



Reasons Why

In this activity, participants explore the full range of underlying reasons for women's unintended pregnancies, pregnancy termination or continuation, and governments' regulation of pregnancy and abortion at or after 13 weeks. Participants are encouraged to identify how their and others' level of comfort with women's reasons affects reproductive health policies and services and societal stigma.



Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify diverse reasons for abortion at or after 13 weeks
- Name the reasons why women may make decisions about their unintended pregnancies
- Discuss the reasons why governments regulate pregnancy and abortion, particularly at or after 13 weeks, more than many other medical conditions and procedures;
- Differentiate their comfort levels with regard to the different reasons;
- Discuss how individuals' subjective level of comfort affects different women's access to safe abortion care.



Materials

- Sheets of flipchart paper
- Scissors
- Newspapers
- Markers
- Materials that can be used to decorate (glue, colored paper, newspapers, etc.)
- Optional – Prize



Timeline

25 minutes to complete group exercise

15 minutes for reporting back to large group

5 minutes for debriefing in large group

40 minutes total



Advance Preparation

- Cut the Reasons Why questions into strips.



Instructions

1. Divide participants into 4 groups. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper, markers, any other materials (newspaper, glue, colored paper, etc.) and one of the “Reasons Why” question strips.
2. Ask each group to brainstorm all of the possible responses to the question they have been given. Encourage them to think as deeply and broadly as possible, thinking about the range of diverse women and their life circumstances. Let groups know that they can be as creative as possible and draw pictures and use the materials provided to write/illustrate their responses on their sheet of flipchart paper. Let groups know they will have 25 minutes to work on their responses and their “creative flipchart”. Groups should select one person to report back to the larger group. That person will have 2-3 minutes to present to the larger group. *optional – inform groups that the most creative flipchart will receive a prize.
3. After 25 minutes, ask each spokesperson to come up, post their flipchart and present their response to the larger group. After each presentation ask the larger group if they have any additional responses. Suggest any additional responses that were not identified.
4. After all the groups have presented, facilitate a discussion using some of the following questions:
 - What reasons for abortion at or after 13 weeks make you uncomfortable, and what is the source of your discomfort?
 - How do people’s different levels of comfort influence societal stigma against women who have abortions at or after 13 weeks and the providers who perform them?
 - What are the reasons that governments often regulate women’s pregnancies and abortion, particularly abortion at or after 13 weeks, to a greater extent than other medical conditions and procedures? How much of this has to do with gender (the fact that only women become pregnant and the majority of legislators are usually men)?
 - (For participants working in reproductive health and abortion care) How does our discomfort with certain reasons (for having sex, unintended pregnancy, abortion) affect our work in reproductive health and, specifically, abortion care at or after 13 weeks? How might clients sense this discomfort? What impact could this have on the quality of health care we provide?

Note to facilitator: You may need to really prompt participants to think deeply to identify the core values that influence their comfort levels.

You may want to present local examples to illustrate the point about governments regulating pregnancy and abortion, particularly at or after 13 weeks, more than most other conditions and procedures.

5. Close the activity by discussing the following points:
 - Individuals’ discomfort with some women’s reasons for abortion at or after 13 weeks results in the implementation of reproductive health policies, laws and service-delivery systems that deny certain women access to safe, high-quality abortion services. This can lead to some women having to risk their health and lives to procure a (possibly unsafe) abortion. In other words, it creates health disparities and often tragic outcomes for some women but not others.

- Ensure participants grasp that this disparity in access to safe abortion at or after 13 weeks is based on individual, subjective beliefs about what are “acceptable” versus “unacceptable” reasons for pregnancy and abortion.
6. Solicit and discuss any outstanding questions, comments or concerns with the participants. Thank the group for their participation.

Activity adapted from:

Marais, Thea. 1996. *Abortion values clarification training manual*. Melrose, South Africa, Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa.

Reasons Why Questions

Instructions

Cut the following statements into individual strips of paper to hand out to groups

What are all of the reasons why women have an abortion at or after 13 weeks?

What are all of the reasons why it might be difficult for a provider to provide abortion services at or after 13 weeks?

What are all of the reasons why women do not leave with a contraceptive method after an abortion at or after 13 weeks?

What are all the reasons why governments regulate abortion at or after 13 weeks?

Activity adapted from:

Marais, Thea. 1996. *Abortion values clarification training manual*. Melrose, South Africa, Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa.