

Four Corners

The purpose of this activity is to help participants come to a deeper understanding about their own and others' beliefs about abortion at or after 13 weeks; empathize with the underlying values that inform a range of beliefs; and consider how their beliefs affect societal stigma on abortion at or after 13 weeks and, if they are health-care providers, the provision of high-quality services



Objectives

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

- Articulate their beliefs about abortion at or after 13 weeks;
- Defend and respectfully explain other, sometimes conflicting, points of view;
- Explain different values underlying a range of beliefs on abortion at or after 13 weeks;
- Discuss how personal beliefs affect societal stigma or acceptance of abortion at or after 13 weeks;
- (For health-care providers and workers) Explain how personal beliefs can affect the provision of abortion services at or after 13 weeks;
- (For health-care providers and workers) Discuss ways to ensure a professional standard of high-quality abortion care at or after 13 weeks regardless of personal beliefs.



Materials

- Four signs labeled Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree
- Pens
- Tape (for attaching signs to wall)
- Four Corners worksheet Part A and Part B



Timeline

50 minutes (if three statements are discussed)



Advance Preparation

- Prepare and tape up four signs: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree on the walls in four corners or areas of the room.
- Review and adapt the worksheet statements to make them more relevant to the participants or workshop content, if needed. You may want to select in advance the statements to be discussed by the group, or wait until you see how the participants respond. Select the statements that will elicit the most important discussion for that audience and setting.
- Research international agreements or treaties on health and human rights that include the right to safe abortion and whether these treaties were signed or ratified by the country(ies) represented in your workshop. (Refer to the reproductive rights section of Ipas's *Woman-centered abortion care: Reference manual* or *Improving access to safe abortion: Guidance on making high-quality services available, A presentation package for advocates* for more information)
- Copy Four Corners worksheets Part A and Part B, one of each per participant.



Instructions

1. Inform participants that this is an activity where we will be speaking from a personal point of view, as well as defending others' views. Encourage them to be completely honest to get the most out of the activity.
 - *Often, our beliefs about abortion at or after 13 weeks are so engrained that we are not fully aware of them until we are confronted with situations and compelling rationales that challenge them. This exercise helps us to identify our own beliefs about abortion at or after 13 weeks, as well as understand the issues from other points of view.*
2. Hand each participant a Four Corners worksheet Part A. Instruct them not to write their names on either of their worksheets. Ask them to complete the worksheet and then turn the sheet over.
3. Hand each participant a Four Corners worksheet Part B. Ask them to complete the worksheet and then turn the sheet over. If they are a man, instruct them to respond as if they were a woman in that situation.
4. Ask participants to turn worksheets A and B face up and place them next to each other. Tell them that Part A asks about their beliefs for women in general, and Part B asks about their beliefs concerning themselves. Ask participants to compare their answers on A versus B.
5. Ask the following discussion questions:
 - *What similarities or differences do you see in the beliefs you hold for women in general versus yourself?*
 - *If there are differences, why do you think that is?*
6. Take a few comments for a brief discussion. Point out that differences between responses on worksheets A and B can sometimes indicate a double standard. Some people believe that women in general should not be allowed to freely access abortion services at or after 13 weeks if they or a family member needed them. Gently encourage participants to consider whether they maintain a double standard for themselves versus women in general, and ask them to reflect on this more deeply. Stress the negative impact such double standards can have on the accessibility of services, social stigma on abortion and laws and policies on abortion at or after 13 weeks.
7. Ask participants to stand in a circle and crumple their Part A worksheets into a ball and throw them into the middle of the circle. Randomly toss a "ball" back to each participant. Explain that for the remainder of the activity, they will represent the responses on the worksheet they have in their hands. If they got their own worksheet, they should act as though someone else completed it.
8. Point out the four signs placed around the room. Tell them they will be discussing a select number of statements from Part A, one at a time.

Note to facilitator: This activity will be too long if you try to discuss all or even most of the statements. Three statements are normally enough to gain the desired effect from the activity. If participants want to see how the group responded to all of the statements, you can have them move to the four corners for each statement and see how the responses are distributed but then only discuss a select number of them. Select the statements that will elicit the most important discussion for that audience and setting. You can select the statements in advance or after you have seen how participants responded and where the greatest differences in opinion are.

9. Read the first statement out loud. Ask participants to move to the sign that corresponds to the response circled on the worksheet they are holding. Remind participants that they are representing the responses on their worksheets, even if they conflict with their personal beliefs.
10. Invite participants to look around the room and note the opinions held by the group. There may be different-sized groups in the four corners, and sometimes all four corners may not be occupied. You can then ask some people to move to another group if the four are not evenly distributed.
11. Ask the group under each sign to discuss the strongest rationale for why people might hold that opinion for two minutes.
 - Encourage them to come up with more meaningful reasons that are based on underlying, core values.
 - The Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagree groups should make sure they can differentiate between merely Agree or Disagree and Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagree.
 - Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson to present why people might hold that opinion. Ask the spokespeople to speak convincingly, as though they hold the belief themselves. For example. "I strongly disagree with this statement because ... "
12. Start with the spokesperson under Strongly Agree and proceed in order to Strongly Disagree.
 - Remind participants that the designated spokespeople may or may not personally agree with the opinions they are presenting.
 - Do not allow other groups to comment at this time.
13. Read the next statement, and ask participants to move to the sign that corresponds to the response circled on their worksheet. Invite participants to note the opinions held by the group. Redistribute some people if groups are not evenly distributed. Ask groups to select someone who has not yet spoken to be their spokesperson. Reverse the order of the groups' presentations.
14. Continue in the same manner for the remaining statement(s).
15. Have participants return to their seats. Discuss the activity by asking some of the following questions:
 - *What was it like to represent beliefs about abortion at or after 13 weeks that were different from your own?*
 - *What was it like to hear your beliefs represented by others?*
 - *What rationale for certain beliefs caused you to think differently?*

- *What are your general impressions about the beliefs held by the people in this room (but not by any particular individual)?*
- *What is your sense of the underlying, core values that inform these beliefs?*
- *How do our beliefs about abortion affect societal stigma or acceptance of abortion at or after 13 weeks?*
- *What relevance do the beliefs discussed in this activity have for abortion care at or after 13 weeks in our setting or country?*
- *Were any of the arguments/rationales presented by the small groups based on women's internationally recognized right to reproductive health care, including safe abortion? If not, what does this say about our understanding of women's right to second-trimester abortion services?*
- *(For health-care providers and workers) How might our beliefs about abortion affect our provision of abortion services at or after 13 weeks?*
- *(For health-care providers and workers) What can we do to ensure that we maintain a professional standard of high-quality abortion care regardless of the gestational age or our personal beliefs?*

Note to facilitator: When asking the questions about women's rights, you may want to include some information about international agreements or treaties on health and human rights that include the right to safe abortion and whether these treaties were signed or ratified by the country (or countries) represented in your workshop.

Health-care providers or workers may need help with the last question. Suggestions may include: attend more training on how to provide compassionate, nonjudgmental care for abortions at or after 13 weeks; ask co-workers for feedback and make improvements accordingly; institute an anonymous client/ patient satisfaction evaluation system and make improvements based on feedback; put a monitoring and quality improvement system in place to ensure services for abortions at or after 13 weeks are available and high quality; and providers can consider transferring to another clinical specialty if personal beliefs prevent provision or referral to high-quality care for abortions at or after 13 weeks.

16. Solicit and discuss any outstanding questions, comments or concerns with the participants. Thank the group for their participation.

Four Corners, Part A

Instructions

Please read the following statements and circle the answers that best reflect your personal beliefs. Please be honest and do not write your name on this sheet.

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Services for abortions at or after 13 weeks should be available to every woman who wants them. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. Abortions at or after 13 weeks should be easily available in cases of fetal abnormality, but not in other cases. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. Women who have abortions at or after 13 weeks are ending a life. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. A woman should be able to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks even if her husband or partner wants her to continue the pregnancy. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. Young, unmarried girls should be allowed to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks if they want one. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. Clinicians who specialize in ob-gyn have a responsibility to perform abortions at or after 13 weeks. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. Minors should be required to get their parents' consent in order to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. Pregnant women who have HIV/AIDS should be counseled to terminate their pregnancy, even if they want to keep it and are in the second trimester. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. A woman should be able to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks based on the sex of the fetus. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. I can support women having an abortion in the first trimester, but but never in the second trimester. | SA | A | D | SD |

Four Corners, Part B

Instructions

Please read the following statements and circle the answers that best reflect your personal beliefs. Please be honest and do not write your name on this sheet. If you are a man, respond as though you were a woman in this situation.

SA = Strongly Agree	A = Agree	D = Disagree	SD = Strongly Disagree	
1. Abortion services at or after 13 weeks should be available to me if I want them.	SA	A	D	SD
2. Abortion at or after 13 weeks should be easily available to me in case of fetal abnormality, but not in other cases.	SA	A	D	SD
3. If I had an abortion at or after 13 weeks, I would be ending a life.	SA	A	D	SD
4. I should be able to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks even if my husband or partner wants me to continue the pregnancy.	SA	A	D	SD
5. If I was young and unmarried, I should be allowed to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks if I wanted one.	SA	A	D	SD
6. If I was a clinician specializing in ob-gyn, I would have a responsibility to perform abortions at or after 13 weeks.	SA	A	D	SD
7. If I was a minor, I should be required to get my parents' consent in order to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks.	SA	A	D	SD
8. If I was pregnant and had HIV/AIDS, I should be counseled to terminate my pregnancy, even if I wanted to keep it and was in the second trimester.	SA	A	D	SD
9. I should be able to have an abortion at or after 13 weeks based on the sex of the fetus.	SA	A	D	SD
10. I can support having an abortion in the first trimester, but never in the second trimester	SA	A	D	SD

**Strongly
Agree**

Agree

Disagree

**Strongly
Disagree**