



## **Bonus Training Module B: Introduction to Sidewalk Counseling**

### **Module Summary**

While the essential duties of a 40 Days for Life vigil are praying and fasting, some of your participants will feel called to reach out with loving alternatives to abortion-bound women and men. This interaction can be highly effective as long as it is done in accordance with the standards set in the statement of peace. Our guiding philosophy is that we serve the babies, their mothers and fathers, and even the abortion facility employees (the workers are not our enemies).

### **Reaching out to abortion clients**

1. **Be dressed appropriately.** You want to look professional and approachable, but do not dress formally. Do not wear clothing, hats, buttons, signs or stickers with pro-life messages as they might create barriers between you and the abortion customer. Do not wear sunglasses and build trust with eye contact.
2. **Know where to stand.** Identify where you can legally stand. Do not intimidate the customers. Never approach abortion customers without somebody else on site. Keep some distance from the rest of the on-site volunteers because a one-on-one approach works best.
3. **Great the person with a short, simple message.** Open with a simple statement like “Good morning, we’re here to help you.”
4. **Slow things down.** Women typically choose abortion because they feel threatened by their pregnancy. You might mention:
  - a. Abortion is a major, invasive surgical procedure. Did you get a second opinion?
  - b. Take time to consider your options; you can always come back later.
  - c. Would you like to see an ultrasound of your baby before making the decision?
  - d. You could offer to go for lunch/coffee to discuss her options.
5. **Share a few basic facts.** Share some simple information. Include one or two basic facts on fetal development, physical risks associated with abortion, and the abortion center’s history (for example, is there a history of failed inspections?).

6. **Direct her to go somewhere else.** It is critical to offer a viable alternative. Include information on local pregnancy help centers and other local resources.
7. **Pray for everyone you interact with.** It is not up to you; it is up to God.

#### **Reaching out to non-abortion clients**

Clients might come for services other than abortion. Inform them that the facility is an abortion center. Know where they can go for life-affirming help and refer them elsewhere. Offer literature and directions to local pregnancy help centers and other places that can help.

#### **Reaching out to post-abortive clients**

You are likely to encounter post-abortive women and men. Half of all women with abortion appointments have had at least one abortion. Take a compassionate tone and be gentle. Respond in humility and gentleness if you're yelled at. Offer post-abortion healing resources.