

SPEAKING OUT ABOUT ABORTION

As one element of your plans for the March 10th National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers, we suggest having a speak-out about abortion.

Speak-outs can:

- Help break through the climate of guilt and shame that often accompanies abortion;
- Inform people concretely about the horrors of the days before abortion was legal; and
- Help people understand why it's important to fight for abortion rights and against restrictions, and to stand with and support providers.

Abortion on demand and without apology




If held before March 10th the speak-out can be used as a way to get people involved in the Day of Appreciation. Or it could be part of the day itself. Either way, you should have appreciation postcards or letters available for people to sign on the spot to send to providers. If media cover the event, be sure no one is photographed who doesn't want to be.

MORE TIPS ON OTHER SIDE >>

We suggest having several "official" (and announced) speakers and then an "open mic" during which anyone from the audience can speak. Many organizations can come together to sponsor the speak-out, or one group can sponsor and solicit speakers from others. Most effective, we think, is having a mix of people speak, focusing on their experiences with abortion. Speakers could include:

- An older woman who would tell of her experience—or a friend's experience—getting an abortion before it was legal (in most states, 1973);
- A doctor or clergyperson who helped women get abortions before legalization and/or who saw the horrors of unsafe illegal abortions;
- An activist from the 1960s women's movement on the struggle to make abortion legal;
- A youth who could talk about having an abortion today;
- Someone to speak about the need to fight restrictions on abortion today;
- An abortion provider or clinic worker who can talk about the harassment at clinics today.





It is very powerful when women who have had abortions themselves are among the announced speakers, or step forward to speak during the open mic period. To encourage people to share their experiences, you may need to have one or more women who have had abortions prepared to “break the ice” and speak first. Hearing others share their experiences can make people want to tell their own stories.

Set a time limit—perhaps no more than 3-5 minutes for each person, to be sure many have an opportunity to speak. Close the mic five minutes

before the event ends, then conclude with a statement from the speak-out organizers. This is important in order to refocus attention on your main message: that access to abortion is essential if women are to have reproductive choice, and that reproductive choice is essential if women are to have control over their lives.

You can close the event by urging people to escort at clinics and support and defend abortion providers. You may want to have a sign-in sheet for people to leave their contact information so they can be contacted for escorting and other clinic support work.



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The open mic

period may draw speakers who present different views on abortion—including some who may be anti-abortion. We suggest

that the best way to handle this is to let them speak, but for no longer than the time limit for everyone else. Do not let them dominate the microphone or turn the event into a debate. The speak-out has its own purpose, which should not be allowed to be disrupted. You may want to have several pro-choice people (whom you know) lined up, prepared to counter any distortions/lies about abortion that may be presented. In your planning, as always, remember that security issues should be considered.



If you want to have a speak-out but need assistance in finding appropriate speakers, contact the **Reproductive Freedom Task Force of Refuse & Resist!** at RFTF@refuseandresist.org or 212-713-5657.

