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Right Brain Research

Dr. Charles Kenny, a pioneer in consumer psychology and founder of The Right Brain People®, developed a powerful and unique methodology to uncover the emotional motivators that drive decision-making. This innovative approach to consumer message development has been used by over 600 of the world's most successful corporations and organizations, from Fortune 500 companies to mom and pop shops.

The Right Brain methodology:

- 1) Focuses on emotion by separating rationalizations from what truly motivates people. It is easy to uncover information about the rational, left-brain reasons people give for why they do what they do, but the complete answer is lacking without understanding the emotional side of decision-making.
- 2) Uses visualization to access the emotional mind. In Right Brain interviews, respondents visualize and relive critical decision points in order to gain understanding of the emotional motivations and barriers that influence how decisions are made.
- 3) Interprets interview material within a psychological framework of emotional motivations and barriers.





Vitae & Right Brain Research

Vitae commissioned Dr. Kenny to better understand the psychological dynamics that motivate women to feel the way they do about abortion.

An additional objective was to learn how to better communicate with those who may support abortion as a solution to an unexpected pregnancy and move them to a more life-affirming position.

A communication strategy emerged from the first study that resulted in a complete paradigm shift within the entire Pro-Life arena. Gone was the often politically-charged rhetoric, absent the accusatory undertones. This new approach was woman-centered and non-confrontational, while inviting audiences to think about the message.

Vitae has commissioned seven studies with The Right Brain People® and continues to work with Dr. Kenny. Every project uncovers new findings and strengthens Vitae's ability to save lives. Current endeavors include Vitae's efforts to share this valuable information with Pregnancy Help Centers and Pro-Life peers across the world.

Abortion—The Least of Three Evils

Purpose

This study seeks to understand why women who believe abortion is morally wrong can accept it as permissible under certain circumstances. The study also seeks to find what factors influence their decision to abort such as gestational age, abortion terminology, present motherhood and cultural influences.

Implications

Be the middle ground: We should distance ourselves from radical Pro-Life and pro-choice groups. Denounce violence and murders publicly because the failure to do so is seen as support for violence against women.

Avoid arguing the legality of abortion: Everyone agrees that abortion is ending a life. Since women want to feel they have control in their lives, which legalized abortion provides, avoid arguing that abortion should be illegal. The stance that abortion should be illegal will be opposed by all pro-choice and some Pro-Life supporters.

Understand women and empower them: Show understanding of women's dilemmas and show them that choosing life is just as empowering and freeing as what some women think abortion is. Show women that they do not need to default to abortion. There is great courage in keeping a child or placing a child for adoption.

Assert your organization as “pro-woman”: Urgently support women's expectations to be self-determining and free from life-damaging guilt. Allow them to make mistakes and learn from them.

Redefine choice: Persuasive messaging provides women with alternative choices to abortion which can expand rather than restrict their “choices.”

Take action in the community: Show commitment by developing community education projects and support existing groups that promote the reproductive education of women.

Educate women on all of her choices: Show women the effects of abortion later in life, facts of fetal development and facts about

abortion. Provide information on both discussion groups and seminars about parenting.

Choose words carefully: Use tag lines that incorporate the well-being of the mother, her need for equally weighted choices and her need to avoid future regret. “Choices you can live with” is a good example. Additionally, the term “insights” reaches more than “messages.”

Reposition adoption as an option: Address barriers to adoption. Focus on how adoption fulfills the child’s needs for love and security. Do not pit adoption against abortion. Show adoption success stories and how thankful the child (now adult) is that they were adopted. Also educate the mother on adoption procedures so that she knows her future self will not be destroyed by contact with the adult child unless she has consented to such contact.

Focus on spirituality not religion: Pregnancy and the preborn child should be linked with spirituality rather than religious precepts. Many women feel abortion is wrong not because of religion but as a primal, generalized belief. Show the spiritual connection a mother has with her preborn child even before the first movement is felt by the mother. Avoid preaching as the religious do not need it and the unreligious will not listen.

Present an “admired woman” to discuss unexpected pregnancy: The spokesperson should discuss the spiritual conflict women experience when an unexpected pregnancy occurs and what she does to help those women. Avoid using men in advertising and use African American women when trying to reach that same demographic.

Conclusion

This study concludes that women perceive abortion as the least of three evils (abortion, adoption and parenting). The perceived death of self is what is known as “evil.” Abortion represents the death of the preborn child while parenting represents the death of self and adoption represents the death of both the child and self. We must reposition the levels of evil with abortion being the greatest by showing that the death of the preborn child is only the trigger for the gradual death of self caused by the guilt and pain of the act of abortion.

We must act in the interest of women and reinforce that the most respected “choice” is that of choosing life. We can empower women to truly free themselves and regain control of their lives by choosing parenthood or adoption. Influence should occur through education about the adoption process, facts of fetal development and the long-term effects of abortion.

Its Own Time and Its Own Season

Purpose

This study seeks to understand the psychological dynamics that drive women who, after an unexpected pregnancy, are considering carrying to term, adopting or aborting, as well as the emotional needs fulfilled by each decision.

Implications

They must make the choice: All women seem to reject messaging that seems pushy, preachy or manipulative. Utilize educational messaging to help them come to their own conclusion that they should carry their child to term and keep the child. That way they feel as if they organically chose life and have subconsciously regained control of their self-identity. In ads, show a woman speaking for herself and demonstrate that her remorse is more effective than a woman who tells others abortion is wrong. The woman speaking for herself is not judging others and cannot easily be judged or otherwise rejected for her own remorse be the target audience.

Be clear in your messaging: Respondents in this study were often confused by the vague nature of the ads they viewed and sometimes even believed that Pro-Life ads were pro-choice.

Focus ads on aftermath of decision: Ads should not focus on the decision-making process but rather the aftermath of a wrong decision. Avoid direct mention of the guilt. Instead show one woman talking to another about her feelings after her own abortion. This gives credibility to the speaker and demonstrates the true role of the trusted confidante to listen and provide support without judging.

Target high conflict group: Women who are troubled by abortion are the women who are reachable. These women sometimes ignore their beliefs and choose abortion when other dynamics take precedence. Ads should encourage these women to seek out guidance from an older, mature, family member to discuss her fears and moral dilemma. These ads will also be effective with abortion-minded women who have previously chosen parenthood or placed a child for adoption. Do

not attempt to reach low conflict groups at all as no Pro-Life ad will motivate them to change their minds.

Target confidantes: Enlist their aid in preventing abortions by showing them that many women cannot live with the decision to abort. The confidante will see that she can best serve her friend by asking her questions, showing empathy and helping her discuss other options.

Conclusion

This study concludes that in order to encourage women to carry to term, close attention must be paid to both the underlying and direct message the ads portray. The goal is to reach women who are troubled by abortion, confidantes and abortion-minded mothers. Messaging should be clear and focus on the aftermath of an abortion decision rather than the decision-making process. To avoid a pushy, preachy or manipulative message, ads should share personal testimonials from women who have regretted abortions, thus minimizing judgment of the ad or actress. The true role of a confidante (one who listens without judgment) should be obvious in ads.



The Dilemma of Choosing Life

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the rational and emotional motivators which drive attitudes and feelings about abortion among teens. The conclusions of this study should provide the groundwork to develop and implement communication strategies that increase the percentage of teens who reject abortion and ultimately reduce abortion among teens.

Implications

Redefining adolescence as a time of learning: Adolescence should not be defined as a waiting period but a time to learn to become an adult. Introduce the idea that an abortion will prevent them from reaching their goals because responsibility is vital to building character. Becoming a parent builds courage, compassion, selflessness and intelligence. Abortion builds unwanted traits into character, such as guilt, stupidity, heartlessness and selfishness.

Show them what to do: Reassure adolescents that their parents do want to be included in the decision-making process. Provide them with pamphlets or other materials that explain how to talk to your parents about unexpected pregnancies. Parenting classes may also be beneficial in demonstrating how to parent as an adolescent.

Freedom doesn't end at pregnancy: Emphasize the benefits to having a child at a young age. When they are more established financially, they will get to enjoy freedom again (this time with more resources).

Educate adolescents about adoption: There are many misconceptions that adoptions only result in bad experiences for the child. Explain the process of adoption, their hands-on role in choosing the adoptive family and the option to keep or disconnect contact with the child. Easing their concerns makes adoption a more viable option.

Show them! Seeing is believing: To read a success story is one thing, but to hear it directly from someone who went through it is living proof. Invite a young mother who chose parenthood or adoption to speak in a classroom or other educational setting.

Give biological evidence: By using a scientific approach, show when the life of a baby begins by explaining when a heartbeat is detected and when the baby can hear and recognize its mother’s voice. Explain that a baby does feel pain inside the womb (justified by modern science providing anesthesia in surgery settings).

Do not use dehumanizing words: Use words such as “preborn child” instead of “fetus” and “embryo.” Speak in a manner that offers them a choice between parenthood and adoption. They may reject messages that they perceive as encroaching on their freedom.

Shift focus from the mother to the baby: Because of adolescents strong need to empathize with others, it is important to focus their attention on the baby rather than the mother. They will transpose their identity and advocate for freedom on behalf of the preborn child. Another way to induce this transposition would be to have them role play, acting as the preborn child in the womb.

Conclusion

Teenagers are better understood not by their chronological age, but their developmental status. Referring to this unique group as adolescents proves to be a more appropriate term. Adolescents’ opinions about abortion can be easily swayed depending on the context of the pregnancy. The Vitae Foundation can utilize this impressionable time in an adolescent’s life to educate them about how to deal with the most unfavorable circumstances of pregnancy without turning to abortion. The Vitae Foundation should reposition adolescence as a time to form character (by taking on perceived good and bad circumstances) which will set the tone for the future.



2003 | Abstract of
Choosing a Life for Vitae
Synthesis of Findings

Purpose

This study seeks to construct a model of the psychological dynamics that affect decisions about abortion, understand the current position of the Vitae Foundation within the context of those dynamics and develop a strategy to strengthen Vitae's position in the minds of its constituents.

Implications

Focus on benefits of parenthood: We should not focus on the legal right to abortion but rather the emotional benefits of parenthood. Positive conceptions of maternal self-identity contribute to the decision not to abort. Present Pro-Life organizations and Pregnancy Help Centers as “navigators” in their journey toward a new self-identity.

Combine rational and emotional appeals: We should supply a positive, uplifting emotional message at the same time that it provides women with rationalizations to support the decision to become mothers.

Focus on the woman, not the children: Pregnant women do not typically see their preborn children as a part of their self-identity. We should focus on addressing the needs of the woman rather than the child. Idealistic models of reality will be ignored by women that fear judgment and a loss of identity.



Do not mention legislation: Women want to have the ability to choose abortion even if they believe that abortion is

wrong. We should refrain from lobbying efforts. Instead, focus on a less direct and less emotionally threatening strategy to reduce the number of abortions.

Make motherhood the default: Instead of communicating an assumption that women want to abort, we should start all communications with the assumption that women merely need help finding their way into motherhood.

Separate fundraising from communications: The emotional motivators of people who donate to Vitae are likely to be very different from the emotional motivators of women considering abortion. To ensure clear messages for both audiences, there should be separate teams and strategies.

Conclusion

This study concludes that women fear (and are unable to resist) the power of their sexual impulses, even though they are aware of the consequences. They believe their failure of self-control is inevitable and find it reassuring that abortion is available as an emergency means of control to “erase” their mistakes.

When it comes to sex, women do not trust themselves to make the right choice and seek abortion as a second chance to make the “right” choice. The baby is perceived as the child of sexual desire and to surrender (again) to that sexual desire feels like a mistake. Consequently, the rebirth of self as a mother feels like a mistake as well. Women fear that without undergoing an abortion, they will be transformed by their mistakes so radically that they will be destroyed.

The mere availability of abortion, as a choice to exercise self-control, is so appealing to women, that a dispute of its legality would be faced with great opposition from both Pro-Life and pro-choice women. Women facing unexpected pregnancies need help diminishing their guilt and fear so that they can have the courage to take on a new identity; motherhood. These women should be empowered to learn from their mistakes, take control of their lives and feel pride in their choice of life.

Ready for Responsibility? Abortion & Emerging Adults

Purpose

This study investigates the following objectives 1) to better understand the psychological process that drives young people to change or retain their attitudes and feelings about abortion as they move into adulthood and 2) to reduce the frequency of abortion decisions among adults by using strategic communication strategies to simultaneously change the culture and reinforce the sanctity of life.

Implications

Timing: Instill the idea that a preborn child is not only part of your identity but is a completely separate identity in itself. If this idea is instilled when young people become mentally and developmentally ready (preferably before adolescence), their position should generally remain fluid through adolescence and into adulthood.

Education: During adolescence and emerging adulthood, utilize strategic marketing messages to educate and share stories of abortion-determined women who chose to take on the transition into adulthood and motherhood simultaneously. For every mother to be able to relate, provide them access to success stories from all demographics: single mothers, poor mothers, young mothers, etc.

Precision: Be careful to not identify the abortion issue as two dimensional (Pro-Life and pro-choice), but rather recognize the existence of the plethora of dimensions in between.

Change: As culture evolves and new generations emerge, the model must be continually refined. Marketing, fundraising and counseling efforts should also follow the most updated model.

Perspective: An unexpected pregnancy is often thought of as the end of the mother's self-identity. If we reposition pregnancy as an opportunity for growth, mothers may take the pregnancy as an inspiration rather than a challenge, an opportunity to show self-

confidence rather than an immediate end to self-identity and a swift but positive conduit to adulthood. Redefine responsibility as doing the right thing whenever challenges arise as opposed to denying responsibility until the “perfect time” arrives.

Strategy: We cannot help mothers unless we can communicate with them in their immediate time of need. Strategic ad placement is vital to the success of our mission. Placing messaging on job search, real estate and educational websites reaches emerging adults when they are in a receptive mood—feeling that they should be taking on more responsibility.

Support: The advice of a trusted peer, parent or other influencer can weigh heavily on the decision-making process of a mother. Match an expectant mother with a counselor or volunteer (preferably close in age) who can empathize or sympathize with her experience. This counselor/volunteer can provide comfort to the expectant mother by committing to “hold her hand” every step of the way and by consistently providing gentle and responsible guidance throughout her pregnancy.

Conclusion

Emerging adults’ feelings about abortion cannot be treated as the feelings of children on abortion or the feelings of adults on abortion. Emerging adults are a category of their own with thirteen possible dimensions measuring their positions on abortion. Great care should be taken to develop a multi-faceted approach to more effectively communicate with each and all dimensions.



Purpose

This study uncovers the psychological dynamics that drive women's decisions about pregnancy. Specifically, the purpose is to uncover the dynamics that affect them when they decide to have children or when faced with an unexpected pregnancy. This study aims to understand what makes abortion unthinkable and what strategic messages can be used to market the emotional “opposite” of abortion. These messages should serve to decrease the percentage of women who choose abortion after experiencing unexpected pregnancies.

Implications

It is okay to rewrite the “plan”: Reassure mothers that it is okay to change their “plan” at an unplanned time. Empower them to regain control over their future through the structure and purpose that parenting provides.

Dream for your baby: Allow pregnant women to dream for their babies and imagine who they could be, the things they may accomplish and the opportunity to continue the family legacy.



Show her the community: Explain to pregnant mothers how special this rite-of-passage (birth) is and how she will be welcomed into the community of women in her life who are also mothers.

The baby is their legacy: All stakeholders should realize that the baby is part of all family members who have gone before them. They represent the continuation of a legacy.

Show them how: It may be difficult for women to move forward with an unexpected pregnancy by simply hearing that their dreams can still become reality. Recruit very successful women who have had unexpected pregnancies and let them tell their story. Encourage TV, movie and radio producers to add less than perfect birth experiences into their storylines. It is important to include the most controversial parts of the story such as telling your partner and/or parents, going to an abortion facility, etc.

Provide support outside their network: Create brochures or web pages that connect readers to local help lines or Pregnancy Help Centers (PHCs), pregnancy support and parenting groups. Distribute brochures at doctor's offices, places of worship, health clinics, schools, grocery stores and civic centers.

Go to them: PHCs should be available for questions and support at state and county fairs, women's expos, neighborhood fairs, malls and flea markets. The presence created in the community will subconsciously be remembered so that, when the need arises, pregnant women will know where to find help or know where to refer other women.

Measure results: To measure results, track which web pages visitors are interested in, which events are producing leads or which advertising mediums are producing referrals.

Conclusion

The factors that influence pregnant mothers whether to carry to term or not are 1) the level of support and reassurance they feel and 2) the level of acceptance for the new identity they will take on by carrying to term. The messaging needed to reach these mothers should focus on changing a "mistake" into a "higher calling" by utilizing the factors above.

Purpose

This study investigates how Planned Parenthood's (PP) branding strategy makes an effective emotional connection to consumers and that its shortfall in delivery of service provides opportunities for Pregnancy Help Centers (PHCs) to capitalize on those shortcomings. Secondly, the study focuses on understanding how consumers want to feel buying or using the brand and helps PHCs learn how to accurately position themselves in the minds of consumers.

Implications

Create judgment-free zones: Do not talk about the mistakes that led the woman to pregnancy, but rather focus on moving forward, as an empowering move in the right direction.

Provide the highest levels of confidentiality: Use discreet voicemails that do not identify PHCs as the caller or mention the reason for the call. Discuss medical conditions in total privacy. Confidentiality is crucial at this time in a woman's life.

Provide emotional and physical safety and security: PHCs must be clean and have well-kept employees with good bedside manner and professionalism. Appointments should focus on the health of the client by taking blood pressure, weight, etc., further establishing the legitimacy of PHCs as healthcare institutions and alternatives to PP.

Utilize PP "legacy customers" for PHC referrals: The age group defined in the survey as "legacy customers" (age 25-45) offers PHCs a specific and unique market. They are the ones typically responsible for recommending that their younger sisters or friends go to PP. If this market is educated on the offerings of PHCs, they could refer their peers and family.

Emotional well-being: Pair clients with the same nurse or patient advocate during each appointment. They should offer sufficient time during appointments. This will establish trust and will provide a "friend" to walk them through their pregnancy. Offer solutions by way of jobs, education, childcare, removing the reasons given for needing an abortion. Provide sufficient support before, during and after pregnancy.

Be transparent: To continue the highest levels of trust, everything must be disclosed and known up front. Disclose pricing before service is performed, keep consistent hours and short wait times. These are all weaknesses of PP.

Recognize the relationship between ethnicity and perception: Hispanics are more convicted by the thought of having an abortion; Black women favor PP as a normal part of their culture; and white women are more affected by protesters and bedside manner. It would be of value to study these demographics further to be able to overcome these objections with strategic marketing.

Explain the risks thoroughly: Many respondents did not remember PP staff spending much time explaining the risks of chemical or surgical abortion. Explaining the risks in detail and providing them information to take home seems like it would be a more effective deterrent.

Invite women to consider a PHC as a “second opinion”: Respondents thought of gynecologists and primary care physicians as PP’s competitors. PHCs should take a more holistic approach as a place to provide emotional well-being to the total person, providing information on not only sexual health but fitness, dieting, STD’s, etc. All of these being free services!

Discredit PP: Focus on the poor consumer practices and customer relations of PP. Specifically, the lack of counseling offered pre- and post-abortion, long wait times, poor bedside manner, cleanliness, reversal options, inconsistent pricing and sporadic availability. Challenge PP to show women the ultrasound so she can see what will happen to her body rather than using it to determine the size of the baby and price of the abortion.

Conclusion

The PP brand is a strong and resilient brand that presents itself as the only option for sexual health. PP provides a confidential, judgment-free zone that reinforces the decision to abort. PP provides a safe haven for those looking to make their pregnancy disappear quickly through the path of least resistance, absolving themselves of any guilt or damage to their futures. PP purposely involves themselves in the furtherance of risky behaviors.

PHCs must now utilize the weaknesses of PP as their strengths. They must focus on providing “whole person health” and not just focus on sexual health. This study uncovered a lack of awareness of PHCs and a need to rebrand them all over the country.

Vitae Foundation offers **FREE** training,
consulting and distribution of
research findings to our Pro-Life peers.
After all, we are in this together!

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vitae 
foundation
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1731 Southridge Drive, Suite D
Jefferson City, MO 65109
vitaefoundation.org
573.634.4316



@vitaefoundation
info@vitaefoundation.org