



MEN 4 CHOICE

HOW TO  
BE AN ALLY  
IN THE  
**FIGHT FOR  
REPRODUCTIVE  
FREEDOM**

A Starter Guide for  
Pro-Choice Men

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT A  
PERSON SHOULD HAVE  
THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE  
WHAT'S BEST FOR THEIR  
BODY, WELCOME! YOU'RE  
AMONG 61% OF MEN LIVING  
IN THE U.S. WHO SUPPORT  
REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM.

### About this Guide

This guide is designed to help you leverage your voice to become a welcomed and effective pro-choice advocate.

# WELCOME!

**You're among the 60M+ adult men in the U.S. who believe that every person should have the right to control their own body, their own health care, and their own reproductive decisions. After all, reproductive health care is basic, essential health care.**

The decision about whether and when to become a parent is one of the most important life decisions we make. When people can make decisions that are best for their lives, families thrive and we build communities where each of us can participate with dignity.



## Who are we?

# MEN 4 CHOICE

## Our Mission

Our mission is to unconditionally support the women and impacted individuals leading this movement by activating, educating, and mobilizing male allies into the fight to protect and expand reproductive freedom.

## Our Vision

We envision and are working towards a future where male allies are actively deconstructing misogyny by transforming the way they think about, speak about, and engage in the fight for reproductive freedom.

## Our Guiding Principles

- We will use our voice/privilege/power to fight for reproductive freedom and justice.
- We will listen, be accountable, and grow as **PARTNERS** in this movement.
- We will usher in new resources to support this movement by **MOBILIZING** allies into the fight.
- We will enter this fight because of our obligation to **BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD**, not as saviors.
- We will work to **CHANGE LAWS AND CHANGE CULTURE**, with an emphasis on understanding how sexism and racism fuel these oppressive laws and the entire anti-abortion movement.

## What We Believe

- We believe this isn't just a fight about abortion. This is a fight about **FREEDOM, POWER, AND CONTROL**.

- We believe there is no such thing as **FREEDOM** for someone who doesn't have the **POWER TO CONTROL THEIR OWN BODY, HEALTH CARE, AND REPRODUCTIVE DECISIONS**. Either you have the power to control your own body, or the government has the power to control you and your loved ones.

### **PRO-CHOICE MEN MUST**

- **SPEAK UP**. Anti-abortion men in America have been loudly and proudly using their power to ban and criminalize abortion. We need pro-choice men who support reproductive freedom to speak up as allies and partners in the fight.

- We believe **ABORTION ISN'T JUST A WOMEN'S ISSUE**. It affects trans men, non-binary people, and yes, it also affects cis-men.

- While we believe no man should have the final say, within the confines of a healthy relationship, the decision of whether to have children, or expand your family, is

a decision most couples make together. While your body may not be under attack as a man, when the government has the power to control your partner's body, **YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOM ARE UNDER ATTACK TOO**. For tens of millions of men in America, the government has the power to control how you build your family with your partners.

- We believe there is no way to ensure abortion access for all, if we don't expand the power of the movement for reproductive freedom. That's why **WE MUST ENGAGE AND ORGANIZE MEN** (who represent half of the pro-choice population). We must confront and change the toxic culture responsible for these oppressive attacks on abortion rights pushed mostly by anti-choice men. **CULTURES ARE CHANGED FROM THE INSIDE OUT**. So, if we want to dismantle the misogyny and sexism underpinning these attacks, we need well-trained male allies to help create this change.



## Step 1

# REALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO SUPPORT REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

While this fight is about much more than the right to choose whether or not to have children, being pro-choice is perhaps the most common way someone who supports reproductive freedom defines themselves.

As NARAL Pro-Choice America Says: “Reproductive freedom is for everybody.”

- ❑ **It’s a fundamental American value.** Without the freedom to control our own lives, bodies, and futures, meaningful equality will remain out of reach.
- ❑ **Everyone should be able to determine if, when, how, and with whom to start or grow a family.** Polling confirms that 8 in 10 Americans support access to abortion and believe that any decision about pregnancy should be made by that person with those they love and trust—not by politicians.
- ❑ **Securing our reproductive freedom means expanding access** to abortion and affordable contraception, protecting pregnant people from workplace discrimination, and supporting working parents by guaranteeing paid family leave.

1 in 4 people who can get pregnant will have an abortion by the time they’re 45.

## Step 1 Continued

# [REALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO SUPPORT REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM]

**Being an ally in this fight is about much more than standing up for a person's right to choose, though. It's about fighting for true reproductive justice for all.**

**Sister Song, a women-of-color-led organization, defines reproductive justice as:** the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.

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**Further, Sister Song explains that reproductive justice is:**

- 1 A human right** based on the United Nations' internationally-accepted Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a comprehensive body of law that details the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of government to protect those rights.
- 2 About access, not choice.** Mainstream movements have focused on keeping abortion legal as an individual choice. That is necessary, but not enough. Even when abortion is legal, many women of color cannot afford it, or cannot travel hundreds of miles to the nearest clinic. There is no choice where there is no access.
- 3 Not just about abortion.** Abortion access is critical, and women of color and other marginalized women also often have difficulty accessing: contraception, comprehensive sex education, STI prevention and care, alternative birth options, adequate prenatal and pregnancy care, domestic violence assistance, adequate wages to support our families, safe homes, and so much more.

## Step 2

# KNOW THE TERMS.

### □ Anti-Abortion

Individuals or groups who seek to deny women control of their bodily autonomy. These people are not “pro-life” and it’s critical that you don’t speak their language. Call them what they are: anti-choice or anti-abortion.

### □ Crisis Pregnancy Center (CPC)

Fake clinics run by anti-choice zealots that frequently and intentionally pose as real clinics to lure women in but then provide false information about abortion in an effort to coerce women not to have an abortion. Frequently they will be opened next to or near an actual abortion clinic or women’s health center and give a neutral-sounding name to create confusion. Call them what they are: fake clinics. To find a legitimate healthcare facility, click [here](#). ([ReproAction](#))

### □ Embryo and Fetus

An embryo is the developing human individual from the time of implantation to the end of the eighth week after conception. A fetus is a developing human from usually two months after conception to birth. ([Merriam Webster](#))

### □ Gender Equity

“Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits obligations & opportunities.” ([Omega Accelerator](#))

### □ In Clinic Abortion

“A physical procedure that requires in-clinic treatment from medical professional.” ([Planned Parenthood](#))  
The vast majority of abortions occur in the first trimester with a simple procedure that takes just a few minutes and is incredibly safe. ([NAF Abortion Facts](#))

### □ Medication Abortion

Sometimes called the “abortion pill” or “[Plan C](#)”, medication abortions are the majority of abortions currently taking place in the United States. It is usually done with the help of two extremely **safe** and **effective** medications – **mifepristone** and **misoprostol** – and is one of the safest ways to end an early pregnancy. To learn



## Step 2 Continued

# KNOW THE TERMS.

more about this process, watch this quick [Planned Parenthood video](#)."

([Planned Parenthood](#)). **Note:** this is not to be confused with "Plan B" or the emergency contraceptive pill, which prevents pregnancy after unprotected sex.

After the Supreme Court rolled back Roe v. Wade, the anti-choice movement wasn't done. In an effort led by right wing judges, the anti-choice movement is trying to challenge the 20+ year FDA approval of mifepristone in an effort to essentially ban all medication abortions. Make no mistake, this was never about the safety of these drugs (which has been proven beyond any doubt), but yet again an effort to control the lives of people who need abortion care.

### ☐ **People are still accessing pills in all states.**

Telehealth has become [20% of all abortions in the US](#), including pills sent under "Shield Law" protections for providers enacted in 6 states.

Other ways people get abortion pills include [community networks](#)

[mailing pills for free](#) and [websites that sell pills](#).

Access to pills does not solve the whole problem of abortion access, but for people with limited options (e.g. – those living in a restricted state, with limited financial means, those unable to travel, etc.) research shows this option is not only real and available but preferred by many. Today tens of thousands of people are accessing pills by mail every month.

Access to pills is essential, and it's important for us to highlight resources that are helping people understand their options:

- For pills, clinic support/info: [INeedAnA](#)
- To understand how people use pills at home: [plancpills.org/protocol](#)
- For free, confidential answers to medical questions: [M+A Hotline](#)
- For free confidential legal support: [ReproLegalHelpline](#)

## Step 2 Continued

# KNOW THE TERMS.

### □ Self-Managed Abortion

Self-managed abortion (often called SMA) is when a person chooses to have an abortion outside of the formal healthcare system, in a setting of their choice, with the support of the people they choose. Self-managed abortions can be safe and effective and there are different ways one might self-manage, including with the same abortion medication described above, or through other methods that have been passed down through indigenous and cultural traditions. We believe that everyone should be able to choose the option that is best for them – whether that is through a clinic or self-managing at home without a medical provider – and that nobody should be criminalized for choosing any of these methods. You can learn more on this issue through this resource: [Abortion On Our Own Terms](#). And learn about pills by mail and self-managed use at [Plan C Pills](#).

### □ Planned Parenthood

“Delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of women, men, and young people worldwide.” The federal government doesn’t fund [Planned Parenthood](#); they are reimbursed for healthcare services provided to patients.

### □ Personhood

An anti-choice effort to ban all abortion, as well as a number of forms of contraception, by defining life as “beginning at the moment of conception.” If [personhood amendments](#) pass, abortion would be legally defined as murder.

Less than 0.05% of women obtaining an abortion experience a complication.

You’re more likely to experience a complication from a wisdom tooth extraction or [taking Viagra](#).

NATIONAL ABORTION FEDERATION

## Step 2 Continued

# KNOW THE TERMS.

This means that any person who gets an abortion, or physician that performs the abortion, would be subject to prosecution. The impacts of this effort are far reaching and extend well beyond abortion to types of contraception & even end-of-life care

### □ **Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP)**

TRAP laws are state-level laws that place undue burdens on those seeking reproductive healthcare and are often deliberately misrepresented as efforts to “protect” women’s health. TRAP laws have become the preferred weapon used by anti-choice forces in the war on women’s rights; they became more prevalent after the 1992 Supreme Court ruling of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* to circumvent a woman’s constitutional right to make her own healthcare decisions.

Read [here](#) to learn more.

### □ **Misogyny**

Social systems, environments, or behavior where men are hostile to women; it’s about controlling and punishing women who challenge male dominance. ([Vox](#))

89% of U.S  
Counties have  
no abortion  
providers

GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE

STOP THE  
WAR ON  
WOMEN'S  
BODIES

## Step 2 Continued

# KNOW THE TERMS

### Distinguishing between different elements of the broader movement for reproductive freedom

**(This guide is inspired by [this helpful primer by NCJW](#))**

#### Reproductive Health

- Direct services: includes - health care centers, clinics, abortion providers
- Outcomes are seen as a consequence of service accessibility, insurance coverage, individual care
- Solutions are to build more clinics, train more doctors on providing abortion care, train providers on culturally competent caregiving, teaching inclusive sex ed

#### Reproductive Rights

- Focus on legal right to reproductive health care, sex ed: includes - elected officials, lawyers/judges, advocacy orgs (like us!)
- Adverse outcomes seen as a result of restrictive laws/policies, preventing people from accessing care
- Solutions are state/federal advocacy, lobbying, protests/rallies/petitions, lawsuits, proactive legislation efforts

#### Reproductive Justice **([see our section on this above](#))**

- Focuses on the human right of pregnant people to control their own bodies, lives, gender, sexualities, work, and reproduction: includes - community leaders, organizers, faith leaders, and others
- Individual's inability to exercise full bodily autonomy is seen as a direct result of power inequities in our society and systems
- Solutions focus on centering leadership of those most impacted - namely women/trans/non-binary people of color, building local power through organizing, working on multi-issue/multi-racial coalitions


## Step 3

# ACKNOWLEDGE INTERSECTIONALITY

It's important to understand that access to reproductive health care and the ability to make one's own reproductive health decisions affects different communities in different ways. Understanding this can be complicated, especially when you consider that some of those affected belong to more than one community. Here are some great resources to help you better understand:

### People of Color

- 1 [Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Voices: The State of Black Women and Reproductive Justice](#)  
by In Our Own Voice, National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
- 2 [Women of Color and the Struggle for Reproductive Justice](#)  
by If/When/How Brief
- 3 [We are Brave: Race, Money, and Abortion Access](#)  
A Movement-Building Curriculum by All\* Above All, Forward Together, and the Western States Center.



In America, 20% of women are on Medicaid.

Because the Hyde Amendment blocks Medicaid from covering abortion procedures, many of these individuals must choose between paying for food, their electricity bill, or an abortion. This disproportionately affects individuals of color.

Read [here](#) to learn more.

## Step 3 Continued

# ACKNOWLEDGE INTERSECTIONALITY

### Low Income Households

- 1 [Abortion in the Lives of Women Struggling Financially: Why Insurance Coverage Matters](#)

by Guttmacher Institute

### People in Rural Communities

- 1 [Distance traveled for Medicaid-covered abortion care in California](#)

by BMC Health Services Research

- 2 [Seven states have only one remaining abortion clinic](#)

by VICE News

### The Trans Community

- 1 [Reproductive rights and trans rights: deeply interconnected yet too often misunderstood?](#)

by Dr. Chamindra Weerawardhana

- 2 [Queering Reproductive Justice: A Toolkit](#) by The National LGBTQ

TaskForce

59%

OF INDIVIDUALS  
WHO SEEK  
ABORTIONS  
ARE ALREADY  
PARENTS.

[GUTTMACHER  
INSTITUTE](#)



## Step 4

# UNDERSTAND THE REALITY

While abortion rights and access were heavily restricted before, in June of 2022 the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. In doing so, they rolled back the clock and the constitutional right to abortion care in America. The consequences of this decades-long effort by the anti-abortion movement to achieve the first step in their plan (yes, this is just the beginning for them) have been incredibly painful.

**America is a pro-choice nation but a majority of American states are now hostile to reproductive rights and access.**

Today, **26 states** (and counting) are considered to be **“somewhat to extremely” hostile to abortion**. That means tens of millions of Americans now live in states with severely restrictive abortion laws or total abortion bans. Read more on state laws [here](#).

Millions of Americans are forced to travel hundreds or thousands of miles to access basic, essential reproductive health care. See [this story of Texas women](#) traveling hundreds of miles just to get care.

Anti-abortion states aren't simply content to let someone travel elsewhere for an abortion, they're proposing and passing law after law to target patients, loved ones who support them, and providers, effectively criminalizing abortion no matter where it happens. See [this study](#) to learn more about laws targeting providers.

**These oppressive laws are having devastating consequences on American families:**

- [A woman in Texas almost died](#) after doctors, fearing prosecution under SB8, refused to perform an abortion even though the pregnancy was no longer viable.
- [A couple in Ohio got similarly devastating news](#), but the state denied her insurance coverage for a necessary abortion, risking her life and forcing the couple to spend nearly \$30,000 to receive basic, urgent care.
- These anti-abortion attacks couldn't get any more cruel, as [this story of a 10-year old child being denied an abortion](#) in Ohio demonstrates – she was just over 6 weeks pregnant, as a result of child rape.

## Step 4 Continued

# UNDERSTAND THE REALITY

### Access to abortion is severely restricted.

As of 2020, 89% of US counties had no clinics providing abortions. Nearly 40% of American women live in one of those counties. **Americans in 26 states** will have to drive more than 500 miles to access abortion. This travel means lost income, added expenses for lodging and child care, and time off work. Being forced to travel also carries social costs that may make it impossible for people to make this difficult decision in private.

As previously mentioned, abortion care isn't covered under Medicaid in most states. For low income people struggling to get by, covering these costs may mean they are unable to pay other bills.



In 1982, Missouri had 28 abortion clinics. As of 2017, it had 1. Today, abortion is now completely banned in the state.

### Since Roe was overturned, attacks on abortion rights and access have escalated

- **As of May 2023**, 15 states have banned abortion and **26 states** in total are likely to ban abortion.
- The state of Utah banned abortion clinics in the state, forcing abortion patients to go to hospitals. In the year before the ban, 1% of all abortions in the state happened at hospitals.
- The state of Idaho criminalized taking a person under 18 years of age out of state to get an abortion. Grandma could be charged with "human trafficking" for taking her granddaughter to get an abortion and sent to prison for years.
- **Click here** to understand the full current landscape of abortion access in America.



## Step 4 Continued

# UNDERSTAND THE REALITY

### The anti-abortion movement doesn't want you to see these pictures

Nearly 90% of abortions in America happen in the first trimester. Here is what a pregnancy looks like during that time frame.



This is why it's crucial to not fall for the anti-abortion movement's propaganda and understand the actual facts.

**“Nobody needs to justify their abortions to us”**

While the vast majority of abortions do occur very early in pregnancy – **people seeking abortion care deserve our full support no matter when or why they need an abortion.** People might need an abortion later in pregnancy for a variety of reasons. Moreover, given the current abortion access landscape, thousands of people struggle to figure out resources (money for travel, time off from work, childcare, and more) to even get an abortion, often pushing their timeline to later in pregnancy. Our work as allies is not to question or pass judgment – people know what's best for them and their families, and we must support their right to make that decision without fear, shame, or barriers from the government.

## Step 5

# DON'T BE "THAT GUY."

You know that bro you grab beers with after work who thinks it's funny to play devil's advocate during political debates? Don't be him. He just spreads misogyny and wastes a lot of time saying, "It's just a joke, I'm actually pretty progressive." Here are some ways to not to make sure you, and your friends, aren't "that guy."

*It's not my place to speak up about this issue.*



**Yes it is.** Anti-abortion men speak loudly about this issue and use their power to ban and criminalize abortion. We need pro-choice men like us to speak up. Women and people who can get pregnant shouldn't have to shoulder this burden alone.

*They wouldn't have needed an abortion if they had been careful.*



**Never assume you know why a person is getting an abortion and recognize that it's not your place to judge.** They are the only one with the perspective to make the right decision about their body. Never play into the anti-choice narrative that this issue is about reckless sexuality.

*I'm pro-choice, but it's not a top political priority.*



**Anti-abortion men are able to get away with their bullsh\*t** because too many men like us have treated this like someone else's issue for far too long. While they've been attacking people's freedom to control their own body and trying to control women, we've been silent. I know you're the kind of guy who cares about doing the right thing. If guys like us start stepping up we can help change this situation and ensure every person has freedom and dignity.

## Step 5

# DON'T BE "THAT GUY."

*...But have you thought about it this way?*

O


**People have been fighting this battle for centuries.**

Remember: you are an ally and a partner. Listen, ask questions, and don't assume you have the solution to the problem.

*I'm Pro-Choice. But what about after 20 weeks?*

O

The anti-abortion movement is trying to ban and criminalize all abortions in America. Period. They've used this propaganda about 20 weeks as a way to silence you. It's our job to unconditionally support people and not demand they justify their abortions to us. Let's not fall for intentionally bad faith arguments built on lies pushed by people who want to ban all abortions in America.



Since 1973, more than 1380 anti-abortion laws have been enacted in America, and just in 2021 over **561 abortion restrictions were introduced**. And over 106 of them passed - the most devastating anti-abortion legislative year on record. And that was before the Dobbs decision overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

Read [here](#) to learn more.

## Step 6

# SAY THIS, NOT THAT

Many of us aren't quite sure what to say and don't want to cause any harm. Here's a list of common things pro-choice men say and some better ways to share those ideas.

### How Can We Say It Better?

**Commonly said:** "I support choice because I want my daughters to have equal rights."

**Try this instead:** "Without bodily autonomy, no person can be free. Everyone deserves the right to control their body and access to full health care."

Also, let's remember abortion access is an issue that impacts not just cis women, but also **trans men and non-binary/gender non-conforming people**.

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**Commonly said:** "No woman makes this decision lightly."

**Try this instead:** "When someone makes a personal decision about their healthcare and what's in the best interest of their family, we need to respect that."

Also, let's remember to not judge the reason why a person chooses to get an abortion and how they feel about their decision - doing so only further stigmatizes abortion and ranks certain reasons above others.

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**Commonly said:** "I respect that both sides of this debate have sincerely-held beliefs."

**Try this instead:** "I stand unconditionally with the women and impacted individuals under attack and losing their basic rights."

Also, let's remember that not all viewpoints deserve to be put up on the same stage and debated as equal. When someone's "opinion" is based on taking away someone else's rights, we are not compelled to respect that opinion.

## Step 7

# CALL BULLSHIT.

**Being an ally is about helping those most affected, and it starts by calling bullshit. What does that mean?**

- ☐ It means saying something to a friend if they shame another person for their sexual history.
- ☐ It means challenging anti-choice comments from family members, and friends.
- ☐ It means calling on your elected officials to make reproductive rights a priority.
- ☐ It means saying something in a bar when a man struggles to understand why a person shouldn't have to pay for birth control.
- ☐ It means saying something to a friend who makes a sexist comment.

**It gets easier to call bullshit if you can get your pro-choice friends to join in, especially the passively pro-choice MEN in your life.**



## Step 8

# GET INVOLVED.

This is a starter guide, not a step-by-step manual. Below are some immediate actions you can take to become a better ally and support gender equity:

### Top five things you can do now

[Check out this short video from NowThis featuring Men4Choice](#)

### Donate to your local abortion fund

[Visit the National Network of Abortion Funds to find a fund near you.](#)

### Step up your knowledge further

To learn more about the issue, and support other organizations in the reproductive freedom movement, visit the Resources page at [Men4Choice.org](#)

### Share This Toolkit, Support Men4Choice, And Vote

- ☐ [Share](#) Share this Toolkit via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- ☐ [Share](#) this Toolkit via email
- ☐ [Vote](#) only for candidates who are 100% pro-choice.
- ☐ [Donate](#) to Men4Choice and support our work.

### Make sure your friends and loved ones know how to access an abortion.

#### Here are some resources:

- ☐ [INeedAnA.org](#) for clinics and pills by mail, in all states
- ☐ [PlanCPills.org](#) a comprehensive directory to pills by mail and safe self-managed use
- ☐ [MAHotline.org](#) for medical support
- ☐ [ReproLegalHelpline.org](#) for legal support
- ☐ [ReproCare.com](#) for peer-based and practical support
- ☐ [National Network of Abortion Funds](#) or [Abortion Freedom Fund](#) for help funding an abortion

# JOIN US.

KNOW WHY YOU  
SUPPORT EVERYONE'S  
REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM,  
AND BE READY TO JOIN THE  
CONVERSATION.

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for questions, comments,  
or to connect.