

Theory of Change

Care Net works to advance a Pro Abundant Life mission and vision of advocating for life, marriage, fatherhood, family, the gospel, and discipleship. We accomplish this through our 4 Key Strategies: (i) Support and grow a team of effective Pregnancy Decision Line (PDL) coaches; (ii) Support and grow a network of effective pregnancy center affiliates; (iii) Equip the Church to reach those considering abortion; and (iv) Equip individuals to carry out their pro abundant life beliefs. We use this 4-prong strategy because of the following underlying nine assumptions that define the way we view the world and hence constitute the Care Net theory of change.

1) Pro Abundant Life, not just pro-life

The Biblical narrative calls on Christians to respond to abortion more holistically than just saving babies from abortion, as God honoring as this is. Christians are called to ensure that parents, and their born and unborn children, can experience the abundant life that Christ wants for us (John 10:10). We are called to support bios (biological life) and zoe (spiritual life).

Therefore, Care Net's services are not just focused on saving babies from abortion, but providing parenting support, engaging men and fathers, encouraging marriage, sharing the gospel (evangelism), and connecting people to the Church for ongoing discipleship. Accordingly, all the services we provide are focused on strengthening two Pro Abundant Life "pillars": (i) God's design for family, and (ii) God's call to discipleship.

2) Compassionate care, not compassionate advocacy

When a woman or man faces an abortion decision, they have an unmet need for compassionate care, not an argument to delegalize abortion. Care Net seeks to go to the heart of the matter, in the moment, and "be there" for the parent considering abortion. There is a role and a need for "compassionate advocacy" – advocating for political candidates and laws that will challenge the legality of abortion. But Care Net's mission is to minister to the women and men considering abortion who need practical help that is independent of what is happening legally or politically on the abortion issue. We believe that attitudes and beliefs should be changed so that abortion is unthinkable, even if it is legal.

Moreover, providing compassionate care is critical because as advocacy efforts achieve success -- making abortion harder to access -- care providers need to be prepared to receive people who would otherwise seek out abortions but who now need realistic alternatives and support. Such care will allow us to avoid the mistakes that movements like the Abolitionist Movement made, where the concerted legal effort was not coupled with a care component to love and empower former slaves. Therefore, too many black Americans after slavery did not thrive as God intended.

3) Transformation through evangelism and discipleship, not just “transactions”

Care Net believes it must transform people’s hearts and minds around the issue of abortion, not just save their unborn children from abortion. This is a distinctly Christian viewpoint. Unlike a retail establishment, which operates on a transactional basis, we do not want “repeat customers” who, as well as their children, are coming back to us with new unplanned pregnancies where abortion needs to be averted again and again. As followers of Christ, we model his ministry approach, which was “come as you are but don’t stay as you came.” People must leave us transformed so that they do not return to the culture that led to their unplanned pregnancy lacking new tools to make different choices.

To achieve this transformational approach, we must focus on sharing the gospel, encouraging the formation of strong married, two-parent families, and connecting clients to the Church for ongoing discipleship. “Talking them down” from abortion is necessary, but not sufficient.

4) The unique role of the Church

The Church is the seat of discipleship. Long-term discipleship is a key pillar of our Pro Abundant Life approach to ending abortion, building strong families, and advancing the Kingdom of God. Thus, the Church is irreplaceable if Care Net is to accomplish its vision and mission.

As a result, Care Net provides resources and training, through our Making Life Disciples ministry, to churches so they can provide compassion, hope, and help to women and men considering abortion, and so that they can create meaningful relationships with their local pregnancy centers. Then, clients can take advantage of the unique services that both settings can provide.

5) Compassion, hope, and help changes minds and hearts

When women and men considering abortion receive compassionate care, they are less likely to choose abortion. Often, abortion can be averted if those considering it encounter caring individuals who can provide them with reliable information about realistic alternatives to abortion, along with access to educational and material support to bolster their decision to bring their unborn child to term.

As a result, Care Net provides a continuum of care across three major strategic areas: a network of life-affirming pregnancy center affiliates; a national hotline; and a network of life-affirming churches.

6) Continuum of care

Care Net believes that people are better served, and the kind of transformation we seek is more likely to occur, within a “continuum of care.” For Care Net to be a transformational ministry (rather than a transactional “business”), we need to transform people. We don’t want repeat customers calling into Pregnancy Decision Line (PDL) or visiting a pregnancy center. We need to be able to move them toward deeper levels of support, so they can get the “life support” they

need to undergird their life decision. A continuum of care is also important because people want and need services in different places for different reasons. For example, since abortion is a deeply private issue, many people may not want to meet face-to-face with a stranger, so the anonymity of the PDL is critical.

This means we provide services in different settings for people in varying situations. PDL provides immediate, anonymous, “emergency” care. Pregnancy centers provide face-to-face, medium-term care (material support, parenting education, etc.), with referrals to other local resources. The Church provides “life support” and long-term discipleship around key issues, such as marriage, so they make better choices in the future.

7) Training is key

A high level of professionalism is necessary for compassionate care to be effective. Just having a “good heart” and “wanting to help” are not sufficient. Compassionate care calls for well-trained specialists, who can handle difficult and complex situations with grace and skill. Care Net dares not see a life lost due to ineffective service provision, so high quality training is essential.

Therefore, Care Net provides state-of-the-art training and resources to all our ministry partners to ensure they are meeting the ever-increasing standards the public expects from a professional outfit providing medical and educational services. The better our training and resources, the more effective our ministry partners are, and therefore the more abortions prevented, families strengthened, and gospel presentations made.

8) Serving men is critical

Our research shows that women consider the father of their unborn child to be the most important influencer on their abortion decision. Moreover, the Biblical narrative of Christ’s birth demonstrates that God has a model for how children are ideally to be brought into the world – with a married mother and father who love each other, love their child, and love God. Of note, 86% of women who have abortions are unmarried. Accordingly, in order to holistically approach our work, we must serve men with the same enthusiasm and professionalism with which we serve women. And we must not simply serve men as a “means to an end” of serving women better. We must treat men as “ends,” in and of themselves; individuals made in God’s image who have a calling to be fathers and husbands that we can help them answer.

As a result, Care Net provides materials and support designed to help our pregnancy center affiliates, hotline coaches, and church partners serve men more effectively.

9) Public engagement makes a difference

There are millions of passionate pro-life people in the United States, but they are not given many ways in which to carry out their pro-life beliefs aside from

political activism (voting, petitions, marches, etc.). We believe that by getting individuals, and not just organizations, to take up Pro Abundant Life ministry, we dramatically increase the number of “points of compassion” available to those considering abortion, thus saving more babies from abortion and introducing more people to the gospel and to God’s design for the family.

Care Net endeavors to help people turn their pro-life passion into Pro Abundant Life action by providing them with practical tools they can use to effectively defend their pro-life beliefs in the public square, to understand the importance of being Pro Abundant Life, to explore how they can get their church involved in abortion-prevention ministry, and to personally minister to women and men considering abortion.