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*and then genitally mutilated by two men in Nairobi. In addition to dealing with the trauma of this experience, the rape had left her pregnant. Too ashamed to tell anyone about the rape, Rosemary went to her sister for advice on how to deal with the pregnancy. Her sister brought her to a private clinic where she could procure a safe abortion. Rosemary told no one but her sister about this experience.*

## Rosemary's Story: Living with Stigma

**Abortion is a highly stigmatized procedure in Kenya. A woman who procures an abortion, whether safe or unsafe, legal or illegal, risks community and family condemnation.<sup>447</sup> Women who have abortions go to great lengths—even risking their lives and health—not to be discovered by family, friends, or neighbors. Women often fear the potential stigma and shame associated with the procedure more than the possibility of arrest and imprisonment. Rosemary's story illustrates the nature and impact of this type of stigma.**

Rosemary, a young woman, was brutally raped and then genitally mutilated by two men in Nairobi. In addition to leaving Rosemary severely traumatized, the rape also left her pregnant. Too ashamed to tell anyone about the rape, Rosemary went to her sister for advice on how to deal with the pregnancy. Her sister brought her to a private clinic to procure a safe abortion. Rosemary told no one but her sister about this experience.

According to her trauma counselor, Rosemary's sister then told everyone—her family and community—that Rosemary had obtained an abortion. Now, said the lawyer investigating her case, “she has no support. [Instead, she's suffered] lots of insults. [From] her mom included.”<sup>448</sup> Her trauma counselor said that Rosemary is particularly upset by her mother's reaction: “She wants our support and her mother's support. Her mother has rejected her.”<sup>449</sup> Rosemary has still not told anyone in her family about the rape that led to the unwanted pregnancy.<sup>450</sup>

The shame and disgrace that Rosemary is made to feel by her family and community has severely affected her quality of life. According to her trauma counselor, she “started feeling like everyone was talking about her and started having social phobia. She can't go out. She leaves the house early in the morning [for her counseling session] and comes home very late so no one will see her.”<sup>451</sup> Rosemary is currently suicidal; her trauma counselor and lawyer are deeply concerned about her well-being and safety.