

ABORTION

SEASON 2



SHIFT

WITH P. S. BLOSSOM

Narrative Change SHIFT with P.S. Blossom

The US has a complex history with race, reproduction, and class, which leads to negative health outcomes for women and other birthing people of color. Dominant public narratives surrounding these health outcomes do not always reflect the perspectives, voices, or lived experiences of women and other birthing people of color. The P.S. Blossom podcast explores issues at the intersections of reproductive justice and capital with a specific focus on the autonomy of women and other birthing people of color.

SHIFT with P.S. Blossom is a guide that accompanies each topic covered in the P.S. Blossom podcast. It provides a reproductive justice approach to controversial conversations. We encourage readers to actively participate in SHIFT-ing the Narrative by sharing personal stories and lived experiences in their communities.

Abortion

An abortion is a procedure used to end a pregnancy. Abortions are common, safe and essential healthcare. There are two types of abortions: medication abortion and procedural abortion. A medication abortion occurs when medications, including mifepristone and misoprostol, or misoprostol alone are taken in early pregnancy. Medication abortion can safely occur outside of the formal health care system, as with self-managed medication abortion or within the formal healthcare system. A procedural abortion is a procedure done with medical instrumentation, regardless of the setting. Procedural abortions should be performed by a trained provider under sanitary conditions. Self managed abortion is when a pregnant person leads, in part or entirely, their abortion process, with or without support from health care providers. Self-managing a medication abortion is simple, safe, and highly effective when a person has access to high quality medication and accurate information. According to the World Health Organization, people can self manage their own abortion safely without the supervision of healthcare providers up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

“Any reason is a good enough reason to access abortion.”

—Erika Seth Davies

NARRATIVES AROUND ABORTION

Sometimes, it is difficult to identify harmful dominant narratives since they are deeply rooted in our culture. By identifying harmful dominant narratives, we can positively SHIFT social structures and behaviors.

Here are some examples of **harmful dominant narratives** around abortion:

- “Abortion is morally wrong and socially unacceptable.”
- “Abortion makes you a murderer, and that is a sin.”
- “You can’t have a baby after you’ve had an abortion.”

Here are examples of healthier **intersectional counter narratives** that can help SHIFT harmful dominant narratives:

- Abortion is an essential component of health care.
- Laws and policies that prevent access to abortion do not reduce the rate of abortion. Instead, they often increase the number of unsafe abortions that occur
- Pregnant people should have the right to decide the outcome of their own pregnancy
- Safe abortions are safer than childbirth.

“We recognize that everyone has the right to live autonomously as their authentic self. We want everyone to know they deserve to have the family they want, when and how they want.”

—Nikia Grayson



Dr. Melissa Madera *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 14+15

[Dr. Melissa Madera](#), originally from Washington Heights, New York, Dr. Melissa Madera (a.k.a. [The Abortion Diarist](#)) is a queer, first-generation Dominican-American, and the Jill of all trades at [The Abortion Diary](#), the only audio archive of abortion stories. Melissa created The Abortion Diary in the summer of 2013. Her own abortion story and the deep impact sharing it (13 years later) had on her, her family, friends, and complete strangers inspired her to create The Abortion Diary. She is also the former Director of Research and Partnerships at [Choix](#), a telehealth clinic founded by experienced family planning clinicians with a vision of using technology to expand access to abortion care. She is a researcher on [Project SANA](#) (Self-managed Abortion Needs Assessment), an interdisciplinary research group at The University of Texas at Austin

that researches self-managed abortion in the United States. She also works as a special projects consultant at Plan C Pills. An expert on abortion story-sharing and listening, she works to center the voices of people who have had abortions and end abortion stigma in all facets of her life.

“ **Technology is a double-edged sword. We have technology that allows us to put all this information online, and people are able to [access]. We have telehealth because we have technology, but there is too much information online that is not helpful.** ”

“ **The decisions we make are so that we can have the lives that we want to have and offer our future children (if we have any) the life that we want to be able to provide them. We should be affirmed in that.** ”



Dr. Nikia Grayson *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 14+15

[Dr. Nikia Grayson](#), DNP, MSN, MPH, MA, CNM, FNP-C, is a Reproductive Justice informed public health activist, anthropologist, and family nurse-midwife who has devoted her life to serving and empowering people in underserved communities. [Nikia](#) is the Chief Clinical Officer at [CHOICES](#) Memphis Center for Reproductive Health, where they have opened the first non-profit comprehensive reproductive health care center in the country and the first birth center in the city. She is passionate about being a disruptor to the current healthcare system and creating new models of care that integrate midwifery and center Black and brown communities. Nikia has more than 15 years of experience working in public health and nursing, with her more recent work focusing on reproductive rights and justice, birth justice, and midwifery. She works daily to ensure all persons have the rights and means to make decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

ON THE EPISODES

In “[Increasing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Compassionate Abortion Care \(Part 1\)](#)” and [Part 2](#), we are joined by reproductive-justice-informed midwife Dr. Nikia Grayson and Dr. Melissa Madera (a.k.a. The Abortion Diarist). They discuss the crucial importance of access to quality abortion care for all people, regardless of age, race, or class. They walk us through the state of abortion access in the US, the progress that needs to be made, and what they are doing to help people access the sexual and reproductive healthcare they need. We also take a look at the importance of creating life-affirming communities for those who have had abortions, financial aid or practical support resources that should be available to patients both pre- and post-procedure, how we can best support young people seeking abortions, and more.

“ What brought me to this work was recognizing that our health care system is broken and that we needed some disrupters to the present model of care that is extremely harmful to Black and Brown people. ”



“ **Healing and grief, they're both very long journeys.** ”

“ **The best advice someone gave to me was to be kind to yourself. Make the decision with your partner. Make a decision together, and then forgive yourself for that decision.** ”

Dr. Alice Zheng *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 16

[Dr. Alice Zheng](#) has been a women's health enthusiast throughout her career, spanning global health, clinical medicine, and the private sector. She is a Principal at [RH Capital](#), a [Rhia Ventures](#) fund, leading investments in innovative women's health companies across the life sciences, digital health, and consumer health. Dr. Zheng was previously a women's health practice leader and management consultant at McKinsey & Company, where she served biopharma, diagnostics, global public health, and private equity clients across R&D and commercial strategy topics. Her passion earlier in her career for improving lives for the underserved led her to work in reproductive health and family planning in East Africa and Asia with EngenderHealth, Marie Stopes International, and other nonprofits. As a clinician, she focused on women's health globally and published articles examining healthcare in low-income countries. Dr. Zheng holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and an MD and MPH from the University of Michigan, where she was a Dean's

Merit Scholar. She is a frequent speaker on FemTech and women's health innovation and holds advising and mentoring roles with multiple women's health accelerators and forums. She has also been a patient in many women's health areas, including infertility, termination, and pregnancy complications.

ON THE EPISODE

In “[Our Family's Fabric: The Patient Perspective](#),” Dr. Alice Zheng at RH Capital speaks about her unique perspective on abortion, drawn from her experience personally and as a clinician. She shares her late-stage abortion experience (close to 24 weeks) after discovering her child had congenital birth defects.

“ **Going through the procedure, healing from there, was still incredibly difficult. But we felt at peace, and we felt like we could think about the future and how to move forward.** ”



“ Having the choice and making the choice made me a better parent. ”

“ You don't have to have a traumatic, devastating moment in your life to decide, 'I'm not ready to have a child.' That framing seems so harmful to me because it's simply a choice. You don't have to have some horrific situation driving you to this. ”

Erica Seth Davies *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 17

[Erika Seth Davies](#) is the CEO of [Rhia Ventures](#), which aims to transform the U.S. market for sexual, reproductive, and maternal health into a vibrant and equitable one through its impact investing, ecosystem building, corporate engagement, and narrative change work. She is a seasoned leader with over 20 years of experience in development and fundraising, program design, collaboration and partnership management, and racial equity advocacy. Erika is the Founder of [The Racial Equity Asset Lab](#) (The REAL), a venture that centers racial equity in impact investing and works to shift capital to address the persistent racial wealth gap. She previously served as Vice President of External Affairs at [ABFE](#) (Association of Black Foundation Executives), where she designed the [SMART Investing Initiative](#), a field-wide effort to encourage foundations to incorporate a racial equity lens in endowment management practices through increased access for racially diverse- and women-owned investment management firms. Erika is a Social Entrepreneur in Residence with Common Future and a former Fellow of Equitable Access to Capital Markets in the Fair Finance portfolio of the [Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation](#) at Georgetown University. She was a member of the inaugural class of the ABFE Connecting Leaders Fellowship program, a recipient of the NYU Wagner

School of Public Service IGNITE Fellowship for Women of Color in the Social Sector, and a member of the class of 2017 for Executive Leadership Institute of CFLeads. Erika most recently was the Associate Director of Philanthropy at [McDonogh School](#) and previously served as the Chief of Staff of the [Baltimore Community Foundation](#). She enjoys volunteering and serves as a member of the boards of Impact Hub Baltimore and Baltimore Algebra Project. Additional positions and activities include serving on the Investment Committee for the [Nathan Cummings Foundation](#), the Impact Investing Committee of the [Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation](#), [Matter Unlimited's](#) Advisory Board, and the [Abortion and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Cohort](#) of [Women Leaders for the World](#). Her most significant role is that of mother to Ethan and Evelyn.

ON THE EPISODE

In “[Any Reason Is a Good Enough Reason to Access Abortion](#),” we speak with Erika Seth Davies at Rhia Ventures about her abortion story and how having reproductive rights and access to abortion care set the stage for her (and her future children's) life. She opens up about her feelings about her decision and explains how her choice ultimately made her a better parent. Erika's work has always been focused on racial justice, which extends to reproductive justice for black women in particular.

Reflection Questions

Have you experienced an abortion?

Are you willing to share a personal abortion story?

What can you say/do to properly support a person who is considering an abortion?

What are some of the things people experience physically or mentally before, during and after an abortion?

How does paid leave for all assist people who have had an abortion?

What role does parental consent play in a minor's ability to access abortion care?

What does the emotional journey look like after an abortion? How can one support themselves throughout the entire process?

How did you feel when you heard about the turning of Roe vs. Wade?

How can you stand against the harmful dominant narratives around the care needed during a medical or procedural abortion?

Who has the narrative of abortion been centered around?

Guest Recommendations Topic

Increasing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Compassionate Abortion Care with Dr. Melissa Madera and Dr. Nikia Grayson (Part 1)

- [Listen to the episode!](#)
- [Full episode transcript](#)
- [Project SANA](#)
- [Choix Clinic](#)
- [The Abortion Diary](#)
- [The Abortion Diary Podcast](#)

Increasing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Compassionate Abortion Care with Dr. Nikia Grayson and Dr. Melissa Madera (Part 2)

- [Listen to the episode here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [AidAccess](#)
- [Plan C](#)
- [National Network of Abortion Funds](#)
- [ARC Southeast](#)
- [Chicago Abortion Fund](#)
- [SisterReach](#)
- [Midwest Access Coalition](#)
- [Miscarriage and Abortion Hotline](#)
- [Medicaid Health Plans of America](#)
- [Mamatoto Village](#)
- [Chicago Birthworks Collective](#)
- [Jackson Safer Childbirth Experience](#)
- [National Birth Equity Collaborative](#)

Our Family's Fabric: The Patient Perspective with Dr. Alice Zheng

- [Listen to the episode here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [RH Capital](#)
- [Ending a Wanted Pregnancy](#)
- [Dr. Pascale Vermont](#)
- [Surviving the Unimaginable by Pascale Vermont, Ph.D.](#)
- [The Vagina Monologues by Eve Ensler](#)

Any Reason Is a Good Enough Reason to Access Abortion with Erika Seth Davies

- [Listen to the episode here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [Rhia Ventures](#)

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X: [@drmelissamadera](#)

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Dr. Alice Zheng

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Erika Seth Davies

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Relevant Social and Platform Links

Rhia Ventures is a social impact organization with a mission to advance reproductive and maternal health equity by intentionally leveraging capital to center the needs, experiences, and perspectives of historically marginalized people in decision-making.

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Check out the P.S. Blossom Podcast on [Amazon Music](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)!

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