

PHYSICAL/EMOTIONAL/SEXUAL ABUSE

Women's group

This is a Christ-centered group for women in recovery from past physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse. One of the keys to success in this recovery program is the coming together of people with similar backgrounds who also have common goals and objectives. Our common background is a history of abuse and our goal is to enter into or maintain recovery. Recovery for us is a two-fold issue. We need healing from the traumas done to us at sometime in our past; we also need healing from the influence these past experiences continue to have on our present lives. For the newcomer the rewritten 12 Steps can be a place to recognize and identify core issues resulting from past abuse. The newcomer can receive validation, understanding and knowledge of appropriate action to take by practicing the Steps among Christian women.

For the "old-timers", those women with the same issues but who have already begun the road to recovery, this group can provide a place in which to continue their recovery process.

One of our objectives is to provide a supportive, safe environment. The leader alone cannot assure that, it will have to be a group effort. We respect and acknowledge each woman's right to be where she needs to be on her own road to recovery. We acknowledge the sensitivity we need to have for each member of this group. Therefore we have provided a list of reminders that are not meant to offend but hopefully ensure the safety and anonymity of each woman present. "What you hear, let it stay here."

As with any other Christ-centered recovery group we believe that, by our participation through active listening, sharing and application of the Steps to our lives, the Holy Spirit will guide us to further understanding, healing and wholeness.

We are not here to lecture, preach, fix or provide therapy. We are here to tell our story. We come together to share in our weakness, for it is in our weakness that we gain strength. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone: Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." (NIV)

There are other advantages for coming together as a group. One is accountability. We can look to others to honestly let us know how we are doing in our recovery. Old-timers or sponsors can help us see where we may be stuck or provide us with a safe sounding board so that we can hear ourselves.

Another advantage is the sharing of encouragement. The center of the word encouragement is courage. Sometimes we need others around us who have been there to give us courage to be where we are or to take action.

Developing a support system is integral to a this program. We find we are not alone. Others share similar stories. Support can be expanded to include phone calls with other willing members of the group. Support could also include seeking out a sponsor for added encouragement.

An important advantage is the prayer support. We can together in prayer against Satan's strongholds keeping us from maturing as Christians or keeping us from recovery.

When we come together we share spiritual gifts.

One last advantage is that together we multiply the witness of Christ. We're not an accident. We reflect Christ's grace and love as we move through recovery.

12 STEPS FOR PHYSICAL/EMOTIONAL/SEXUAL ABUSE

STEP ONE - We admit we are powerless over the past and as a result our lives have become unmanageable.

STEP TWO - Believe God can restore us to wholeness, and realize this power can always be trusted to bring healing and wholeness in our lives.

STEP THREE - Make a decision to turn our will and our lives to the care of God, realizing we have not always understood His unconditional love. Choose to believe He does love us, is worthy of trust, and will help us to understand Him as we seek His truth.

STEP FOUR - Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, realizing all wrongs can be forgiven. Renounce the lie that the abuse was our fault.

STEP FIVE - Admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of the wrongs in our lives. This will include those acts perpetrated against me as well as those wrongs I perpetrated against others.

STEP SIX - By accepting God's cleansing, we can renounce our shame. Now we are ready to have God remove all these character distortions and defects.

STEP SEVEN - Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings, including our guilt. We release our fear and submit to Him.

STEP EIGHT - Make a list of all persons who have harmed us and become willing to seek God's help in forgiving our perpetrators, as well as forgiving ourselves. Realize we've also harmed others and become willing to make amends to them.

STEP NINE - Extend forgiveness to ourselves and to others who have perpetrated against us, realizing this is an attitude of the heart, not always confrontation. Make direct amends, asking forgiveness from those people we have harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.

STEP TEN - Continue to take personal inventory as new memories and issues surface. We continue to renounce our shame and guilt, but when we are wrong promptly admit it.

STEP ELEVEN - Continue to seek God through prayer and meditation to improve our understanding of His character. Praying for knowledge of His truth in our lives, His will for us, and for the power to carry that out.

STEP TWELVE - Having a spiritual awakening as we accept God's love and healing through these steps, we try to carry His message of hope to others. Practice these principles as new memories and issues surface claiming God's promise of restoration and wholeness.