

MaleSurvivor: National Organization against Male Sexual Victimization

email: MaleSurvivor@MaleSurvivor.org

web: www.malesurvivor.org

MEMO

To: Therapists of Registered Participants for MaleSurvivor Weekend of Recovery

From: Jim Struve, LCSW, Co-Chairperson, MaleSurvivor Weekends of Recovery

Re: Support for participation of your client in the Advanced Weekend of Recovery

The MaleSurvivor Advanced Weekend of Recovery is approaching soon, and your client (or potentially a new client who will see you after the weekend) has registered for the weekend. At this time, we are asking for your help and support of your client's participation in the weekend. This weekend is different than our other weekends, in that it is open to male survivors and their spouses/partners/significant others.

This Advanced Weekend of Recovery will focus on providing participants with the skills to balance and integrate being both loving and powerful in relationships. Trauma can set up survivors of sexual abuse to be trapped in responding in relationships from a submissive or aggressive stance. Power in relationships generally gets a bad reputation; however, love without power is ineffective, and power without love is manipulative. The skills of embodying both love and power will increase participants' ability to handle conflicts, be more self-directed, and feel safer to be more open in relationships.

Goals of the Advanced Weekend on Relationship Building:

1. Increasing awareness, understanding, and compassion regarding the impact of abuse on relationships and intimacy;
2. Learning practical skills for connecting with your own inner experience, being assertive during interpersonal conflict, developing emotional and sexual intimacy, and working together with others to further your healing; &
3. Providing partners of male survivors with additional support and skills to increase their own self-care and ability to experience intimacy in their relationships.

If you would like to view our site which more fully describes the weekend, you can visit it at <http://malesurvivor.org/weekends-of-recovery.html>

For the facilitator team at MaleSurvivor, safety is our number one priority throughout the weekend. One way we work toward this is to have a 1:3 staff to participant ratio. Staff members are licensed mental health professionals, with a minimum of 5 years experience working with male survivors. Many of our staff have 15 or more years of experience. Small groups are used throughout the weekend, and are kept small (no more than 7 men or women in a group), and are always facilitated by two therapists experienced in providing group therapy. Another way we work toward this goal is by having one facilitator interview each registrant before the weekend to learn about their recovery,

what they have done so far, what their expectations are, kinds of treatment they are currently pursuing, and what they are aware of for themselves in terms of needs for safety.

While the weekend itself is not an alternative to psychotherapy, we have found many participants bring what they learn at the weekend back home to utilize in their personal therapy and recovery work. The weekend is highly experiential: we do a lot of personal sharing. In addition, in this advanced weekend, we will be using self defense and body empowerment, art work, improvisational movement, and gestalt sculpting, cognitive behavioral work, meditations and visualizations to help participants access their feelings and take steps toward reclaiming their bodies, their feelings, and their lives.

In our registration materials, we recommend all participants are currently seeing a mental health professional, or have an appointment to see someone upon their return from the weekend. If the person is in therapy, we recommend they discuss their planned participation with the therapist to get as much feedback and suggestions for how they can benefit from the weekend of recovery while keeping themselves as safe as they need to be.

As an additional way to help protect all of the participants' safety, we are asking any therapist who is working with a survivor or their partner to complete the form below which indicates you have discussed the weekend with your client, you feel comfortable supporting their participation, and you are willing to provide follow-up with them following the weekend. Specific areas of concern for us which could seriously change your willingness to support their participation could include: 1) active suicidal ideation and plan; 2) active chemical dependency with no ability to remain sober; 3) inability to control perpetrating behaviors, such as an inability to respect other people's physical and sexual boundaries; or 4) unstable psychotropic drug regimen. It is important for your client to be able to ask for help, and we will do our best to remove as many barriers as we can so the asking is as comfortable as possible.

Being mindful of HIPAA regulations, and in respect for the privacy of our participants, we are not asking you to disclose any clinical information about your client, except any information which your client has agreed for you to release to us for the purpose of helping to facilitate as positive an experience for them at the weekend. Safety concerns are our most important concern.

Please review the form below and return it to me by July 22, 2017. You can fax it to me at 844-829-2927. You can also email it to me as an attachment or copy it to the text of email, to jimstruve@mac.com or mail it to Male Survivor Weekend of Recovery, 1399 South 700 East, Salt Lake City, UT. 84105. If you have any questions or reservations, I would be happy to talk with you personally as well, at 801-953-4928.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to review this letter and complete the form below, to assist us in helping your client benefit from the weekend.