



MEMO

To: Therapists of Registered Participants for MaleSurvivor Weekend of Recovery Level I
From: Jim Struve, LCSW, Managers, MaleSurvivor Weekends of Recovery
Re: Support for participation of your client

The MaleSurvivor 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.

You can find more information describing the Weekend of Recovery by visiting our web site at <http://www.malesurvivor.org/weekends-of-recovery.html>. The goals for the weekend are summarized below**.

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 1:3.5 staff to participant ratio. Staff members are licensed mental health professionals, each with many years of individual and group clinical experience, including many with more than 25 years of providing psychotherapy with male survivors.

Our weekend retreats have been designed to promote safety. One of the ways 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. We also will screen during the interview for alcohol and chemical dependency and abuse, and the presence of active suicidality. We then involve the men in the process of establishing our safety guidelines for the weekend during one of the initial sessions of the retreat. In addition, we include small group sessions throughout the weekend and we keep these groups small (no more than 7-8 men in a group).

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. Throughout the weekend, we use a variety of experiential modalities to help participants access their feelings and take steps toward reclaiming their bodies, their feelings, and their lives: mindfulness skills, art work, improvisational movement, gestalt sculpting, cognitive behavioral work, and meditation. In addition, participants are each provided 10 - 15 minutes in a very structured process during small group time to tell whatever important details of their abuse history they feel comfortable sharing.

In our registration materials, we recommend all participants are currently seeing a mental health professional, or have an appointment to see someone upon their

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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.

An additional way we help protect the safety of participants is by requesting that any therapist who is working with a survivor to complete the form below. This form allows you to confirm that you have discussed with your client his decision to attend an upcoming Weekend of Recovery. We ask that you also confirm that you feel comfortable supporting your client's participation in this retreat and that you are willing to provide follow-up with him following the weekend. Specific areas of concern for us which could seriously change your willingness to support your client's participation could include: 1) active suicidal ideation and plan; 2) active alcohol or chemical dependency or abuse with no ability to remain sober during the weekend and for 72 hours (from alcohol and/or non-prescribed drugs or street drugs) prior to the weekend; or being in active withdrawal at the time of the weekend; 3) inability to control offending 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 maximize his comfort to reach out to facilitators during the weekend.

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 that 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 as is possible. We would welcome a brief statement about what issues are most prominent for your client at this time, but this is strictly optional. Safety concerns are our most important concern.

We request that you review the form included with this letter and please return it to Jim Struve *no later than two weeks prior to the start of the weekend*. You can fax it to him at 844-829-2927. You can also e-mail it to him as an attachment or copy to the text of email, to jimstruve@mac.com , or mail it to 1399 South &00 East, Suite 2, Salt Lake City, UT 84105. If you have any questions or reservations, either of us as Co-Chairs would be happy to talk with you personally as well. Howard can be reached at 801-953-4928.

The Consent Form that each participant signs at the beginning of the weekend clarifies that our facilitator relationship with them ends at the conclusion of the weekend. Therefore, it is our policy that we recommend your client process his weekend experience with you during your post-weekend sessions with him

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



Jim Struve, LCSW
Manager, MaleSurvivor Weekends of Recovery

**The goals for the weekend of recovery are:

- 1) To provide an opportunity to experience a safe environment in which participants can discover they are no longer alone in their recovery;
- 2) To provide an opportunity to co-create and experience safety with other survivors as they explore further aspects of their healing journey;
- 3) To provide an opportunity where survivors can share their inner pain, strength and hope with others who have been abused;
- 4) To provide an opportunity for survivors to give a voice to their experiences as a survivor;
- 5) To provide a safe way for participants to share the story of their abuse with others who will understand and offer support;
- 6) To provide a safe place for participants to experiment with letting go, opening up and being vulnerable, and practice asking for the support they need;
- 7) To provide an opportunity for participants to explore safe ways of going beyond their comfort zones, and to find ways to get beyond their blocks to move beyond their abuse to experience a greater sense of freedom in their minds, bodies, and spirits; and
- 8) To provide a safe place where participants can experience a sense of community, brotherhood and joy.