

# Facts and Questions

## ***Why should a male survivor go to these groups?***

Abusers depend on secrecy and fear. They manipulate children into coping with the abuse alone. Survivors tend to use the same coping strategies they learned as children and continue to keep the secret of their abuse hidden behind submission, anger, aggression, isolation, unhealthy relationships, drug and alcohol abuse.

The groups allow the men to tell their own stories while providing support to others as they tell their stories. These groups allow survivors to release the secret and learn healthier coping strategies in a confidential, supportive and safe environment. Men are given the opportunity to realize they are not alone, they are not to blame and they can learn to do more than just get by day to day.

## ***What is involved in joining a survivors group?***

If you're interested in joining a group, first, you'll need to go through an Intake Interview. This essential step gives you a chance to meet with one of the group leaders and to have any questions/concerns you have about the group answered. The group facilitator will also ask you a lot of questions about yourself and some of the details surrounding the sexual abuse. Also, how you've been coping since the abuse stopped is very important information.

We need to know so much about you because some of the stories or discussions may trigger some abuse memories or emotions. We need to know you will be able to deal with the distress and emotional stress without harming yourself or anyone else.

The discussion you have with the group leader is an important first step in deciding whether you're ready for the group. If you're not ready for the group, the leader will share this information with you. Ideally, this is something the two of you will decide together. If you are ready for group, you're given the day/time of the next group.

## ***Should I be worried about my safety coming to a group?***

No, the group is a safe, supportive and confidential place to discuss your childhood sexual abuse experience. The group leaders are professionals familiar with running groups and know how to facilitate the group so that it remains a safe place for everyone. However, it can be emotionally stressful to listen to other people's stories. Sometimes, this can act as an emotional trigger for group members. Within the first few weeks of the group, all group members will discuss safety plans and coping strategies so that if, and when, they have strong emotional reactions to the group materials, they know what to do to stay healthy and safe.

## ***Are there any safety or legal issues I should be aware of before coming to group?***

It's important to remember that sexual abuse is a violation of personal and physical boundaries. The process of healing depends on adult survivors' feeling safe within the group. In order to promote safety within the group, all members must agree on a code of conduct for the duration of the group (respectful listening, no touching without explicit permission, etc.)

In addition, it is important for group members to realize that all group material will be kept confidential within the group. However, if any group member discloses intent to harm either self or another person, the group leaders will not be able to keep this information confidential. **This is the law.**

Also, as this is a group for men who are actively recovering from the impact of childhood sexual abuse, any group member, who discloses that he, as an adult, has sexually abused a child, will be asked to leave the group.

All child welfare reporting requirements will also be respected. **This is the law.**

