



Adult Survivors Of Child Abuse

Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2020

We offer you warm wishes for the holidays, no matter which ones you celebrate.



ASCA Virtual Cafe
Meeting Guidelines



Gratitude:
Mark's journey with
ASCA



Recovery through
writing: By Scott

ASCA Virtual Cafe Meeting Guidelines

The capacity to recover quickly from COVID-19, has led many in person ASCA Support Groups to hold their meetings in the virtual world: more specifically using free online applications such as [zoom](#). Many ASCA Support Groups also feature a social 'meeting after the meeting' time, often called "cafes". Cafes allow Adult Survivors of Child Abuse, to socialize in a more relaxed, personal setting. While cafes are less structured, attendees are encouraged to use "I" statements, and ask each other if they wish to receive feedback, before it is given. Staying clear from giving advice, including clinical or

personal interpretations of each other's behavior or shares, helps everyone feel equal, safe, and supported.

- *Be mindful of using gentle, non-accusatory language*
- *Stay clear from Psychoanalyzing, giving Advice, and Labeling of Others (name calling)*
- *Want to give feedback? Don't relent, without consent*

Gratitude: Mark's Journey with ASCA

From the age of 14 years old, I discovered alcohol. I quickly learned that substances could change the way I felt, and help me forget, or minimize, the trauma that I was suffering in my life. They made my life bearable, enabling me to endure. At the age of 16 I was able to move away from my abusive situation. I felt at the time that the abuse was behind me, and that I could move on with my life. The substance abuse, however, continued to progress becoming an overwhelming influence in my life, interfering with everything I tried to accomplish: personal relationships, work, housing and embroiling me in the criminal justice system.

Through my introduction to recovery support groups, I was able to practice complete abstinence from all substances. Within weeks from the time I got “clean” I began again to experience flashbacks that entailed scenes of some of the abusive incidents I had experienced as a child. These soon became terrifying to me – I felt that I might be going insane. That’s when I reached out to a therapist that specialized in recovery from child abuse.

It was my therapist who told me about ASCA. After several individual sessions he suggested that a safe support group, in conjunction with continuing to see him, could be helpful to me in recovery from my childhood experiences. Let me just say that at that time I was not sure that I could call my experiences “abuse”. It was clear to me that a parent had been sexually inappropriate with me, but I was not sure that it was severe enough to classify as “abuse”. I did have a long history of severe substance abuse, pervasive thoughts of suicide, intrusive memories of “incidents” that occurred during my childhood, and under certain circumstances felt that I was going to die. At the age of 40, I still could not establish an adult relationship with that parent. I did have a long history of severe substance abuse, had pervasive thoughts of suicide, had

intrusive memories of “incidents” that had occurred during my childhood, and under certain circumstances felt that I was going to die. At the age of 40, I still could not establish an adult relationship with that parent.

The first time that I went into an ASCA meeting, I was afraid. I had no idea what to expect. Observation was my primary goal: I needed to know that this group was safe. I remember when people started to share, I could not hold back the tears. People were sharing about experiences and feelings, I had kept long suppressed. I could see that people were learning to live full and productive lives, despite the harsh realities that they had experienced as children.

For the next 4 years I concentrated on this part of my recovery by going to ASCA meetings, becoming a co-facilitator, getting involved in training, and by providing input into developing some ASCA material.

ASCA has helped me change the way that I live in the world. I continue to be clean and sober and the trajectory of my life has changed from jails, institutions, and death, to the richness I experience most days. I am able to look at my part in situations, holding myself accountable. ASCA has enhanced my ability to look at all of my relationships holding others accountable for their actions as well. It has enabled me to free myself from the past: no more emotionally damaging flashbacks, my relationships are better, work life has progressed beyond anything I ever thought possible and I no longer have an overwhelming feeling that I am going to die. My relationships with my family have never been perfect but I have been able to become an autonomous adult because of the hard work I did with my ASCA peers.

I owe a great deal to ASCA, and try to give back what was so freely given to me by being of service to the Morris Center. I could not have attained a life worth living without the ASCA program.

Recovery through writing: By Scott

There seems often as many roads to recovery from a painful childhood, as people who seek to recover. Makes sense. We each have our own fingerprints, and our own psyches. I know people who express themselves through painting. I know those who create music. I know some who listen to music that speaks to them. For some, therapy is the main thing. For some, support groups are the main thing. I know of a guy who built businesses. He went through self-exploration too, but he healed himself largely through work. Of course, many of us use all of that in different measures.

For me, essay writing is key. As a kid, I sometimes wanted to become a journalist; although sadly I was in too much pain for most of my life to ever pull that off professionally. However, I became an investigative journalist for my own life. I started writing essays that told my story. I'd write them and rewrite and rewrite, recovering memories, solving crimes. All the edits, scores of them, all the rereading, helped me to rewire my brain. I got to tell my story. My childhood was one, among other things, where my mind had been shut down by people around me. By writing, I recovered my own mind. It was hard work, but it was so cathartic.

It's not over. I still do it all the time. I'm doing it right now.

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