

Adventist Conference on Family Research & Practice 2016
Working With Survivors
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This session deals with using a small group, specifically as a church-sponsored program, to facilitate healing and integration for survivors of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

Therapeutic Objectives

1. Provide a safe, nonjudgmental environment where disclosure and healing can take place
2. Offer support and bonding with other abuse survivors
3. Help clients identify and own their emotions
4. Help clients come to understand that God truly loves them
5. Help clients to reach a point where they can forgive the perpetrator (note that forgiveness does not equal reconciliation)
6. Help clients to understand and begin to implement appropriate boundaries in their lives

The primary leader should be properly trained and licensed.
Males should not be the primary leaders of groups for females, and vice versa.

You have an obligation to report to proper authorities if a group member is homicidal or suicidal, or if you have good reason to believe child abuse is occurring.

Local resources:

Women's Shelters
Psychologists, Psychiatrists, and Social Workers
Sex Therapist
Social Services
Child Protective Services
Law Enforcement

SUPPORT GROUP FOR FEMALE SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

1. Confidentiality

Everything about this group must remain confidential. That includes who the members are, when and where the group is meeting, and anything disclosed during group meetings.

2. Respect

Each experience is unique. It is important to be respectful of others' experiences, just as you would wish them to respect yours.

3. Attendance

Please make every effort to attend group meetings and do the homework.

Scriptures for Abuse Survivors

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again, and you, o Israel, will be rebuilt." Jeremiah 31:3, 4

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." Isaiah 61:1, 2

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you! Don't be frightened, for I am your God! I strengthen you—yes, I help you—yes, I uphold you with my saving right hand!" Isaiah 41:10

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore me to the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me." Psalm 51:10-12

"This is what the high and exalted One says, the one who rules forever, whose name is holy: 'I dwell in an exalted and holy place, but also with the discouraged and humiliated, in order to cheer up the humiliated and to encourage the discouraged.'" Isaiah 57:15

"Like a shepherd he tends his flock; he gathers up the lambs with his arm; he carries them close to his heart; he leads the ewes along." Isaiah 40:11

"For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6 (NET Bible)

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43: 18, 19 (NIV)

"But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. . . . Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to be repaid, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, so that they may be repaid in full. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to ungrateful and evil people. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." Luke 6:27, 31-36 (NET)

Recap: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again, and you, o Israel, will be rebuilt." Jeremiah 31:3, 4

Devotional Thought for Week 1

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again, and you, o Israel, will be rebuilt.” Jeremiah 31:3, 4

Food for thought:

What would everlasting love look like to you?

Have you seen God’s unfailing kindness in your life?

Activity: Each day during the coming week notice at least two things that show God’s kindness to you. They might be big things or small things. Write them down and be prepared to share one or two things with the group next week. Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Sabbath

Sunday

Monday