



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. - Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter July 2012

"We don't sing because we are happy, we are happy because we sing." - William James

Hi Folks,

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and doing whatever it is that you do to take some time for yourself and those you care for – because you deserve it! All work and no play is not the way to go....trust me, this comes from a still *recovering* and work in progress *work-a-holic*.

Change is hard for so many of us and this has been a long overdue endeavor of mine, to get rid of my identity as a *work-a-holic*; to truly learn how to sit back and "*smell the coffee*"....it has been a challenge, but I am learning and growing in my efforts to erase the old tapes that I grew up with and that have been reinforced by so much of society in how best to tackle the issues of my own trauma, abuse and mental health concerns. So many of us have learned that we needed to stay silent because of the lack of safety and the deep-rooted shame that was never ours to bear, but instead, it was forced down upon us by those who hurt us and reinforced from the huge stigma and discrimination still prevalent in society upon those impacted by trauma, abuse and mental health issues. Our trust has been repeatedly broken and violated so many times...this in turn has had a huge impact upon not only ourselves, but in our relationships with others.

The good news to all of this, there are so many wonderful people and organizations who recognize all of this and have been doing their level best to help create change. And we at the Surviving Spirit take pride in our own efforts to help change the paradigm of silence, shame, and stigma by being a positive role in helping to foster safety and trust.

The Surviving Spirit has long been inclusive to everyone and always will be, but for this issue we would like to address the concerns of *Males and Trauma*. We'd like to share some helpful resources and to open this dialog up, we'll share a recent blog that was written by Dan Griffin. His words and his sharing speak for themselves - it is bold, powerful, eloquent and vulnerable all at the same time.

"Because we cannot just change what men think - we have to change what we think about men." – Dan Griffin

“At the beginning of May I had the opportunity to experience something life changing – and if we who were in attendance that day in Annapolis have our way it will also be world changing. Grandiose, I know. But not unrealistic. For the first time, as far as we know, a small group of male survivors in recovery from various forms of trauma came together from across the country to talk about what is needed to systematically address boys’ and men’s experiences with trauma. We are not only survivors of trauma but we are also leaders in our respective fields and champions for breaking the silence about men’s trauma. The stated purpose of the meeting was to advise the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the federal body that oversees all public funding and provides guidance on best practices for addiction and mental health services, on what is needed to effectively address the issues of males’ trauma, addiction, and mental health and identify some of the next steps to move forward in such an effort. There was another purpose to the meeting, however, that seemed to come from something much bigger and greater than anyone involved in the meeting. That purpose was to unequivocally and irrevocably end the silence about men’s trauma.

Men have been coming together to heal their trauma for decades. Talking to one another in the privacy of their homes. In their cars after a meeting. Joining with each other in mutual support groups. Through men’s organizations. On weekend retreats. But not like this meeting. *We have never demanded that our society and the service systems that seek to support us recognize the pervasiveness of men’s trauma and create funding streams and services that help us to truly heal.* We have not demanded a model for seeing and treating men’s trauma that is truly created for men by men with men and our experiences in mind. The truth is we have talked around men’s trauma for years.

As I sat in the meeting on the first day I looked around at the men and there were only ten of us but we came from all walks of life – gay and heterosexual; African American, Latino, and Caucasian; old and young; survivors of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, chronic neglect, witness to horrific violence, abuse at the hands of service providers, racial violence, and many other experiences; husbands, fathers, grandfathers, and brothers; upper class, middle class, and working class. It was quite obvious that trauma is an equal opportunity destroyer. We are a group that is not likely to have come together under any other circumstance. We were there in solidarity with one another speaking our truths with great respect and admiration for one another! We are far from really dealing with men’s trauma at the level it needs to be dealt with. *So many men are walking around with undiagnosed trauma and suffering greatly. Many of them hurting others because they do not know what to do with their pain.* I sit in rooms of recovery with men with all periods of sobriety and I can see the pain in their faces. I hear it in their voices. I look at the men working in the field who attend the various trainings I do around the country and I watch how they react to my presentations on men’s trauma. They resist it. They laugh it off. They have questions. They come up and talk to me. They thank me. They see that they have more work to do. They feel as though someone has given them permission to be really honest about their pain.

Much of my personal trauma work has been done outside of any peer group. Intensive personal work with therapists and couples counseling. So it has been a fairly lonely

journey. I spoke with tears running down my face on the last day about what it felt like to be able to talk so freely and so openly about my pain without fear of it being judged, mocked, dismissed, or minimized. Finally. We said the “**T**” word over and over again owning it more and more every time it came out of our mouths. I was no longer alone. I did not have to worry about what other men might think of me. *I was safe and I felt safe – safer than I had in a long time.*

The wheels have been set in motion. There is no turning back now. Those of us who know the beauty and sweet pain of healing from trauma owe it to all of the men and boys out there suffering, thinking that they can’t talk about their pain, to speak up. To not stop speaking up. We no longer apologize for the pain we feel nor do we buy into the myth that says real men can just “*get over it.*” Those days are over. We are not victims. We are not babies. We are not pussies. We are not losers. We are survivors. We are strong. We are men. Real men. We are Males for Trauma Recovery. We will only grow stronger as we grow in numbers. We are not the only ones. Far from it. We will work tirelessly to end the cycles of violence and abuse. *We know it begins with us.*” Dan Griffin

Special thanks to Susan Salasin, Dr. Joan Gillece, Raul Almazar, and the staff at the National Center for Trauma Informed Care (NCTIC) under the aegis of the Center for Mental Health Services in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA.)

“...Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.” - William James

The presenters of M4TR [Males for Trauma Recovery] –

“I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become.” Carl Jung

1] Dan Griffin with [Recovery Enterprises](#) and his powerful book for healing – “*A Man's Way Through The 12 Steps*” - Minneapolis, MN

2] David Washington is with the Washington County Health Department, Division of Behavioral Services, Hagerstown, MD – Helping males who are incarcerated, leading trauma support groups and so much more.

3] William Kellibrew with the Kellibrew Foundation - [The William Kellibrew Foundation](#) is an advocate, bridge and community driven partner dedicated to breaking the cycles of violence and poverty. Washington, DC

At the age of 10, William Kellibrew watched helplessly as his thirty-year old mother, Jacqueline and twelve-year old brother, Anthony, were shot at point-blank range in their living room by his mother’s former boyfriend. The next day, William witnessed his grandfather shoot his next door neighbor in a quarrel over a parking space.

4] Justin Volpe, presenter with *Addicted to Life* in Miami, FL and with the State of Florida's 11th Judicial Circuit – Judicial Support Specialist for the Criminal Mental Health Project, Miami, FL - Helping with jail diversion and follow up support for those in need of services and help.

5] Dr. Jaime Romo of Vista, CA is an educator, consultant, and author. He promotes healing from abuse and the prevention of child sexual abuse, particularly abuse by religious authorities or in the context of religious settings. To learn more please visit - <http://www.JaimeRomo.com> and

[Healing the Sexually Abused Heart](#) *"If You Want to Fly Higher, You Must Be Lighter"*

The Surviving Spirit is also honored to be selling his hopeful, helpful and healing book - ["Healing the Sexually Abused Heart: A Workbook for Survivors, Thrivers and Supporters"](#) - a 2011 International Latino Book Award 'Best Self Help (English)' Winner at our web store.

[KUSI News, San Diego, CA interview with Jaime Romo 7/25/12](#) - powerful thoughts and commentary from Jaime on trauma, abuse, "blaming the victims", and the recent Penn State 'scandal'. Short clip...worth watching and learning...

6] David Fuller is with DLF Consulting in Brooklyn, NY. David has a very powerful story to share of hope, healing and forgiveness. [*I've had the good fortune to co-present with David several times....I always come away with the deepest of respect and admiration for what this man does to help others who have been hurt in life. Mike*]

7] Chris Anderson hails from New York City and he is the Executive Director of [Male Survivor](#) - an organization providing information and support to male survivors of sexual abuse and their loved ones. Through it's website, [Weekends of Recovery](#) program, and [International Conferences](#), MaleSurvivor has helped hundreds of thousands of people to begin healing journeys that have allowed them to put their lives back together.

Chris has been quite active and vocal in the recent Penn State trial, etc – you can read some of his thoughts at the Male Survivor website.

8] Ty Smith is with [Youth Voice](#) out of Denver, CO. Ty brought his passion, experiences and energy to the table and made sure we did not forget the Youth Voice.

9] Pat Risser of Ashland, OH serves on the National Advisory Council for the Center for Mental Health Services and he has long been an advocate around the issues of trauma and abuse. [*hmmn...I tend to see Pat and myself as the 'grandfathers' of the trauma advocacy arena, but in a good way. Mike*]

[Pat Risser Mental Health Consultant/Trauma Advocate](#) - *"I don't believe in 'mental illness'. My thoughts, moods, feelings and emotions are not a disease, disorder or an illness. They are me. They are the essence of my being and what makes me a unique human being."*

“A man's concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an existential distress but by no means a mental disease.” Viktor E. Frankl

10] Mike Skinner of Goffstown, NH – director of the [Surviving Spirit](#) and [Michael Skinner Music](#)

It is truly an honor to know these incredible people and to be a part of this important mission. You will be hearing more from us. Mike

“Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone.”- Margaret Wheatley

Thanks also go out to Jeremy McShan of NCTIC, Pam Rainier with AHP/NCTIC, Sharon Amatetti with SAMHSA, Melanie Sutherland of NCTIC, and Sara Afayee with SAMHSA/CSAT.

“Hope is the companion of power, and mother of success; for who so hopes strongly has within him the gift of miracles.” Samuel Smiles

And here are some more helpful resources that tie in with our theme of Males and Trauma

1] *Anchor Magazine* - Depression affects both men and women, but what they experience and how they respond to it can be quite different. Research has shown that women are 1.5 times more likely to experience depression compared to men, but there is much debate about this statistic. It seems likely that men suffer from depression just as often as women, but due to a number of factors, it is frequently untreated and goes undiagnosed.

Find out more in the upcoming issue of *Anchor: Overcoming Depression and Anxiety*, available August 27! - [Subscribe To Anchor Magazine Today!](#)

2] *“Men On Divorce: Conversations with ex-Husbands”* - [Ellie Wymard, Ph.D](#)

“Through extensive interviews with 45 divorced men, Ellie Wymard reveals the pain and heartbreak that men endure during the divorce process. The difficulties that men experience with respect to sexual politics, part-time parenting, the sharing of family friends, the grief process and so much more, are revealed – along with practical advice for healing men of their emotional suffering.”

Two links to purchase the book:

<http://www.amazon.com/Men-Divorce-Conversations-With-Husbands/dp/1561700967>

http://books.google.com/books/about/Men_on_divorce.html?id=DDNFAAAAYAAJ

[A friend gave me this book many years ago, it was very helpful...I in turn have given it to others and they too have been helped by what it has to say. Mike]

“Happiness is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it.” – Anonymous

Something to think about –

Approximately 1 out of every 10 men in the US has diabetes, 1 out of every 8 men has a heart disease...but – 1 out of every 6 men has been sexually abused. It is time that society addresses this...*to help all of those hurt by abuse and trauma of any kind.*

“People were created to be loved, things were created to be used; the reason why the world is in chaos right now is because things are being loved and people are being used.” - Unknown

3] [The Good Men Project](#) was founded by [Tom Matlack](#) in 2009 as an anthology and documentary film featuring men’s stories about the defining moments in their lives. The original, modest goal, was to tell stories about men that “changed the writer and changed the reader.” In the process, it became apparent that this book was fostering a much-needed cultural conversation about manhood. [The Good Men Foundation](#) was launched, and proceeds from the book were used to support organizations that help at-risk boys. Since that time, The Good Men Project has grown into a diverse, multi-faceted media company and an idea-based social platform.

“The kind of man who always thinks that he is right, that his opinions, his pronouncements, are the final word, when once exposed shows nothing there. But a wise man has much to learn without a loss of dignity.” Sophocles

4] [Battered Men - The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence](#) - 5.365 million men battered each year, silent too long ...

- Public education efforts about intimate partner violence should not be gender-neutral, but should be specifically addressed to woman and girls as well as boys and men.
- State programs need to ensure that domestic violence services are provided to men across the state.

[Over 40% of victims of severe physical violence are men](#)

SUMMARY: According to a 2010 national survey by the Centers for Disease Control and U.S. Department of Justice, in the last 12 months more men than women were victims of intimate partner physical violence and over 40% of severe physical violence was directed at men. Men were also more often the victim of psychological aggression and control over sexual or reproductive health. Despite this, few services are available to

male victims of intimate partner violence. This paper explores the extent of intimate partner violence against male victims. It looks at the domestic violence system response to male victims. It re-examines data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, research on the impact of IPV on male victims and the system's response to it. More research is needed on IPV against men, its impact on men and the domestic violence service response to male victims.

"Where is there dignity unless there is honesty?" – Marcus Tullius Cicero

5] [Murray Straus Ph.D. Exposes the Academic Veils Placed on Domestic Violence Research](#)

There are millions of compassionate and loving people in the United States who have been given erroneous information about domestic violence. Over the years the media and academia have offered a steady stream of information that indicates that women are the only victims of domestic violence and men the only perpetrators.

More and more is now coming out about the symmetry of victimization in domestic violence between men and women. One of the breakthroughs that have helped us identify this deception was the journal response of Murray Straus Ph.D. Straus has been an acclaimed researcher of family and interpersonal violence for many years. In his article he unveils the ways that this misinformation has been intentionally spread via "research." He shows the seven ways that the truth has been distorted. It is a fascinating yet sobering article that shows how without actually lying, the researchers were able to distort things and make it appear that it was something that is was not.

"The most important thing about a man is what he believes in the depth of his being. This is the thing that makes him what he is, The thing that organizes him and feeds him; the thing that keeps him going in the face of untoward circumstances; the thing that gives him resistance." Hugh Stevenson Tigner

6] [Male Victims of Domestic Violence - The Hidden Story – You Tube](#) – 7 minutes long

We have only heard half the story about domestic violence and that half is the female victims and male perpetrators. But there is another side to this story. The male victims and female perpetrators. Somehow that side of the story simply doesn't get told. This short video touches on these issues and opens up the reality of the male side of domestic violence.

"Great Spirit, help me never to judge another until I have walked in his moccasins." - Prayer, Sioux Indian

7] [1 in 6](#) - For male survivors of sexual abuse, their partners, family and friends. Resources for sorting things out, including learning from other guys like you

8] [Boys and Men Healing](#) – 10 minute preview

The Surviving Spirit has a working relationship with Big Voice Pictures to facilitate the selling or the viewing presentation of their powerful film documentary, "*Boys and Men Healing from childhood sexual abuse.*" [Purchase film](#)

Boys and Men Healing is a documentary about the impact the sexual abuse of boys has on both the individual and society, and the importance of healing and speaking out for male survivors to end the devastating effects. The film portrays courageous non-offending men whose arduous healing helped them reclaim their lives - while giving them a powerful voice to speak out, and take bold action toward prevention for other boys. *Boys and Men Healing* is produced in association with the International Documentary Association.

"Without inspiration the best powers of the mind remain dormant. There is a fuel in us which needs to be ignited with sparks." - Johann Gottfried Von Herder

9] [The Foundation for Male Studies](#) - supports the development of a new "Science and Social Science" focus on all aspects of Maleness.

What would the future be like if all women and men worked together to carry the human species forward as equal partners?

Essential to the survival of the species is the mutual success of both men and women, yet the goal of equal partnership has been lost in the longstanding battle of the sexes. The noble dream of gender equality appears to have fallen victim to an ever-expanding gender divide.

This divide is everywhere - in our educational foundations, employment, our legal system, health care and the virtues of friendship. And these issues are by no means limited to America, but instead span the globe. How can we start turning things around?

10] [\(Wo\)Men Speak Out](#)— Chris and Ophelia De Serres are the founders of (Wo)Men Speak Out - a non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating violence against both genders.

(Wo)Men Speak Out™ is a non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating rape, sexual assault and gender violence. We seek to educate both men and women, cultivating healthy relationships and gender equity.

Chris and Ophelia are doing a great job in showing how both genders can work together for a common goal – kudos to them for their caring and passionate advocacy.

"People may doubt what you say, but they will believe what you do." - Lewis Cass

Thanks & take care, Mike, Rachel, Lynn, Mary, Zsuzsi, Cynthia, & John

ps. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know.

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A diagnosis is not a destiny

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mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

| [@MichaelSkinne11](#) Twitter

"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi