
From:
Sent: Saturday, 21 November 2015 8:54 PM
To: Advocacy and Support
Subject: Support services for child abuse victims

Hi, I have suffered since childhood many forms of abuse that resulted in lifelong trauma or CPTSD. The thing that has made the most difference for me is a place called the Heal For Life Foundation.

I have been working on healing myself and helping my daughter to heal over the last 20 years!!! I had attended a couple of healing retreats in that time but the last couple have been the most significant! I am aware they have improved the program since I first attended which gave me tools to take home and use in my ongoing healing journey.

As a survivor of child abuse only another survivor/s can truly understand. Two years ago I was hospitalised as I wanted to end my life (for the zillionth time)! I had made attempts before and it has been a lifetime battle to stay alive and stay sane! The emotional pain of the abuse was so terrifying and overwhelmingly and intensely painful I would rather die than experience it's repeated emergence! As soon as I got out of hospital 2 years ago I went to a healing retreat at HFL and I got my hope back, which was everything! Since then I have gone from strength to strength and healed and grown rapidly since.

I am now studying the Trauma Informed Care certificate there and even teaching my counselling teacher things about trauma he wasn't aware of!

I am volunteering there now as it gives me great joy to be there for other survivors and see them arrive defeated, depressed, terrified, suicidal and leave with light in their eyes and a new hope and radiance. They literally walk out changed in a positive way by the experience. I know nowhere else that survivors can feel truly understood and accepted exactly as they are and this makes a huge difference! The retreat teaches them the way trauma affects the brain, the way the neglect, abuse or trauma has affected their behaviour, mental health and poor coping skills so that no-one feels like a freak anymore! What a difference it makes to know they are normal reactions to abnormal circumstances. Also it is a place where many survivors feel supported and loved in a healthy way for perhaps the first time in their life!

I am committed to making a difference in this field as many volunteers who come to their own healing weeks also find themselves wanting to support an organisation that makes SO MUCH difference in so many people's lives!!!! They are funded mainly by all the volunteers that believe in the place and help it run but sadly funds are minimal in a place soooo deserving of support!

This is a much needed service and a literal life saver for so many and could help many, many more lives be put back together in a sadly under informed and under reported area that devastated and continues to devastate the lives of so many! Many are lost and often re-traumatised in the mental health system and the legal system and the abuse gets passed down the generations without informed education, understanding and care!

Kind Regards