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Male Survivor Services

In case you missed this highlight last month, here is another opportunity for you to learn about SAGE's Male Survivor Services. Recent studies report that up to 95% of prostituted women and girls were raised in abusive households, forced to endure physical, mental and sexual abuse for most of their young lives. But what we do not always realize is that boys are subjected to these same abuses. SAGE is one of the unique programs to include gender-specific programming specifically created for male survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation.

SAGE's Male Survivor Services Program offers substance abuse and trauma recovery services for adult men with histories of addiction, homelessness, incarceration, and reliance on survival sex and/or other exploitative relationships. By providing the resources, caring and tools needed to escape further victimization, SAGE's male survivors are afforded the opportunity to heal from their multiple traumas and successfully integrate into the larger community.

Over the past few years, SAGE has been privileged to work with extraordinary male clients in our men's program. We have witnessed remarkable life changes and wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the prolific accomplishments we have witnessed within SAGE's Male Survivor Services Program. To assist us in portraying the success of the program, some of our male clients have agreed to share their stories of survival with you. Their courage and resolution to overcome all obstacles will truly inspire. Together, we recognize and applaud their bravery and courage.

"SAGE allows me to feel safe to talk and process all of my trauma that I encountered as a child. My trauma started from the age of five and went on until I left home and came to San Francisco. I was disowned at the age of fifteen because I came out and also found out that I was HIV positive. No family, no place to lay my head, I started prostituting so I could get a place to stay and that was how I began my journey wondering when I was going to die. Being brought up in a broken home with six step-dads and five out of the six physically, mentally, sexually abused my mom, sister and myself. Never understanding where I went

wrong, what did I do to feel the torture that I was getting. SAGE is helping me to get to the point of coping, expressing, understanding, that it wasn't my fault. SAGE is a wonderful program with the fact they specialize in dealing with trauma and giving the clients the coping skills to be okay again. My recovery has been very hopeful because the main core issues that I see are that of my childhood trauma by being molested by five step-dads, two uncles, one grandfather and my baby-sitter. I am learning that I am not a victim any longer. I am a survivor." -T

"SAGE has assisted me with mental health and substance abuse issues. Today, I'm focusing on issues around childhood trauma which has played a part in my mental, emotional and substance abuse problems. This agency, which I rely on to address these sensitive issues, has dramatically helped me. I have not found any other program which can allow me to share and learn from other men who can relate to child sexual exploitation and prostitution. I firmly believe that if I continue this care, I will be able to live a content life. I can't say enough about the tremendous help this organization has given me. I feel there is a need for more programs like SAGE's mens' program because as a man in this society, men are encouraged to suppress emotional feelings and with some, as myself, can feel there is no way out." - anonymous. "I had a job at the time I came to SAGE but lost it due to relapse. There was not a drug I wouldn't use. I am what you call a garbage can. I do them all. My main drugs were speed and heroin for over 20 years. I have been able to somehow not get AIDS or HIV. Most of the people I ran the streets with are either dead or dying or in prison. I got Hep C and feel blessed just to have that because for many years I put myself at risk. When I hit the streets of San Francisco in "81" I had already been selling my body for a couple of years so I had no problem here. I really didn't think anything about it. It was just surviving and everyone did it in my group of young people. It was just a way of life. Drugs and prostitution went hand in hand. When I was 17 years old I had a very close relationship with this kid and the ugliness of the streets cut his life short. I still think about how my life changed the day I had to identify his body. He was just a kid wanting to live. I was just a kid when I left home. I could not take it anymore. From the time I could remember, there was pain. I would hide up in a tree in the back yard because I knew if my dad could see me then he could hurt me. I grew used to all the bruises. I was not alone in my misery-my mom, brothers and sister were in hell with me. I was 14 when my dad attacked me with a hammer

in the middle of the night. He told me he would have killed me. I left and have not seen that man since. SAGE knows how to work with people like me. I have been able to find the good in me due to SAGE and the groups they have for men. There is still a lot of pain from the past. I plan on healing with SAGE's help." - P

"I came to SAGE without housing, income, or medical care. I was in poor condition mentally and emotionally. I am a survivor of addiction, street violence, incarceration and domestic violence. SAGE teaches me how to analyze my condition, describe my predicament, and discover my whole person constellation. The SAGE program gives help, support and refuge for those like myself who are seeking help without causing me to feel vulnerable or fear the thought of possible rejection and /or chauvinism. Today I am still discovering myself. I hope to be a positive thinker on the path that will lead me to health, strength, mindfulness and to a joyful outlook on life." -anonymous

"I am a 44 year old gay male. My father was killed when I was approximately 5 years of age. My mother remarried shortly thereafter. My step-father used to physically abuse me using his fists, kicking me and hitting me with 2 x 4 pieces of wood. There was an episode where he duct-taped my face and tried to drown me in the pool. I was a feminine young boy. He would keep me in the backyard putting me through boot camp type exercises, sometimes for days at a time. I could not do pull-ups so he would take me into the garage, hang me from a bar and put broken glass under my bare feet. At age 11, I started having sex with him until the age of 13. At that age they finally divorced. At age 13 I had my first drink. At age 19 I had my first injection of crystal meth. I never stopped. I have lived my life drunk, high and numb. I've been in one abusive relationship after another, never once thinking that I deserved better. I came to SAGE almost a year ago. I had no self-esteem, no confidence, no value. I was homeless, had no money or tools for life other than a syringe and a bottle. I now have program housing, food stamps and G.A. I am coming up on a year of sobriety. SAGE loved me until I could love myself. I now have self-esteem and I realize I have a value in this world. I will soon be looking for a job. With the tools I've been given and continued support from SAGE, I hope to have a successful and happy life. You see, you can't just abuse young boys and expect them to figure it out on their own."- C