

The Stories We Share

Myths and Facts

Myth: Time heals all wounds – survivors eventually forget their abuse and move on with their lives.

Fact: Not only does time not ease the effects of childhood sexual abuse, it often compounds the effects. The deep personal violation of sexual abuse does not simply go away over time, nor do survivors get over it with time.

Myth: Victims of child sexual abuse are more likely to become perpetrators.

Fact: Most children who were sexually abused never grow up to perpetrate against others. This is a particularly dangerous myth that adds to the stigma around sexual abuse.

Myth: Children will tell an adult if they have been sexually abused.

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Executive Director's Message

Each of us has a story to tell.

At Shepherd's Counseling Services, our story is not the story of an organization or an agency – it is a human story – a story of people.

This story is one of human heartache and struggle, and it is also a story of the deep and life-changing healing that can come from allowing such deeply held pain to break open to the light.

It is a story of the survivors who haven't yet found a safe place to speak of what happened to them and be heard, believed, and supported. It is the story of courageous survivors who come to this place to tell their story. And it is how we come together as a community to hold open a space to support the journey of healing that forms the narrative of our story.

We have the honor every day of watching the story unfold, of witnessing the deep tenderness of survivors opening to their true selves and their true potential as they

shed the oppression of the psychological and emotional impact of childhood sexual abuse. We have the honor of hearing the breath let out and laughter open up between people who have finally found a safe place to be themselves and feel connected.

We have the honor of witnessing the profound courage and strength of survivors and the beauty of their journey of healing.

This story – this beautiful, miraculous, and very human story is only possible because of the very human and caring community that dares to acknowledge both the deep and lasting pain of childhood sexual abuse and the value of creating this safe place for healing to happen.

Because of your willingness to open your heart to this suffering, this profound and

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"My story changed. I found anger in me. I found deep sadness. And the most unexpected to me, I found a great well of strength and a desire for realness. I wanted to be real. I wanted to live a real life."

- Paige, 2016 Luncheon Speaker

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

~ Maya Angelou



The Stories We Share ...

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lasting story of healing continues to be written in the lives of the men and women who come to Shepherd's each and every day.

Our story continues to be written within this caring community that you create, line-by-line and page-by-page in the lives of those who come to Shepherd's to find healing.

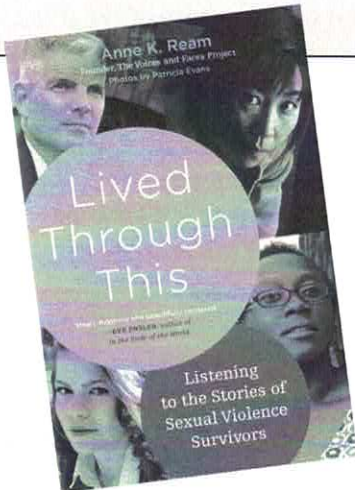
We are grateful and honored to be in this community with you, opening the door every day to survivors who find this safe place to share their stories and to begin a new chapter in their lives.

- Janice Palm, MA, LMHC, Executive Director

"Through it all, I kept going every Tuesday to share the support and the journey with my group of other survivors. Did going to Shepherds save my life? Possibly. But what is even more important to me is that I found a life worth living that I hadn't even known existed. Looking back now it feels like one of those old movies where everyone starts in black and white and then a switch is flipped and they're touched by beautiful Technicolor."

- Paige, 2016 Luncheon Speaker

The Voices and Faces Project



In September, Shepherd's Counseling Services was honored to host the nationally recognized writing workshop from the **Voices and Faces Project**, "The Stories We Tell."

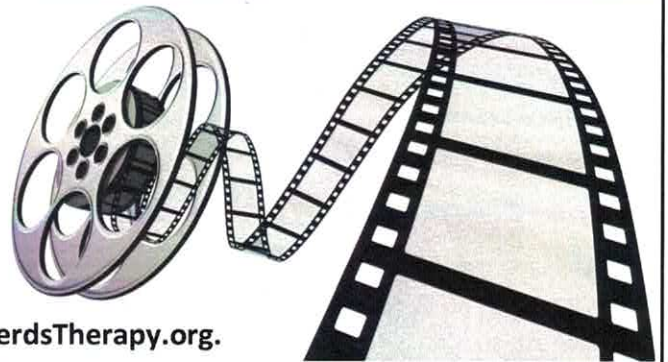
Anne K. Ream and R. Clifton Spargo facilitated this very powerful writing workshop. Survivors of abuse were supported in writing, reading and discussing their own testimonial writing to change their world and to promote justice and healing.

We are pleased to partner with others in the larger community to achieve a common goal of healing for survivors of abuse.

"A New Chapter"

Each of us has a story. This is something we share as humans.

Most survivors believe that once the abuse happens, their story is set in stone - that their story is irreparably changed forever. We want each and every adult survivor to know that sexual abuse is not the end of their story. . . .



Watch the video at ShepherdsTherapy.org.



"During these meetings [at Shepherd's], each of us would find a safe and nurturing place to share our stories – to be heard and believed." - Chuck, 2016 Luncheon Speaker

Celebrating Healing . . .

The theme of our Premier Fall Luncheon was, *The Stories We Share*. Those who were present at the event had the amazing privilege of hearing stories of deep heartache, amazing strength, and most of all, the beauty of healing first-hand from 2 courageous survivors. Hearing each story, bearing witness to the difficult and profoundly courageous journey of each speaker brought a deep sense of appreciation for the healing that happens at Shepherd's!



A special thank you to all our table captains!

Myths and Facts About Sexual Abuse

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Fact: Statistics tell us that most children do not tell of their abuse. The secrecy and the shame that children carry compounds the damaging effects of the abuse.

Myth: The term "sexual abuse" only applies to sexual behavior that involves physical touch.

Fact: If an adult engages in any sexual behavior (looking, showing, or touching) with a child it is considered sexual abuse and can cause deep and lasting harm.



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Celebrating Healing



"Gradually, I realized that I was not alone because the other men who had suffered from abuse and were hurting like me, knew and could relate to my pain." - Chuck

www.shepherdstherapy.org