

A Survivor's Roadmap to Recovery

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MENTORING SURVIVORS

"These Christians ain't got a clue what my life is like..."

Bonding with girls-

Sometimes, you will need to be the Hatchet and sometimes you will need to be the friend. From my experience, it is hard to be both. It is vital for survivors to have healthy structure and boundaries so a Hatchet, someone who enforces the rules, is important.

Part of being a good friend is also being vulnerable yourself. These girls are not dummies: they can smell sincerity. *You can't con a con.*

"You have to actually get close enough with someone for them to catch your 'disease'."

Iron Sharpens Iron

Life is surrounded with people: it's just the way it is. Real life interaction (like hatchets, mentors, roommates, counselors) will prepare them for real life. They MUST learn healthy interaction.

Purpose and Value

What lured these vulnerable girls out of their home is the promise of a brighter future. Whether it be freedom from an unhealthy home, financial security, excitement, or someone to love them- they all wanted something they were willing to Risk Their Life for.

1. Take the time to create a "roadmap" or "dream board" or "plan of action" - whatever you want to call it. Help them think of what they want to be or do when they grow up. Career? Husband? Healthy Home for their own family?
2. Identify the steps it will take to get them there.
3. Write these down and encourage them that they can do it.

Hold them accountable to their roadmap. It is easy to forget the motivation behind their desire to change. Remind them of what they are fighting for.

"It is easy to choose the game, it takes a strong person to choose to do the right thing."

UNDOING THE BRAINWASH

Girls have been brainwashed to think that only "suckers" leave their pimps- "weak women who run when things get tough..." It is important to constantly reinforce that they are valued; that they are making the right decision; that they are strong and born for a purpose!

Don't give up now!

- "Sarah" used to be the girl in her pimp's home that showed the new girls how to work. He trusted her to train the new "hos" how to get money, how to be with tricks, how to get out of dangerous situations, etc. This made her feel special. She took her role as "bottom" very seriously. When she came into the group home, she fell immediately into her old patterns and took it upon herself to "show" the girls how things were ran in the home.

Identifying old behaviors and redirecting is crucial. Explaining the importance of this is also imperative not to make the girl feel like she will get in trouble.

- In Sarah's instance, while explaining to a new girl the in's and out's of a group home may seem harmless, it is the old behavior we want to redirect.

Often times, the girls will identify old behaviors on their own. Taking nightly inventory could be very beneficial. "Did anything happen today that made you think of your past?" "Did anything happen today that made you feel yucky?" Her inventory the instance will bring clarity to old patterns and behaviors.

Remind her that IT IS **HEALTHY TO RECOGNIZE UNHEALTHY**. Sometimes seeing the issues in us can be devastating. Realizing how much work one has to do or how far from "perfect" they are can destroy self worth. Reinforce how great they are doing, even to be able to recognize unhealthy habits!

Most girls have been beat down physically, verbally, emotionally and sexually for so long that they already think very poorly of themselves. Even when they deny they are victims, spit in your face, cuss you out and want to go back to their abuser- remain calm. Continue to find reasons to build them back up. All of their emotions are simply coping mechanisms for what they have been told about themselves by their abuser(s). Remind them how recognize unhealthy habit are! How strong they

Bacteria Grows in the Dark

Please them when they recognize their unhealthy thinking

Negative thoughts are like mold in our minds. They grow in dark places.

Encourage girls to talk about the "lies" that they are saying to themselves in their own thoughts.

- ❖ Every time I use to speak at an engagement, I would drive home and the thought "no one will believe you, it wasn't that bad" would continually play in my mind. It was not until I was visiting a trafficked woman and her ex-pimp texted her that exact statement that it hit me. I was hearing an old voice myself! My pimp use to say that to me after a beating to convince me not to say anything. Even after all these years, his lies continued to linger in my own thought life.

Teach and Talk about the negative thoughts that go through their mind. **DO NOT LET THEM KEEP IT**

A SECRET

FAMILY SUPPORT/EDUCATION

they need to enjoy
being normal!

A lot of victims of sex trafficking have no idea what being "normal" is like. They often come from abusive homes, whether sexual or physical. They have been on the streets or with their abuser for so long that the idea of even being normal has been engraved in their minds as a bad thing.

No one girl is the same - take time with each every one to develop new habits and a new normal that SHE will actually enjoy!

New Surroundings

Teens that return to the same community, friends and schools are going to have a harder time adjusting.

Memories from certain houses, parks or routes home will spark thoughts like a Vietnam Vet.

different groups
of friends
- support them bc
available
new friend

Girls who have experienced forced prostitution or DMST have been proven to suffer from

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Encourage girls to get involved with a youth group or new circle of friends. Move if possible, even to a different part of town allowing the girl to enroll in a new school district. Give her every opportunity possible to embrace and accept the new person that she is!

Each new journey in our lives as survivors' means new levels of healing. Someday having a healthy relationship will STILL bring up fears and insecurities. Someday having children will STILL reveal more healing that needs to occur. Teaching survivors how to handle each new level of healing is imperative to her lifelong success!

1. Identify the old habit that is being displayed.
2. Throw away old baggage.
3. Keep the good stuff: remind her of what that is constantly.
4. Make a roadmap to her new future.
5. Hold her accountable to that roadmap.
6. Show her how to handle real "issues" that life will throw her way (mean bosses or teachers, unpleasant co-workers, etc...) in a healthy manner.
7. Remember that these are tools, but EVERY girl is different and will need to accept each stage differently.

