



Self-Help Support Groups for Childhood Trauma Survivors

ACA SoCalACA.org

Adult Children of Alcoholics / Dysfunctional Families (ACA) is a 12-step fellowship for people raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family. Members are recovering from physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse or neglect. Its website SoCalACA.org contains a searchable meeting list, printable meeting list, links, events and ACA Basic Literature. Newcomers are encouraged to read "Who Is An Adult Child?" to find out if they may benefit from ACA.

Phone and online meetings, a searchable list of all ACA meetings worldwide can be found at AdultChild.org, the website of ACA's World Service organization. ACA books, which can be purchased via the World service website, include the Big Red Book Fellowship Text, the ACA Step Study Workbook, the Laundry List Workbook and Daily Meditations. ACA has more than 40 meetings in Los Angeles County.

SIA SIASoCal.org

Survivors of Incest Anonymous (SIA) is a 12-step fellowship for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Motto: "We are not to blame, and we are not alone."

SIA defines childhood sexual abuse broadly. "Actions against minors may be damaging, initiated by a family member, teacher, coach, clergy, peer, or anyone. Trust can be betrayed in many ways:

- Suggestive or seductive talk or behavior
- Invasive non-sexual touching
- Sharing pornography, nudity or sexual activity
- Involving in fondling, sodomy,

intercourse, etc.

- *Boundary violations or covert abuse*
As adults it is not uncommon to wonder if what happened was imagined. If you think so, it probably did. The truth is shown by the emotions you feel...

SIA's website SIASoCal.org contains in-person self-help support groups, phone meetings, links and activities such as retreats. There are meetings available in Mar Vista, Santa Monica, Long Beach and more.

ASCA ASCASupport.org

Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse (ASCA) is a non-12-step support program designed for adult survivors of physical, sexual, and/or emotional child abuse or neglect. It uses a three-stage Recovery Framework which includes 21 steps. Its website ASCASupport.org contains a meeting list, events, online forum, e-meetings and online resources. New attendees are encouraged to read the literature and Frequently Asked Questions before attending their first meeting. The website includes the free "Survivor to Thriver" manual. ASCA has meetings in Long Beach, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica, San Pedro.

Male Survivors

LaMaleSurvivor.org

Los Angeles Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse is a non-12-step peer-to-peer support group. Its website LaMaleSurvivor.org contains meeting information for newcomers, events, links, suggested books and more. Meeting-goers screen new members. Please read the Newcomer information on the website and call 323-250-6116 before attending

the meeting, which is held Sundays in Culver City.

Its parent organization, MaleSurvivor (MaleSurvivor.org) aims to "improve the resources and support available to male survivors of all forms of sexual abuse around the world." The website has online chats, forums, weekend retreats and other resources.

Two important related self-help support groups:

SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests)

SNAP, an advocacy group, has non-12-step peer support for people who have been abused by priests. Its website SNAPnetwork.org has referrals to SNAP Support Groups. Newcomers are asked to read the "Ground Rules" before attending a group. The website includes helpful resources such as "What to do when your minister is accused of abuse." For more information contact the Southern California Director Joelle Casteix at 949-322-7434 or jcasteix@gmail.com.

Program for Torture Victims

"rebuilds the lives of torture survivors from over 70 countries who have stood up for freedom, democracy, and human dignity" through "a local response to international human rights abuse." The website ptvla.org has peer-led support groups, resources and links (in addition to professional mental health services). Survivors should call (213) 384-4788 ext. 246, or email refer@ptvla.org.

How to attend a Self-Help Support Group for Childhood Trauma

1. **You don't have to know exactly what happened to you.** Many people aren't sure. You are entitled to attend and find out more.
2. **Check out the web site.** Some groups prefer that you read their literature first, or have a screening process. There may be a meeting contact you can call beforehand.
3. **When you get there, introduce yourself as a newcomer.** The person leading the meeting, who is also a survivor, will usually read some material explaining how the meeting works. Some of the literature may be read by other members of the group.
4. **You don't have to speak.** In most meetings everyone gets a chance to share about how they're dealing with the issue, if they choose to.
5. **Meetings usually range** from 1 to 1 1/2 hours. A basket will be passed to collect your donation. SHARE! suggests a donation of \$2 to \$5 per person per meeting, however no one is turned away for lack of funds.
6. **Your first few meetings may feel uncomfortable.** This is to be expected. SHARE! suggests you attend a group six times before you decide whether it's helping you.

Am I an Adult Child?

Did you grow up with a problem drinker or in a dysfunctional family? Not quite sure why you feel and behave the way you do? **Adult Children of Alcoholics / Dysfunctional Families (ACA)** may be for you. Read the following and see if you can relate:

Do you constantly seek approval and affirmation?
Do you fail to recognize your accomplishments?
Do you fear criticism?
Do you overextend yourself?
Have you had problems with your own compulsive behavior?
Do you have a need for perfection?
Are you uneasy when your life is going smoothly, continually anticipating problems?
Do you feel more alive in the midst of a crisis?
Do you still feel responsible for others, as you did for the problem drinker in your life?
Do you care for others easily, yet find it difficult to care for yourself?
Do you isolate yourself from other people?
Do you respond with fear to authority figures and angry people?
Do you feel that individuals and society in general are taking advantage of you?
Do you have trouble with intimate relationships?
Do you confuse pity with love, as you did with the problem drinker?
Do you attract and/or seek people who tend to be compulsive and/or abusive?
Do you cling to relationships because you are afraid of being alone?
Do you often mistrust your own feelings and the feelings expressed by others?
Do you find it difficult to identify and express your emotions?
Do you think someone's drinking may have affected you?

If you have answered "Yes" to any of these questions, ACA might be for you. We sometimes refer to ourselves as "adult children" or "an adult child", because we have a tendency to go through life with survival techniques we learned as children. SoCalACA.org

THANKS for the SUPPORT!

This directory of Los Angeles self-help support groups for trauma survivors is compiled by **SHARE!** For changes or additions please contact **(213) 213-0100** or info@shareselfhelp.org

SHARE! was founded and is managed by people who attend support groups. **SHARE!** is funded by individual donations from people like **YOU**. We count on your help to continue providing the services we do.

Make a tax-deductible donation payable to **SHARE!** at shareselfhelp.org or mail check to 6666 Green Valley Circle, Culver City 90230.

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425 S Broadway, Los Angeles 90013
6666 Green Valley Circle, Culver City 90230
1.213.213-0100 www.shareselfhelp.org