



## The End of the Year Holidays

It's hard to believe it's already October! The holidays are nearly upon us. We have a busy three months to follow. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, November brings us Thanksgiving, and December brings us Christmas. I expect that this time of the year is either a difficult time and you're wishing it was already over, or this is a time of the year that you look forward to.

Whether this time of the year is good or rough for you, we will still be here. We are planning to have a time online to be available on Thanksgiving and on Christmas to be a support.



It will require registering ahead of time so we can provide you with the information to access the support as it will not be publically displayed, but given only to those requesting extra support.

### Note About BoH:

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- This publication is designed as an information exchange for survivors of trauma and dissociative disorders and their supportive others and professionals. Neither its editor nor its layperson contributors are engaged in the practice of medicine. This publication should not be construed as medical advice concerning any specific facts or circumstances. The contents are for general information purposes only. Please consult with competent professionals concerning your specific questions and needs.

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## Book Review: Life Reinvented

**Life Reinvented: A Guide to Healing from Sexual Trauma for Survivors and Loved Ones** by Erin Carpenter, LCSW is an easy and informative read. It addresses topics such as the brain after trauma, memories, revictimization, tools for healing and more. She writes from an educational standpoint with survivor stories

in each chapter to share how they can relate to the chapter topics.

This book's level of triggering is mild. It may be difficult to read some of the stories, but in general they are not graphic at all. I highly recommend this book if you want more information about sexual

trauma, and it is particularly informational and helpful for friends and family members of a survivor of trauma.

As with any resource shared in this publication, check it out to make sure it's a good fit for you. Not everything shared is the same level of help for every survivor.

## Lost

I lost someone I loved to suicide. She was a friend I spent a lot of time with. We were always doing something together. We played cards, talked, and just enjoyed each others' company.

I knew she was depressed. She had been in the hospital for trying to kill herself at one point. She hadn't mentioned those thoughts in a long time. I really thought she was past that. She was still struggling with the depression, but she seemed to be handling it better than she ever had. Was I ever wrong!

*I felt like I had been punched in the stomach and I found it hard to breathe.*

On day I was going about my schedule when I was approached by a mutual friend. She told me our friend was dead and had died by suicide. I felt like I had been punched in the stomach and I found it hard to breathe. I felt like passing out and like I was in the middle of a dark pit that was so stuffy and black there was no way to find an escape route.

Years later I still try to figure out what I missed. How could I have been a better friend? Why didn't I know how bad she was feeling? Why her? What did I miss at the time? She was such a beautiful person. One of

the kindest people I've ever met. I wish she were alive today so I could tell her that every day.

It's really hard to write this but it's hard to keep it inside too. I could spend the rest of the day telling you all the good things about her and how much she meant to me and others. I hope you've never had to go through this, but if you have, I'm sorry. I know how much it hurts even long, long after.

Submitted by:  
Rachal F.

## What Christmas Means to Me

I never used to do anything for the holidays. They were filled with memories of traumatic events. From threats, beatings, throwing out gifts when they were angry and most of all just not having anything positive to remember.

Christmas caused much pain for me. I had some invitations over the years but I always rejected them. I didn't feel like I belonged in the midst of another family during their time of celebration. For many years the week leading up to thanksgiving until Valentine's day were horrible for me. I wouldn't

even leave my house during those weeks. I felt so alone.

One year I noticed how many other people spent Christmas alone like myself. They seemed as lonely and miserable as I felt. I decided that the following year my Christmas would be about reaching out to others, hoping to bring something positive into my life, instead of feeling alone. It started with one other person. We had lunch and just enjoyed our time together. This was the beginning of my new tradition with Christmas. I call it Pushing Out and Bring-

ing In. I was Pushing out all the sorrow and pain and I was Bringing in the hope and joy that I had never experienced.

Sure, sometimes sadness of the loss of family creeps in, but it quickly goes away when I'm preparing for my guests and their arrival. It's a day I now look forward to more than any other. It's nice to have a reason to celebrate Christmas.

God is good. All the time.

Submitted by:  
Julie

## Pain

Expecting more  
Seeing less.  
Hoping and wondering  
Not sure at all.  
Do they think  
Justice will be served?  
I don't know  
But I sure hope so.

He hurt me  
I am still ashamed.  
But what he did  
Carries pain.  
Costly plans  
Run away  
Can't think  
Where does it stop?

Crippling fear  
Nightmares abound.  
Sleep is scarce  
So very tired.  
Inside and out  
Praying and hoping.  
Need to be rescued  
From myself.

Feels like no hope  
Ever abounds.  
Where do I find  
Which way to go?  
When does it end  
The pain, the fear?  
Unbelievable  
How twisted it is.

Missing time  
Not knowing where.  
What did I do  
Perhaps need to see?  
Not so much length  
Ropes are short.  
So alone  
Why oh why?

When does it stop  
This pain inside?  
A giant sigh  
Just maybe I pray.  
Will he hear me  
Amongst all the sad?  
I can only hope  
I can only hope.



Submitted by:  
Cindy

*So I reached out  
and found a  
wonderful grief  
group full of  
compassionate  
people...*

## Cutting

I spent a long time in my life struggling with cutting. I felt like the process of cutting eased the pain inside. I never realized what it was doing to me. After a while I needed to cut more and more to the point I was cutting near daily. Every little thing was too much and an excuse for me to cut.

Shame stopped me from reaching out. I would lie about my cuts and scars when asked. I knew I had a problem but I didn't know how to deal with it. When I did try

to reach out they thought I was trying to kill myself and they would lock me up in the crazy bin. I just shut down more inside. When I got out I stopped for a minute, but it always started up again.

One day I looked at my scars. They really represented more than unspoken emotions. They represented the deeper pain of grief and loss. I had no clue at the beginning. One day it just hit me and I realized that I needed to deal with that. So I reached out and

found a wonderful grief group full of compassionate people who cared about each other and who were grieving someone they lost in their lives.

I learned it was okay to feel those feelings. I never disclosed to them that I cut, but I did share my losses and pain. It was cathartic to share. It's one of the best things I've ever done for me.

Submitted by:  
Anonymous



2017

*A beautiful place  
in person—a  
beautiful place to  
hold inside as a  
calming place.*



LaJolla

Photography Submitted  
by: Kevin

## Timing & Coping

I've found that my recovery process has required me to set aside time to prepare for therapy such as questions or issues since the last appointment. This doesn't take me a long amount of time—at the most has taken me 30 minutes with my average prep time being around 15 minutes. The most amount of my coping time tends to be after my appointment. Because of the trauma content we discuss or when we do EMDR, I need a couple hours to relax and to take time to rest.

One of the biggest things I spend my time on is reviewing and implementing my coping skills. Some of the things I've noticed in this is needing to practice my coping skills on better days. For example, I may find that I'm starting to dissociate, then I need to use as many grounding skills as I can to ground myself to stay in or refocus on the here and now. If

I practice them on my better days, I find them easier to do on the rough days.

What has helped me manage as best as I can? Getting out of bed when I don't feel like it. Changing rooms in my house. Going outside my house when I'd rather hide. Finding a comfortable position and focusing on my breathing—slowly in and out—paying attention to the feeling of my chest rising and falling and focusing on relaxing my shoulders. Thinking about reasons to fight for my recovery—on the bad days I choose to fight because I don't want to hurt my friends by not recovering from my trauma. I work on a project like a puzzle or another hobby. I find journaling relaxing and a good way to get things outside of me. There are many other things I use but these are the ones I turn to the most often.

One of the things I

struggle with but hold on to is my belief in Jesus Christ. I struggle to read the Bible, but it is getting better. I do spend a lot of time in prayer—that is easier than reading. I don't know why, but it is. I'm thankful though, because it is prayer that helps me feel closer to God, like He cares for me and helps me. I know that without God in my life, I'd be challenged to find a reason to hang on. Prayer helps me to find strength outside of myself. It gives me hope that there is more than the pain I've been through during my lifetime. I believe God strengthens me and allows me to work on healing and recovery. My spiritual journey is important to me. I don't know what I'd do without my faith. I know this isn't for everyone, and that's okay. For me though, it's incredibly important.

Submitted by:  
Kristen

*Thinking about my reasons to fight for my recovery—on the bad days I choose to fight...*



## 2019

As we approach 2019, many start to think about setting new year resolutions. Resolutions can be a long list of things we want to do and succeed at over the course of the year, but for many these go to the wayside before we even get through January. I'd like to take this time to challenge you to think about setting one goal, and one goal only for the year. Once it is accomplished, set a new goal.

Rather than making a long list of resolutions, the one intended goal or one thing that is realistic and achievable during the year is the ultimate goal. In the past I've found myself making a list of six or more things I'd like to do but did not make intentional effort to do each of these things because it was too many to focus on.

Instead of these six things on my list, I've challenged myself to pick one thing I really want to work on. Something that I want to work on to make my life better. For example, I want to improve my health. My question to myself then is what does that mean? For me, that looks like changing what and how I eat. It's not about weight loss though that would be great. It's about changing to healthier foods and portion control. Then I

need to make specific steps to make that happen. For example, I need to research what constitutes healthier foods and ways to establish portion control

Rather than being a resolution, let's make a life changing decision. For some of us that may be to return to therapy and that would require coming up with a list of criteria I want to use to interview a potential mental health professional. Then I will want to interview the professionals who work with my particular trauma and who have a great amount of experience in treating trauma survivors symptoms and struggles. For another that may mean deciding whether to forgive my abuser. I may need to figure out what forgiveness means and what it would look like in my life. What changes, if any, would that mean in my relationship? What is my goal for forgiveness—releasing the control my abuser has had over me, reestablishing some types of relationship or forgiving myself from the critical self thinking, and learning to be kinder to myself. Forgiveness can mean different things and look different for each individual.

As a side note, consider-

ing forgiving an abusive person or a person that has harmed us that has been in my life doesn't mean going back or staying. It is possible and permissible to choose to forgive while keeping safety and having no contact with my abuser.

For some, the goal for the next year may be introducing something fun into my life to help with self-care and even distraction. It may be something I've wanted to do for a long time, or something that I've only heard about and would like to explore.

What improvement do you want in your life? Something you can do yourself and that you can control so you will be healthy. What kind of steps and support will you need to make this happen?

To a healthier 2019—no matter what healthy choice you plan to make, make it for you. I pray that God will direct your path and journey as you take one step forward in choosing something that is healthy is your life.

Submitted by:  
Kristen P.

*Instead of six things on my list, I've challenged myself to pick one thing I really want to work on.*



*It doesn't matter  
what I look like  
on the outside, it  
matters what I  
look like on the  
inside.*

Submitted by:  
Erin



## Just for Fun

A Y M E N T A L E V O L L A C I S Y H P  
 E K N O S A E S E C N E D N E P E D N I  
 N D E P E N D E N C Y S U T S U R T H N  
 C R E C O V E R Y F K R E T L E H S E T  
 O A C C E P T A N C E Y L I M A F B L I  
 U R Q T X T I N O I S S A P M O C A P M  
 R E L A T I O N S H I P S Q B T N T R A  
 A N O I T A X A L E R C X D U G R T O C  
 G S D G Y B U A V F H S E N X E C E T Y  
 E A O E H T U E R I L J D R C O O R E N  
 M P A P I T Y E L L H E Y O U A M N C F  
 E R X R I H E D I G R T V N R H M O T N  
 N E B R T D R K B S I Q S T E S U I I A  
 T P I L O E S I T T Y E H R S D N T O L  
 A P A M H G V A N T L R E O T N I A N P  
 S E C E N R N E E I A P L P R E C R Z E  
 H C A I L D D F N E L E T P A I A O W P  
 A R P E I I A G F O U L E U I R T T E A  
 T O G N F S E C U R E Z R S N F I S P C  
 C N G Z E W C L A N O I T O M E O E O S  
 A N G E R S E X U A L E C A E P N R H E

## Terms of Recovery

Acceptance	Fear	Peace	Spiritual
Anger	Freedom	Physical	Support
Batter	Friends	Protection	Trust
Child	Healthy	Recovery	Understanding
Communication	Heart	Relationships	Yearn
Compassion	Help	Relaxation	
Coping Skills	Hope	Restoration	
Counseling	Identity	Restrain	
Dependency	Independence	Safety	
Emotional	Intimacy	Season	
Encouragement	Life	Secure	
Escape Plan	Love	Sexual	
Family	Mental	Shelter	

## My Story of Faith

My parents were abusive in every way possible. I spent much of my life trying to stuff this deep down inside and to not think about it. I grew up in a “Christian” home, but nothing about it was Christian. Privately it was like living in hell. In public however, we were the “perfect” Christian family.

I struggled for a long time with my belief in God caring and being a loving God. I didn’t understand how He could allow the abuse to happen, and having heard God our heavenly father was mirrored like an earthly father loves his children, I didn’t want to be hurt like that anymore. I believed in God but I was a far cry from understand how He could be safe. I thought His goal was to punish me.

At one point in my life I left the church. I turned from God, believing I wasn’t loveable and I

was too bad for Him. I decided that if God was like my father then I didn’t want to take that chance. I’d rather die. I still believed in Him, I just didn’t trust Him to be loving.

Recently I started searching—asking questions about God’s love. I started asking questions about why He allowed the abuse. I asked questions about how He could love someone as bad and dirty as I was (I believed that because of the types of abuse I went through). While I still struggle in my beliefs, here is some of what I’ve learned.

God isn’t like the God I learned about growing up. He is a gracious God giving us chance after chance to love Him and turn to Him. In fact, rather than wanting to punish me, he loves me very much. How in the world could I believe that? One, He sent Jesus to die. Why would someone sent their son

to die on my behalf if He didn’t love me? Then in the Bible it says how much He loves me and how much he cares for my pain and hurt.

I don’t know where you are with your faith in God, but I’m still learning about His love. I’m still learning about how to believe He loves me, but I’m glad to be going back to Him. I’m thankful He chose me to love and care about.

Submitted by:  
Anonymous

**\*\*Note\*\*** Hope Recovery has a Facebook Community recently opened to discuss faith and trauma. If you would like to share with others about your struggles and successes in your spiritual journey with God, please feel free to ask for access by responding to the questions asked. It’s a closed community. It’s linked from our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/HopeRecoveryInc/>

*God isn’t like the  
God I learned  
about growing  
up.*

## Support Groups Accepting New Members

Hope Recovery is accepting members into our Trauma Recovery Support Group that meets once a week for 1.5 hours, and our trauma and Binge Eating group that meets on the 2nd & 4th Monday of each month. Both groups are available online. Regis-

tration is available by going to <http://www.hope4christianrecovery.org/support-groups-workshops.html> and completing the registration toward the bottom of the page on the right.

There are no costs associated with support ser-

vices for survivors of trauma. Supportive friends and family are available with a donation.

## MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide Christian-based supportive compassion in the lives of trauma survivors by assisting them in recovery, providing support, resources, committed volunteers, and standards of excellence.

## VISION

Hope Recovery aspires to provide excellence in service and support while assisting trauma survivors in achieving their recovery goals.

## Hope Recovery Inc.

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Online Christian Support message boards are available at [www.christianforums.com](http://www.christianforums.com)

If you're feeling **suicidal**, please contact 800-SUICIDE or if outside the US, go to [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org)

If you are being **abused**, experiencing incest or rape, please contact RAINN at 800-656-HOPE. RAINN provides links to international agencies.

If you are in a **violent relationship**, call 800-799-SAFE. For international contacts, go to [www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html](http://www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html)

We're on the Web

[www.hope4christianrecovery.org](http://www.hope4christianrecovery.org)

## Subscribing to Bridge of Hope

### Fees:

Free to Survivors.

\$4 donations from supporters and professionals is requested to cover the costs of the website..

Donations may be sent to our PO Box, or online via PayPal.

**You Are  
Not Alone!**



When all seems like a struggle, there is hope.