

Celebrate Recovery Welcome Home Groups are a safe place for veterans and their family to connect. Most military families miss the camaraderie that the military culture provides. This can be achieved through Celebrate Recovery and Welcome Home Open Share Groups.

Exploring the Effects of Military Sexual Trauma

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is a physical and psychological trauma. MST results from a physical sexual assault, sexual battery, or sexual harassment that occurred while a veteran was serving on active duty. We define it as “repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical sexual contact which is threatening in nature.” MST includes any sexual activity involving someone against their will for implied better treatment. It also includes someone pressured or forced into sexual activity for other reasons. MST includes unwanted sexual advances, sexual touching, grabbing, threatening, making offensive remarks about a person’s body or sexual activities.

Characteristics of Someone Struggling with the Effects of Military Sexual Trauma May Include, But are not Limited to:

- Feels depressed, having intense, sudden emotional reactions to things, feeling, angry or irritable all the time.
- Feels emotionally “flat”, difficulty expressing emotions like love or happiness.
- Has trouble falling or staying asleep, disturbing nightmares.
- Uses drugs or alcohol to deal with the emotional reactions from the memories of the sexual trauma.
- Has trouble staying focused, often find your mind wondering, struggle to remember things.
- Often finds yourself being “triggered” into fear of future sexual trauma.
- Feels isolated or disconnected from others, trouble in relationships with employers or authority figures, difficulty trusting others.
- Experiences physical health problems such as, sexual difficulties, chronic pain, weight or eating issues, gastrointestinal issues.

How We Find Recovery

Through a relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Higher Power, and by working the 8 recovery principles and the Christ-centered 12 steps, we can find freedom from our hurts, hang ups and habits.

Characteristics of Someone in Recovery for Military Sexual Trauma May Include But are not Limited to:

- Accept Jesus Christ as Higher Power.
- Working the 12 step recovery process diligently and consistently. We recognize that we are powerless to heal the damaged emotions resulting from our MST. We look to God for the power to make us whole.
- We admit that God’s plan for our lives includes victory over the experience of abuse.
- We understand the people who abused us are responsible for the abusive acts committed against us. We will not accept the guilt, shame, and fear resulting from MST.
- We understand that the abuse committed against us is not our fault. We are NOT GUILTY.
- We look to God and His Word to find our identity as worthwhile and loved human beings.
- We learn the emotions we are feeling are very real and need to be acknowledged.
- We learn how to organize our emotions. First, by noticing them, then honoring them, organizing them, and sharing them with God and at least one other person.
- We don’t accept responsibility for the MST itself, but do accept the responsibility for our responses to the MST.
- We are willing to accept God’s help in the decision and the process of forgiving those who have perpetrated against us.
- We come to understand that releasing our offender to God allows us to move forward toward the healing process.
- We come to understand that forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with my offender
- We are willing to mature in our relationships with God and others.
- We come to believe that God won’t waste the hurt in our lives.
- Attend Large Group weekly and participate in a Welcome Home Open Share group.
- Join a Celebrate Recovery Step Study Group.
- In our recovery, we become willing to be used by God to bring hope to others with similar struggles.