

The long road to healing

Joan received treatment from the Association of Communities Against Abuse and shares her healing journey.*

*name has been changed

First, I will share a little of my history with all of you, so that you can understand the depth of my gratitude. I was born into a severely abusive situation. As a child, I experienced sexual abuse by both of my parents from a very young age, and ritual sexual abuse by others as I grew older. Torture and physical violence were used to keep control, and to make sure that what was happening in our home was never revealed to the outside world. I was always awakened from sleep to be abused so I developed a split between night, when the worst abuse occurred, and daytime, where the night reality did not exist.

From the time I left home at 18, I have made numerous attempts to heal and leave my past in the past. I did find ways to adapt, none of them healthy. I was referred to ACAA because of depression and unresolved grief following the death of my mother who had until her death called me crazy and in need of mental health care. Even when confronted by me and my siblings (who were also abused) she never admitted anything. My ability to function in life was unraveling, and I had given up hope of ever being able to escape from my past. My financial resources were depleted, I was only able to work part-time, while experiencing severe burn-out and single parenting since leaving a physically abusive relationship. The person that referred me to ACAA said they understood trauma and sexual abuse experienced as a child and could help me heal.

As I finished by therapy, I was able to celebrate how well I am and how functional I have become. And most especially, that at long last, I can finally say my past is my past. It has been a horrendous process at times, and my therapist never wavered in her commitment to staying with me, while I healed. She used her many excellent skills and resources to assist in my trauma

recovery. Not having to pay for this service has been a gift beyond measure. I will be forever grateful to my therapist, ACAA and all those whose contributions made this healing possible. My life is finally my own and I have found inner peace, that I have yearned for my entire life. Thank you for making sure healing is a possibility no matter one's circumstances.