



Adult Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA) Global Newsletter

Winter 2017

In this issue, we celebrate a longtime ASCA group and exciting growth through new ASCA meetings forming around the world. We also share education on the why and how our safe support groups follow the ASCA format and meeting guidelines. Finally, we learn more about Sumi being a survivor and healing towards becoming a thriver.



As our Quarterly newsletter will sometimes feature survivor's personal stories, please be advised some content could be triggering for some people.

The Morris Center and the ASCA Program continue to grow worldwide with over 50 support group meetings. We need your help to reach more survivors. Please consider [volunteering](#), following us on [Facebook](#), or by making a [donation](#) in any requested amount that feels right for you. The Morris Center wants to remind all of you that you are awesome and appreciated.

[**The Morris Center for Healing from Child Abuse**](#)

*unable to see parts of the Newsletter?
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In This Issue

Atlanta ASCA: Happy Anniversary!

.....
New ASCA groups around the world

.....
ASCA meetings: helpful and safe

.....
Sumi: Lost years

.....
Volunteer, comment, find us on Facebook



Atlanta, GA

**Congrats to ASCA Atlanta:
6 years this February 2017**

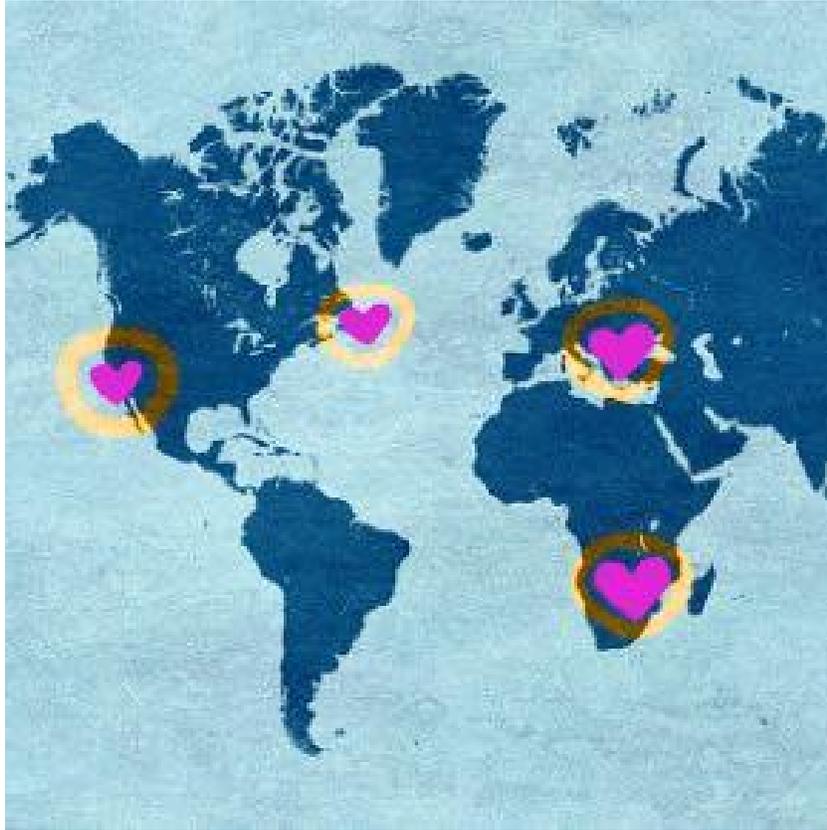
"I remember being agoraphobic, depressed and drunk 7 years ago. I found ASCA online and months later got a therapist, blogged on "iSurvive", and became a Court Appointed Special Advocate for abused & neglected children.

Who would've thought I would start an ASCA support group in Georgia.

Well it's 6 years later: going strong."

- Fire-Brown
ASCA Atlanta founder and co-facilitator

- [ASCA-Atlanta](#)



ASCA support groups grow around the world

- [Newfoundland-St. John's, Canada](#)

In 2011 I finally found the courage to talk about my abuse. Around the same time I began looking for support groups for survivors and was disappointed to find nothing in my area or even in my province. In researching on-line I came across ASCA and [The Morris Center](#). I was excited to learn about the program and it's support network, I was especially pleased to realize I could take the training (from my home) and start a peer support group in our area within a few short months. Only one person showed up for our first meeting. I have facilitated ASCA meetings in my city for 5 years and in that time, interest and participation has greatly increased. I have had survivors tell me that the meeting were "lifesaving" and I have seen first hand the transformation that has occurred for regularly participating survivors. I strongly believe in ASCA and greatly appreciate the level of support that it brings to participants. In fact, I believe so much in ASCA that I have been promoting the program and

hoping to have at least 2 more (ASCA) support groups set up in our province this year.

-Bev, co-facilitator and founder

- [St Luke's Hospital, San Francisco, California](#)

Beginning March 30, 2017, ASCA meetings will be held at St Luke on Thursdays from 7:30pm-9:00pm. This new San Francisco ASCA meeting will feature easy access from BART and MUNI transportation.

- [Diamond Bar, California](#)

An ASCA support group recently formed with the support and assistance of the treasury from the Long Beach ASCA group. The Diamond Bar ASCA group meets on Saturday mornings, from 9:00am-10:30am.

- [Targu Mures, Romania](#)

Support groups being practically non-existent in Romania, a newly formed support group for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse is taking steps to fully incorporate the ASCA format with each new meeting. This ASCA group is working towards translating the manual into Hungarian.

- [Zimbabwe](#)

Having recently received co-facilitator training from The Morris Center, a women's support group in Zimbabwe for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse is taking steps to fully incorporate the ASCA format with each new meeting.



ASCA Morristown, NJ

ASCA Support Group: purpose, format and guidelines

We can sum up the 'why' of our guidelines by understanding our purpose for meeting together. We gather in a **safe, caring and supportive environment to:**

- **Be with others who understand and share the same challenges**
- **Work towards acceptance and healing**
- **share approaches to recovery from our past and creative problem solving in our present lives**
- **Learn more about stopping the cycle of child abuse by healing ourselves and preventing continuation with our own children and children's children**

- Promote research, treatment and advocacy
- Remember that laughter, taking care of ourselves and planning for the future are essential for our well-being
- help others who are going where we have been.

All meeting participants bear responsibility to keep ASCA meetings helpful and safe. Some ways we practice being helpful and safe are by beginning and ending on time, showing respect for each other and the group, speaking about our own feelings/experience while using "I" statements and asking for clarification from co-facilitators when in doubt.

We refrain from using 'should' statements, language that is derogatory towards any minority statuses, psychoanalyzing/taking another person's inventory, criticizing/belittling/attacking/teasing anyone in the group, interrupting and cross talk.

The Morris Center has established guidelines on avoiding cross talk. While a survivor may want to share about something that someone else in the group has brought up, directly addressing that person by saying something like "What you said about...**" or "**What Joe said**" is cross-talk. While it may seem natural to refer to the other person, our guidelines are to refrain from doing so. Directly addressing another meeting member can provoke anxiety or be unwelcome. By participating in ASCA meetings, all participants agree to abide by the philosophy and spirit of ASCA, the welcome to ASCA handout (provided to new participants) and any interventions made by the co-facilitators. To help enforce safety, co-facilitators are available to discuss interventions after the meeting has concluded.**

Lost years

by Sumi

This article talks about the impact of years lost because of my mental illness, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), which was triggered by childhood bullying. From kindergarten onward, I quickly became aware of the fact that I was viewed as being different from nearly all of my peers due to my race and ethnicity. As I got older, I was bullied on a regular basis for being brown skinned and for having such a markedly unusual name. Over time, many years of bullying led to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and set the stage for the development of severe OCD at the tender age of sixteen. Ages sixteen to twenty-one were by far the worst years of my life, as I struggled silently with my OCD symptoms, afraid that I was losing my mind. At twenty-one, I finally broke my long-held silence and began receiving OCD treatment, a process that would take many more years from my life. Throughout this process, I was inspired to write one of my books titled, *"A Life Interrupted: The Story Of My Battle With Bullying And Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder."*

Struggling to cope with the lost years became a major issue for me. The toughest part was realizing how much I still hadn't done in comparison to many other people my age. Though my life had been interrupted now for almost the past twenty years, there's a world out there full of people who have made progress in their own lives while I was struggling to deal with bullying and OCD. The educations, careers and relationships of others were never frozen in time or put on hold as they had long been for me. While I slowly began to make changes in all of these various areas, my journey back to the present time hasn't been quick or easy. On the contrary, the loss of teenage years and early adulthood years took quite a toll on my life. Even improvements in life also helped me to see how much time I have had to let slip away.

As a result, I was left with a strong sense of urgency that accompanied all that I did.

While this urgency impacted a wide range of life experiences, it had been dominantly centered on the concept of having fun. Feeling like I've missed the more enjoyable aspects of youth, I went out of my way to try to somehow re-capture my teenage years! This strange endeavor led me to a lifestyle of partying, alcohol use and excessive risk taking. Soon behaviors I once envied and despised in others became quite

appealing to me. After years of being a slave to the rigid rules of a brutal disease, it felt great to be irresponsible and not have a care in the world!

Although it seemed like I was having a good time on the surface, my life overall remained empty and unfulfilling. In addition to being bullied and then developing OCD, misfortune also came in dealing with the opposite sex. Only now beginning to date, I experienced a whole lot of heartache and very bad luck with girls. These setbacks affected me deeply and left me extremely depressed over time. Setbacks created an overwhelming, long term sense of hopelessness and pessimism. With the pressure of the lost years weighing on my shoulders, I found myself growing more afraid that time was running out.

I'm delighted and grateful to say that I feel worlds apart from those most awful years when my illness consumed my existence. I discovered The Morris Center offers [the ASCA program](#): an international self-help support group program designed specifically for adult survivors of neglect, physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse. Today, I am aware that my future still offers promise and potential. Although I struggle immensely with the impact from the lost year, I am also aware that my future still offers promise and potential. The decision to let go of my past is one I am quite capable of making. I'm well enough to often catch myself whining and complaining over that which, when I stop and really think about it, is also quite trivial in retrospect! At such moments and also on a regular basis, I feel I have forgotten what it was like to have my life controlled by my illness. This is perhaps the most accurate way for me to measure the progress that I have made. Off and on I still have strong obsessive fears. I believe my painfully developed ability to reprogram my thinking, contributed to the overall lack in severity/frequency of my symptoms. This allows me to feel in control of my life and be able to enjoy things in life to the fullest. I published my book "[A life interrupted](#)" in June of 2011, detailing all of these experiences.

Yes it's true I've lost many years - but I know that there are many more good years to live.

Support The ASCA community

If you would like to volunteer, have comments, or would like to provide supportive feedback for anyone featured in this newsletter, send an email to ascanewseditor@gmail.com .When providing

supportive feedback, please remember to include that person's name in the subject line of your email. The Morris Center provides training, coaching and mentoring for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse who are interested in volunteering. New volunteers are always welcome.

Be featured in the ASCA Newsletter

Please submit: your own stories, photography, artwork, poetry and other self-expression, book reviews, and upcoming events to ascanewseditor@gmail.com.

A special thank you, to all those who have made a [donation to the Norma J Morris Center](#). We would not be here without you.



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