

## What is S.O.A.R. ?

S.O.A.R. is a not-for-profit charitable society with two objectives.

The primary objective is to provide peer counseling services to adult male and female survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

The second objective is to provide education and insight into survivor issues to the public through workshops, seminars and presentations to community groups and organizations.

## What is a peer counselor for survivors of abuse?

Someone who has a basic understanding of the problems and struggles of other survivors because she/he has experienced childhood sexual abuse in her/his own life.

Someone who has a desire to assist others in their healing process and through training has acquired the skills and information to enable her/him to counsel at a peer level.

Both female and male peer counselors are available to provide the services to female and male survivors. Usually women counsel women and men counsel men, but if you have a preference for a counselor of the other gender we have some peer counselors qualified to do this.

## How to obtain a peer counselor

Call Karen at 365-1701 Ext 2861 between 8:00 & 4:00 Mon-Fri

After hours call the following contact person in your area

- ✧ Annapolis County  
Mary Lee at 532-2673
- ✧ Kings County East  
Nancy at 365-2656
- ✧ Kings County West  
Karen at 765-4779
- ✧ Hants County

Or call our voicemail at any time calling between Hantsport and Aylesford 679-7337 or toll free from other locations 1-877-679-SOAR (7627)

## To have S.O.A.R. speak to your group or for further information on S.O.A.R.

call Karen at 365-1701 Ext 2861

S.O.A.R.  
P.O. Box 105  
Kentville, N.S.,  
B4N 3V9

[www.survivorsofabuserrecovering.ca](http://www.survivorsofabuserrecovering.ca)  
[info@survivorsofabuserrecovering.ca](mailto:info@survivorsofabuserrecovering.ca)  
S.O.A.R. Voicemail 902-679-7337  
or 1-877-679-7627



## Survivors Of Abuse Recovering

*volunteer-driven  
community-based  
peer counseling service  
for survivors of  
childhood sexual abuse  
in Nova Scotia*

Services currently available in  
Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties

## What are the effects of abuse?

Though different for everyone, research has shown that there may be several long-term effects from the experience of childhood sexual abuse that can impact on the quality of life of the adult survivor.

Among these are:

- ✧ symptoms of post-traumatic stress
- ✧ flashbacks
- ✧ feelings of guilt and shame
- ✧ problems with self esteem
- ✧ health problems
- ✧ depression
- ✧ substance abuse
- ✧ issues of trust or intimacy in relationships
- ✧ re-victimization

## How long has S.O.A.R. been in existence?

S.O.A.R. started upon the completion of the first Peer Counseling training program in December, 1993. S.O.A.R. evolved from the vision of two Mental Health therapists, Rita vanVulpen and Deirdre O'Sullivan after they identified a clear need for peer counseling services to complement the existing services for survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

They trained, inspired and supported a small group of female survivors to form S.O.A.R. There is a current membership of 15-20 female and male volunteer Peer Counselors. Services are currently available in Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties. S.O.A.R.'s mandate covers the whole province and new chapters will start up as interest evolves.

## Statement of confidentiality

A survivor can expect all information shared with the peer counselor to be held in confidence. The only exception is if the survivor at any time becomes an obvious risk, in that they plan to do harm to themselves or others. It is then the peer counselor's duty to refer the survivor to the appropriate professional. The confidentiality guidelines will be discussed with the survivor at their first session so that they are aware of the consequences of this exception.

## What training is provided for members of S.O.A.R.?

All of our peer counselors, themselves survivors, are fully screened and are required to complete a 16-session training program co-led by a Mental Health professional and a S.O.A.R. trainer.

The training emphasizes supportive, listening counseling skills and includes:

- ✧ communication skills
- ✧ confidentiality
- ✧ crisis management
- ✧ responding to flashbacks
- ✧ post traumatic stress
- ✧ resources available in the community
- ✧ cross-gender counseling (optional)

Peer counselors then become members of S.O.A.R. where ongoing education and training is provided through annual workshops, retreats and training seminars.

Training in group facilitation and Train the Trainer is also available to S.O.A.R. peer counselors, thus enabling S.O.A.R. to take an active role in the co-facilitation of treatment groups for survivors, in the delivery of peer counselor training, and in offering peer-led survivor support groups.

## How is S.O.A.R. funded?

S.O.A.R. is a volunteer driven not-for-profit charitable society. Funding has been received for Public Relations and Educational projects from the following sources:

- ✧ Fundy Mental Health Foundation
- ✧ Eastern Kings Memorial Health Foundation
- ✧ Western Kings Memorial Health Society
- ✧ Western Region Community Health Promotion Fund
- ✧ Annapolis County Interagency Committee on Violence.
- ✧ Consumer-Led Health Initiatives Grant
- ✧ Wellness initiative Fund (Annapolis, Central Kings and Eastern Kings CHBs)
- ✧ West Hants Community Health Board
- ✧ Private donations

Tax deductible donations can be made at our web site or mailed to us.

## Where do peer counselors and those seeking our services meet?

There are many safe locations throughout the Annapolis Valley for peer counseling, including offices in hospitals, health centers, churches, and family resource centers.

Your peer counselor will arrange a time and a meeting space that will best accommodate the needs of both the peer counselor and the peer client.

## How to access a peer counselor?

Confidential peer counseling is available to female and male adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

A survivor can make a self-referral or have the help of a doctor, therapist, clergy, family member or friend, etc.