

History

In 1992 the Catholic Prison Ministry, Lifeline, Dr Wendell Rosevear and interested psychologists and social workers met to address the issue of sexual assault of males in both prisons and in the wider community. This network lobbied for the creation of an acute sexual assault service, law reform (widening the definition of rape) and education.

The network also identified the need for a self-help group as such a resource for men did not exist.

In 1993 MARS was founded by Dr Wendell Rosevear at the Gladstone Road Medical Centre. A self-help group model was established where participants decide the format, process and safety rules of the group.

The group opens for new members every three months. This allows for trust and safety to develop to address highly personal and sensitive issues.

Contact

Dr Wendell Rosevear
07 3857 1222

Words from men in MARS

“The hardest thing I ever did was walk into the room on the first night. The greatest feeling was leaving at the end knowing I was not alone” -A

“The group accepted me” - D

“I felt I was understood” - G

“My story was shared, not compared. All our stories are equal, I was believed” - K

“I exhausted my life trying to hold on to my dirty little secret, now I have shared it in group it is not so scary, I am in control of it, not it of me.” - J

“For the first time I was accepted as me and not judged” - M

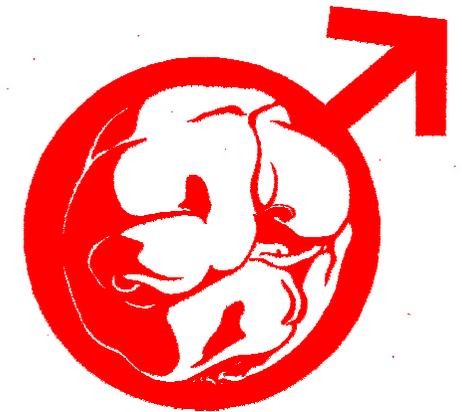
“I have found the MARS program to have been one of the most positive and influential things in my life. The Mars program is effective and positive in helping men overcome some of the most heinous things that can be done to little children.” - R

“MARS may not always be comfortable, but it will be safe” - M

“MARS helped me go from surviving to thriving” - W

MARS

Men Affected by Rape and Sexual Abuse



Relief is possible

www.marsaustralia.com.au

Why a group for men?

Men have several identifiable barriers to disclosing a history of sexual abuse or rape. They may fear they will be blamed, labelled as weak, or seen as non-masculine or homosexual. Their history may evoke strong emotional feelings which confuse and do not fit into the ideal image of a successful male. Some men may turn to alcohol and drugs in order to find relief. Men need a safe place where they may achieve resolution without further trauma.

Services

MARS is a self-help group that meets weekly. Each participant is able to meet their own particular needs at their own pace by making their own decisions about when to speak, how much to share, speaking to their own personal experience and using the group for as long as they need. Some men have been attending now for a number of years, while others come for a three month session. Each participant makes his own decisions about attending.

Who is the group for?

The group is open to all adult men 16 years and older who identify a past history of rape or sexual abuse. The group caters for heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, transgender and men of unresolved sexuality.

A facilitator participates in a safety role and provides support and guidance when necessary.

The group has a resolution focus and aims to provide relief for participants by supporting them to make their own decisions about how to achieve resolution.

Group openings

The group accepts new participants every three months, usually sometime during January, April, July and October. As dates vary from year to year, advertisements are placed in Quest newspapers, gay community papers and the Courier Mail.

Men may also find out more about the group by contacting Dr Rosevear at the Stonewall Medical Centre.

Who has used the Group

Since its inception in 1993 over 1500 men have used the group to gain relief from abuse

This covers a wide variety of men who have attended MARS. A general overview would reflect that around 50% of participants identify abuse as a child, 25% as an adolescent and about 25% as an adult. About 90% identify having been abused by a male and about 10% identify having been abused by a female. Many have been repeatedly abused. All men self-identify the abuse.

Unresolved Abuse

Unresolved abuse may lead to:

- Low self esteem
- Depression
- Increased risk of suicide
- Self harming behaviours
- Difficulty maintaining relationships
- Difficulty with trust and assertion
- Fear of progressing to abuse others
- Questions regarding sexuality