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Orientation and Overview

resound
Supporter Recovery
Programme



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Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, unless otherwise specified.



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*Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvellous things
(Psalm 98:1a NIV).*

1. ORIENTATION

1.1. Relating as a Supporter

Welcome to the **resound** Supporter Recovery Programme. We are really glad that you have found your way here and we pray that the programme will be an enlightening and empowering experience for you.

The word *supporter* is a term that we use to describe those of us whose lives have been impacted by another person's cycles of addictive use. Typically, supporters are close friends, spouses, children, or extended family members of a *loved one* who is currently struggling with addiction to a substance or a behaviour, or who has been addicted in the past.

For reasons that you will come to understand through this programme, we retain our position as a supporter regardless of our loved one's condition. It does not matter whether our loved one is in sustainable recovery, active addiction, or somewhere in between. We relate as a supporter on the basis of our own life experiences, not on the life that our loved one may currently be experiencing.

- ☐ Do you think that you fit into the category of *supporter*?

- ☐ By whose addictive cycles have you been affected and what is the nature of the relationship/s, e.g., child, parent, spouse, friend?

- ☐ Select the option that best describes your loved one at present.

- ☐ Still active in cycles of addictive use
- ☐ Not using but not doing anything about sustaining recovery
- ☐ In early recovery
- ☐ In long-term recovery
- ☐ I'm not sure
- ☐ Other:

1.2. Resonating with Others

As a supporter, the first vital thing to recognise is that you are not alone. Far from it, in fact.

Addictive disorders affect people of all ages, orientations, occupations, races, cultures, and creeds. In our experience, almost every family is impacted in some way by addiction. The World Drug Report (2024) estimates that, globally, 1 in every 81 people has a substance use disorder¹. Problematic pornography use has been estimated by some researchers to be as high as 16.6% of the global population². This means that, right now, there are millions of other individuals, across the globe, who resonate with the complexities and challenges of your situation.

Unfortunately, a lack of organised recovery services for supporters means that many of us are left feeling disconnected, ill-equipped, and overwhelmed, as we struggle to handle our circumstances on our own.

Additionally, social stigma and misplaced shame prevents a large percentage of people from speaking openly about their reality. This is especially prevalent where less familiar *process addictions*, to pornography for example, are present. False perceptions that are created around the actual extent of impacted individuals and families *out there* can result in us feeling *different*, isolated, and even, inferior.

Recognising that we are not *the only one* is important because of the reassurance and personal validation that comes with this understanding. Solidarity with other supporters is a normalising experience that is able to bring us out of secrecy, separateness, and perceived disgrace into the restorative culture of community in which we can experience empathy and empowerment.

- ☐ Have you experienced feelings of isolation and/or shame as a supporter?

If so, describe these experiences.

¹ UNODC. (2024). World Drug Report. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2024.html> [Accessed 20 September 2024]

² Boethe, B. et al. (2024). Problematic pornography use across countries, genders, and sexual orientations: Insights from the International Sex Survey and comparison of different assessment tools. Addiction SSA (Vol 199).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378528092_Problematic_pornography_use_across_countries_genders_and_sexual_orientations_Insights_from_the_International_Sex_Survey_and_comparison_of_different_assessment_tools [Accessed 20 September 2024]

- ☐ How does resonating with other supporters help you?

1.3. Recognising the Impact

Addictive disorders have a far-reaching impact, causing high levels of *unmanageability* in an addicted individual's life and in the lives of those close to them.

As supporters, we are often deeply affected, and even traumatised, by a significant other's addictive cycles. It is extremely common for us to experience a range of intense and uncomfortable emotions, including frustration, anger, resentment, confusion, fear, anxiety, depression, despair, and despondency in response to the chaos in which we find ourselves immersed.

It is also commonplace for us to adopt unhealthy ways of coping with our emotional distress and to attempt to control the situation in maladaptive ways. This can result in dysfunctional, destructive patterns in our own lives, that may include hyper-vigilance, preoccupation, codependency, emotional avoidance, enabling, self-blame, self-neglect, and self-medicating. As dysfunction grows, we can be drawn into thoroughly disordered family systems in which we become an integral part of the problem.

Often, in such set ups, we are so consumed with our loved one finding freedom and getting well, we don't even realise that we ourselves are becoming unwell and living in a version of enslavement. Preoccupation with an addicted loved can cause us to cast our own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health aside. Over time, we may even come to believe that our needs and wants doesn't matter.

Many of us can identify with the experience of *losing our voice*, or even *losing ourselves*, in the process of trying to save our loved one. At the same time, denial can keep us believing that *we are not the one with a problem*.

Despite all of these very real effects, the true impact on supporters is frequently overlooked and under-addressed. Over time, we become practiced at minimising, suppressing, and avoiding the damage. Flawed beliefs and distorted expectations of ourselves can prevent us from acknowledging our own need for renewal and from seeking out the support that we actually require.

Additionally, supporter recovery services and programmes are not as readily available as they are for addiction recovery. We may find ourselves knowing that we need some kind of support but feeling unsure about how to go about the process.

- ☐ What emotions have you experienced in relation to your loved one's addiction?

- ☐ Describe some of the effects of your loved one's addictive cycles on your own life.

- ☐ How would you visually represent your experience in relation to your loved one's addictive cycles? Use the space below to illustrate.

[illegible]

- ☐ In what ways have you tried to control or manage your loved one's addiction? What have been the outcomes?

- ☐ Can you identify any dysfunctional patterns in your own life that have developed in response to your loved one's addictive cycles?

- ☐ To what extent have you minimised, suppressed, or avoided the impact on yourself?

- ☐ What is your understanding around your own need for support?

1.4. Addressing the Reality

Supporters often join recovery groups or programmes to learn how to better help and support a loved one in achieving and sustaining recovery. Although this is definitely important, the reality is that we also need to learn how to better help and support *ourselves*.

As we have read, the supporter role can leave us depleted, despondent, and often caught in self-destructive cycles of our own. This is not God's intention for our lives. God's desire is that we live in peace and prosperity, with purpose and joy, and that we experience an overflow in all areas.

It may feel counter-intuitive at first but effectively addressing the situation in which we find ourselves begins with a *paradigm shift*. This shift involves refocusing our attention onto our own value, identity, and well-being, as we acknowledge that we too are worthy of wellness and in need of change and restoration.

This does not, in any way, mean that we cut off, stop caring about, or arrest support of our loved ones. However, the process does involve a healthy degree of detachment and acceptance of the fact that we cannot control nor is it healthy to take responsibility for another person's choices.

In life, we only have authority over and are accountable for our own attitudes and actions. This means that, no matter what we do, we cannot secure sustainable recovery for our loved ones in our own strength. What we are able to claim, by walking our own, independent journey of recovery, is our own health, freedom, and authority.

Ironically, it is typically through this very process that we come to understand and find the capacity to implement healthy ways of supporting our loved ones that do not perpetuate dysfunction but rather empower them to help themselves. In dealing with our own condition, we end up more constructively approaching the situation as a whole.

☐ What is *the reality* of your situation?

- ☐ How do you feel about the prospect of refocusing your attention onto yourself?

- ☐ Do you have any concerns and/or apprehension about the process?

- ☐ What underlying beliefs and thoughts could be driving these concerns and/or this apprehension, e.g., "Without my constant care, they will fall apart," or, "I shouldn't have to do this, I'm not the one with the problem."?

- ☐ What could you gain through this process?

- ☐ What could your loved one gain through your process?

As you pursue your own recovery, accessing external support is essential. Most Project Exodus recovery communities run integrated *supporter recovery groups* and participation in these groups is highly beneficial on many different levels.

In recovery groups, we can experience empathy, acceptance, and authenticity, and be vulnerable without fear of judgement, which is liberating. As part of a collective, we can also gain powerful knowledge, acquire helpful coping skills, and benefit through vicarious learning and multiple perspectives.

Making use of a recovery coach, counsellor, and/or a therapist is also recommended, especially if you are experiencing signs and symptoms of trauma, such as intense anxiety, persistent depression, insomnia, emotional numbness, emotional turbulence, functional impairment, or suicidal thoughts.

- ☐ Are you experiencing any signs and symptoms of trauma?

- ☐ How will you access additional external support?

- ☐ Which supporter recovery group/s do you currently, or do you plan to, attend?



To find a group online or near you, scan the QR code to access the groups locator on the Project Exodus website. Alternatively, you can access the locator via the following link: <https://www.projectexodus.net/groups>

2. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

2.1. Motivation

After much time and repetition doing things a certain way, *singing a new song* can be difficult. It is for this reason that the **resound** programme has been developed. Crafted out of many years of experience working with families in rehabilitation settings, the aim of **resound** is to lead you confidently through the process and to equip you with the knowledge, attitudes, strategies, and skills required to walk a path of meaningful, sustainable recovery for yourself.

Combining sound biblical precepts with evidence-based psychosocial interventions, the programme delivers a current, best-practice approach to personal change and growth within the supporter context. The hope is that by working through the programme you will be empowered to take hold of an enhanced way of life.

At the same time, the programme provides helpful insights into addiction and sustainable addiction recovery that intend to capacitate you to be of constructive support to your loved one, without compromising your own well-being.

2.2. Materials

resound consists of the following series of twelve workbooks, each of which includes information to read, questions to answer, activities to complete, and practical strategies to implement.

1. COMPREHENDING ADDICTION AND RELATED DYSFUNCTION

In this workbook, you will gain a comprehensive understanding of addictive disorders and learn about the maladaptive mechanisms that sustain cycles of addiction. You will also explore dysfunctional responses that are common amongst supporters and reflect upon your own patterns in need of renewal.

2. ENABLING VS. EMPOWERMENT

Supporters regularly try to help their loved ones in unhealthy ways that actually perpetuate the problem. In this workbook, you will learn about the differences between helpful vs. unhelpful support. You will also reflect on your own enabling patterns and be equipped to replace these with empowering alternatives.

3. CONQUERING CODEPENDENCY

Codependency is common in relationships in which addiction is present. In this workbook, you will gain insight into the symptoms, motives, and effects of codependency. You will reflect on how you relate to this dynamic and explore practical ways to foster healthier, interdependent relationships.

4. THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

Breaking free from the disordered system of relating that makes up the Drama Triangle requires self-awareness and self-regulation. In this workbook, you will learn about the triangle's three main roles and reflect on your own participation in this system. You will also consider and commit to new, healthy rules of engagement.

5. DEALING WITH DENIAL

Denial is a mental mechanism that inhibits positive change by blinding a person to the negative reality of a behaviour or situation. In this workbook, you will explore various forms and outworkings of denial, as you reflect on its presence in your own life. You will also look at ways to dismantle denial in yourself and in others.

6. NAVIGATING RECOVERY

To cultivate wellbeing in the supporter context, it is recommended that you choose to walk a recovery journey of your own. This workbook will introduce you to fundamental recovery precepts as well as progressive stages of change. You will also learn how to most productively approach the recovery process of a loved one.

7. PRIORITISING A PROGRAMME

Sustainable recovery is not accidentally achieved. In this workbook, you will gain an understanding of what it means to work a multi-faceted recovery programme. You will consider different programme components as they pertain to you and also learn about how these elements apply in sustainable addiction recovery.

8. LIFE RECOVERY PLANNING

Like anything in life, recovery works best with a plan. In this workbook, you will work with a set of guidelines to develop your own personalised strategy for recovery in the form of a Life Recovery Plan. This foundational document will function as a roadmap to protect and direct your journey going forward.

9. WORKING ON SELF-WORTH

Reprioritising yourself and nurturing a consistent state of well-being, that is not dependent on external variables, is a large part of the supporter recovery journey. In this workbook, you will explore the concept of sustainable self-worth and apply strategies to cultivate an enduring sense of personal value and precedence.

10. EMBRACING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Underdeveloped emotional intelligence can cause us to mishandle our emotions and react to our feelings in unhelpful ways, resulting in unnecessary distress, relational conflict, and dysfunction. In this workbook, you will learn how to better identify, understand, regulate, and appropriately respond to emotionally triggering situations as well as difficult feelings in order to achieve more positive outcomes.

11. BUILDING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are a vital part of forming an autonomous identity and fostering non-toxic, interdependent relationships. In this workbook, you will reflect on the current state of your boundaries. You will also learn about establishing and maintaining healthier boundaries as you consider practical ways to live according to your own limits and personal parameters while still respecting the needs of others.

12. AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

The practice of gratitude is a behaviour that has a multitude of mental, emotional, spiritual, and even physical benefits. Because of its contributions towards healthy coping, living with an attitude of gratitude is a fundamental part of any recovery journey. In this workbook, you will explore what it means to live a lifestyle of thankfulness. You will also apply practical ways of sustaining gratitude long-term.

To get the most out of the programme, we recommend that you set aside regular time each week to work through the content or, if you are part of a **resound** small group, complete the homework assigned to you by your facilitator.

In this regard, prior planning is helpful in preventing procrastination, developing healthy habits, and maintaining momentum. Scheduling shorter, more frequent sessions as opposed to longer but less regular sessions, can make the process more manageable and sustainable.

Like so many other endeavours, *the more you put in, the more you'll get out*. How much benefit you gain from the programme directly relates to how much time and effort you invest into it.

- ☐ What time/s during the week will you set aside to work through **resound** programme materials?

- ☐ Having been provided with an overview of the programme content, how do you now feel about embarking on this journey?

2.3. Methodology

resound utilises a *Learn, Reflect, Apply* methodology, in which you will

- Learn: be taught core concepts pertaining to a topic
- Reflect: consider the concepts in relation to your lived experience
- Apply: practice or plan to implement new knowledge, attitudes, and skills

Throughout the programme, significant emphasis is placed on personal reflection and practical application of concepts, as this helps to personalise and internalise the knowledge and skills that are taught. This process is further solidified and deepened when reflections and applications are verbally expressed and processed.

To maximise positive outcomes, it is vital to make concerted attempts to complete reflection exercises thoughtfully, implement programme recommendations, and apply the practical strategies/skills that are demonstrated.

Some common excuses for not giving 100% include:

- **Denial:** “I don’t need this. I’m not the one with problems.”
- **Arrogance:** “I know a better way.”
- **Laziness:** “It’s too much effort.”
- **Procrastination:** “I’ll do it tomorrow.”
- **Low self-esteem:** “I’ll get it wrong.”
- **Impatience:** “It takes too long. I have so much else to do.”
- **Victim-mentality:** “It won’t make a difference anyway.”

If you are completing the programme in a small group, we also ask that you respect the group guidelines communicated by your facilitator and participate in group processes to the best of your ability.

- ☐ Which of the previous excuses resonate with, or could be a problem for, you?

- ☐ How will you address these attitudes when they arise?

- ☐ Have you been made aware of the group guidelines? If not, ask your facilitator to make these available to you.

3. ENCOURAGEMENT

Well done. You have completed the *Orientation* workbook. We trust that the information provided has given you a clear understanding of the direction in which you are headed. We are confident that if you persevere along this path, you will reap resounding rewards.

Next up is *Comprehending Addiction and Related Dysfunction*.

- ☐ What is the most significant thing that you have learnt in this workbook?

- ☐ What important realisations have you had?

- ☐ How will you put your new insights into practice?



Please provide us with feedback on this workbook by scanning the QR code alongside and completing the online form. Thank you.

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