

Survivors Group Says There Is Help For Those Who Encountered Abuse

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) gathered outside a local Catholic Church today to spread the word that their organization can help with support for any survivors.

"We're here basically to help protect the vulnerable and heal the wounded," explained David Clohessy, spokesperson for SNAP.

Clohessy encourages parents to talk to their children about abuse, and he advocates for survivors to share their stories, whether they choose to tell a loved one, a church official or the police.

He noted that many victims die by suicide or drug overdoses, and he hopes SNAP can provide support for survivors who are struggling.

“We were contacted by a victim of who is not filing criminal charges or civil charges, but he, like the rest of us, just wants to let people know that if you were hurt, there’s hope,” Clohessy added. “In addition to having a Christian duty, you’ve also got a civil duty to contact civil authorities if you saw, suspected or suffered any kind of abuse.”

“We want anybody who saw, suspected or suffered any wrongdoing by any priests or clergy anywhere to come forward, get help and call law enforcement," even if long in the past," he added.

Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) is a self-help organization of men and women who were sexually abused by spiritual elders, brothers, nuns, ministers, teachers, etc. Members find healing and empowerment by joining with other survivors.

SNAP is an all-volunteer group with several chapters in the United States. They have a very active on-line email support group with members from throughout the world. For more information, call toll free number is 877-762-7432.

Also, for more information about SNAP, the nation’s largest self-help organization for clergy abuse victims, visit SNAPNetwork.org.

If you or someone you know has been affected by clergy abuse, support is available. Survivors can contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) for confidential, 24/7 support. Additionally, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides help for those in distress at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Both organizations offer resources and assistance for healing and recovery.