

South Florida Connects, Inc.

Straight Spouse Twelve Steps Recovery Plan

These are the Twelve Steps for straight Spouse recovery adapted by South Florida Connects, Inc. (SFC)

Recovery is not only for straight spouses with addiction to the lies their husbands tell them and the denial that they chose to live in, but also for their friends and family who may find it hard to believe that their loved one is actually a straight spouse.

Many straight spouses in recovery will find that these steps are not just a way to help you get out of a bad situation, but to help guide you toward a new life and an improved you.

Step 1: Honesty

After many years of denial, recovery can begin when with one simple admission of being in denial about your spouse's gay orientation. This is something your family and friends will have to accept too. They too will have to be honest about their denial or lack of acceptance of the truth before them.

Step 2: Faith

It is a fact that you have to exercise your faith before it can be of any use to you. Before God can begin to make things different and help you salvage your brokenness, you have to have faith and believe that things can change for the better or that you can get up and move on to better things with God's help. You must believe...and act! Act like you know that it is true that you will become better, even better than you were before the disclosure or discovery of your spouse's same sex orientation.

Step 3: Surrender

You must surrender all of your old thinking. It will be difficult but a lifetime of mythical thinking has to end. You have to start facing reality...your reality run is not what you thought it was and you have to surrender the old thinking as you prepare to adopt the truth as it really is. You have to drop everything completely and turn a new page and begin to rewrite your script. With God's help you can do anything now. **Philippians 4:13**: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Step 4: Soul Searching

This is a process, not an event. Straight Spouse Recovery is a process. It can be a shortened process or it can be a long drawn out process. It all depends on whether you are willing to do a complete surrender of your old mythical thinking and accept your new normal...the fact that you are a straight spouse in a mixed orientation relationship.

Step 5: Integrity

This is the step that will provide you the most opportunity for new growth. It will also be the most difficult step for some of you to face as true integrity means you have to stop lying to yourself and accept the facts the way they are without all the excuses, half-truths and deception.

When you are able to face everything and accept it as it is, you will find that the difficulty may be somewhat diminished. Above all else, your integrity is to be treasured so this is a great time to rehabilitate it. You may have ruined it unintentionally especially during those times when you help to perpetuate the lie that all was well and your marriage was wonderful.

Pretending that your great looking public life that drew envy was just the way it was at home, ruined your integrity but you have a chance to rehabilitate it now. So go for it.

Step 6: Acceptance

The most important aspect to this step is your acceptance. Accepting the fact that you are married to someone who is of same sex orientation, accepting that you are a straight spouse, accepting that your children are the product of a mixed orientation union, accepting that you are now a part of the millions of men and women who as straight spouses have been unknowingly married to someone who may have been out rightly deceptive in their intimate dealings with you and the rest of your family.

You have to now accept this truth exactly as it is and be entirely willing to let your spouse go, or work on the new dynamics of your marriage, your new normal.

Step 7: Humility

This is so hard for so many people, especially after your experiences and the fact that you now know so much more than you ever did. This is humility and this step makes this a main focus. How do you practice humility after all of this betrayal?

Try asking your higher power to rescue you and teach you how to be humble because humility cannot come from you alone. It is not your nature to practice humility at all times. Your own self will and determination is not enough, so reach for your higher power. Call in your support. Remember that you are not alone. You are never alone. God is always there with you. Reach out to him.

Step 8: Willingness

With humility usually comes a need to make amends. Not

that you were intentionally doing wrong to others, but that you may have burnt some bridges because you were not willing or ready to believe that you had a secret gay spouse.

You may have kicked some people out of your life as there was a time when it felt like it was so much easier to live your life of denial without them in it. Now you have to prepare to make amends.

Try making a list of those who you may have harmed before you came to the rude awakening that they were right all along.

Coming into straight spouse recovery may sound simple, but becoming willing to actually make amends to those you wronged before your integrity strengthened, your acceptance became reality, and your humility came to life will be difficult.

You can do. If you have come this far in you recovery, you can go all the way.

Step 9: Forgiveness

So, making amends to everyone will most likely seem like a very bitter pill to swallow. However, if you are serious about your straight spouse recovery you will find that it is great medicine for your spirit as well as your soul. Giving up the hurt and the pain as well as the accompanying resentment, will help you with your forgiveness. Remember that forgiveness is about you for helping you and your relationship with your higher power. True forgiveness will help you heal faster than you ever imagined.

Step 10: Maintenance

Do you like to admit that you made a mistake? You are not alone if you don't. Nobody likes to admit to being wrong. But you need to be able to admit when you made mistakes if

you want to maintain spiritual progress throughout your straight spouse recovery journey.

It is absolutely necessary to maintain your spiritual prowess in your recovery process. No one can do it for you. Only you can do this, with God's help of course.

Step 11: Making Contact

Now is the time to discover the plan God has for you. You must truly try to understand what He has in store for your life. Your earlier suffering was not by mistake. It has a purpose in the grand scheme of things. Remember that if God brought you to it, he will bring you through it. But how? What does he want you to do with all of this? Find out as your suffering was not meant to be left in a vacuum. It has a purpose and God will help you apply it to that purpose so others can be helped. Remember that your life has meaning...find out what is required and do it.

Step 12: Service

How does this work? Practicing understanding, empathy, and sharing your new found straight spouse awareness with others who are still where you were...in denial, or feeling loss because of lack of adequate information, is service.

For straight spouses in recovery practicing Step 12 is simply how this works. There is no catch to it, no hidden agenda. Your genuine service to others will be a true reflection of your new and improved self-worth, your new acceptance of your new reality and your new normal, where you feel right at home in your own skin.

You are not Alone!

“Life was not meant to be this complicated and difficult...Period!