

## Sample Letter to Participant Support Person

Dear (name),

Recently your loved one took a very important step by coming to an initial meeting of a Mending the Soul healing group. They probably did so with fear, trembling, and mixed emotions, yet recognizing a need for healing in some areas of their life concerning their abuse. They may feel unsure about their desire to look at the problem, let alone have others looking at it with them. It is a vulnerable place to be. Your role in the coming weeks is extremely important.

You may feel uncomfortable with them attending this group, or resent the time and emotional energy they are spending on something from their past. These reactions are normal, and we understand your concerns.

As the group progresses, your loved one is going to need time alone to do the homework. They are going to be dredging up pain that they have been avoiding, possibly for a very long time. We do this only in order to help them resolve damaging emotions, and not in an effort to create trauma where none previously existed. Most people are in tremendous denial about their abuse, and no lasting healing can take place until the past is purposefully faced.

What is your role in this process? In your own loving way, give them the support that only you can give. Allow them this time. Let them cry. Hold them if they want you to, but don't try to make their pain go away. Encourage them to do their homework -- you might entertain the children or take your dog on a walk during that time to grant them space. Support them as they try to listen, maybe for the first time, to the needs of their heart, soul, and body, and encourage them to take the bath, go to the yoga class, or punch the pillow as those physical needs are expressed. Be willing to listen without judgment or condemnation if they want to talk. And if they don't want to talk, let them know that this is okay for the time being. They'll want to share with you in time.

Towards the end of the group, your loved one will be dealing with their feelings about the abuse and this may be particularly difficult. Be especially tender and understanding with them as they grieve. We wish there were a magic wand we could wave over them to instantly erase their pain and loss. The truth is, they have a lot of hard work ahead of them, and you can be a tremendous source of encouragement and understanding for them in the coming weeks. Pray for them daily as they

wrestle through these challenges. Even though there will always be ongoing memories for them, the goal of Mending the Soul is to help them experience significant and lasting healing, and to help them become the beautiful person of God they were created to be. We pray that your home and family will be richly blessed as a result of your loved one competing this group.

Sincerely,

(your names)

Mending the Soul Facilitators

c/o (your church or supporting organization)