

Voices of the Silenced:

Personal accounts of counselling interventions for unwanted same-sex attractions.

The enclosed solicited feedback accounts are the authentic words of current clients in long-term therapy with Core Issues Trust taken over a two week period in preparation for the July 2017 General Synod. These individuals are concerned that the Church of England may attempt to ban what it calls 'Conversion Therapy'. Their photographs cannot be supplied because of unacceptably high levels of intimidation towards those who seek such help.



core-issues.org
info@core-issues.org
+44 (0)7833098998

Voices of the Silenced:

Introduction

Following dismissal from training as a Psychodrama Psychotherapist in the Birmingham Institute of Psychodrama at the behest of their affiliation body, the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), I have continued to offer counselling to a number of men and women (up to 20 per week) wanting to leave homosexual practices and feelings. The basis of my removal from the professional trainee register was not because of any client complaint (there never has been any such complaint), but because my ideas were, and remain unacceptable to the psychotherapy profession. Following an appeal, I was told that I "may re-apply to continue training should you consistently cease to promulgate your current opinions..." I continue to work internationally to establish a viable alternative platform from which to offer support to those who seek it.

The following solicited feedback represents a snapshot of current clients in my own practice, from various backgrounds taken during a two-week period leading up to the June 2017 General Synod of the Church of England in York. These are the authentic voices of individuals who have sometimes been told that the only professional support they may receive will help them to affirm their homosexual 'orientation'. I have offered these testimonies to a Sunday Times journalist, (some of whose authors were willing to meet for the purposes of verification), but my offer was declined. Their stories are now presented to the governing body of the Established Church. Their names and faces are withheld, since those who oppose our work seek to know them only to denounce them and repudiate their witness as inauthentic.

My hope is that synod members will respect the dignity of these voices, and also feel the deep anger that many experience because their voice is consistently marginalised by the media, mental health bodies, and potentially the Church of England. They seek one thing: trustworthy help which supports their own worldviews and viewpoints, and which respects personal autonomy.

Core Issues Trust is the only registered UK charity openly offering counselling and therapeutic support in line with client goals and aspirations of moving away from homosexual practices. It is regrettable that, despite several representations over the years and throughout the 'Listening Process' on behalf of the Trust, an

organisation supported by many faithful Anglicans, His Grace Archbishop Welby has not been in a position to meet with us and to listen to our concerns. Neither, it seems, has the Church of England paid adequate attention to the findings of its own Pilling Report (paras 205-208 and 209-211) which recognised the Trust's concern for the measure of misleading advocacy science produced by Professor Michael King on behalf of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in its submission to the Church. Of particular importance is the College's claim to the Church that sexual orientation is 'biological in nature' and that there is 'no substantive evidence' that early childhood experiences play any role' in a person's sexual development – in effect, one is Born Gay. After pressure from Core Issues Trust, the College issued a new position statement whose opening sentence reads, "The Royal College of Psychiatrists considers that sexual orientation is determined by a combination of biological and postnatal environmental factors." The significance of the word 'postnatal' can hardly be exaggerated – 'Born Gay' has never been true. We have urged the College to inform the Church that its submission to Pilling on this matter was erroneous, but to our knowledge it has not done so.

I humbly request now, on behalf of those who share their hearts with you in what follows, that the Church of England recognise that it has no mandate to make such a momentous decision as to support a ban on psychotherapeutic, counselling and pastoral support to end unwanted same-sex behaviours and feelings. These people are made in God's image, and have usually had some postnatal experiences which have influenced the direction of their sexuality. A hasty decision by the Church now would impact negatively on those outside of its jurisdiction, deny these voices their human right to decide their own destiny and sexual identity, and damage our mission as ambassadors for Christ.

I commend to you the forthcoming full length feature-documentary *Voices of the Silenced*, and TV series filmed in 8 countries over two years, which will feature additional stories and hear expert perspective from a range of disciplines, including the former Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir Ali. The film examines the resurgence of Pansexual Humanism from its ancient roots, and was extensively filmed in the Vesuvian towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

May God give you guidance as you decide our futures.



Mike Davidson, Ph.D. HEA
Chief Executive, Core Issues Trust

1st July, 2017

Hussein

Muslim

Jordanian UK

MBA postgraduate student
and Dental engineer

33 years

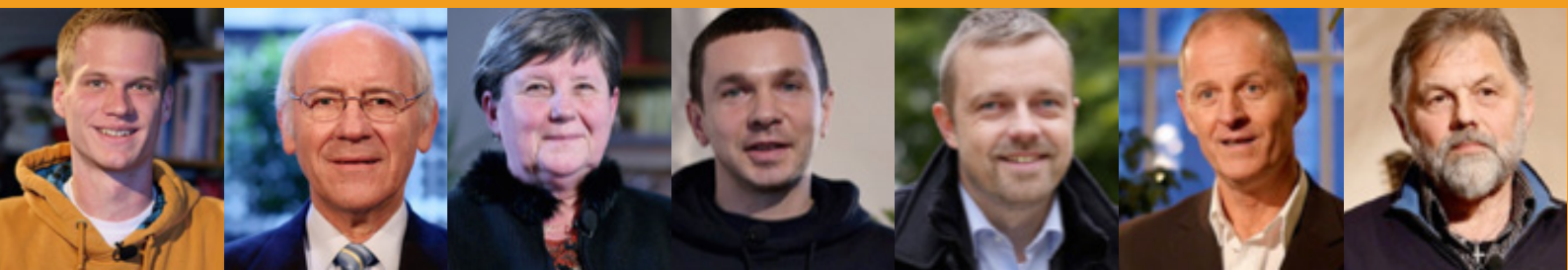
I am a senior electronics engineer. I do maintenance for dental units all over the country. I am also Muslim and I think that Islam has a very good point of view about everything in our life and also I believe that Islam and Christianity are very close to each other because they come from the same God.

I knew about unwanted SSA when I was 20 years old and from that date I became depressed and anxious, searching all over to find answers. In my background, sexual orientation is flexible and changeable. No one stays unmarried. I had been on anti-depressants and medication for years. When I found NARTH and Core Issues Trust, hope came back to me that change is possible. In 2015 I went to the UK to do undertake an MBA in London. I was given the contact details of a therapist that might help. Therapy was helpful especially in the beginning and the therapist gave me insight about issues that I had been struggling with. I still need more therapy and when I return to the UK I will continue my work in therapy.

Therapy must be a free choice for every individual, each person must have the right to choose and adopt his sexual orientation. Many people are happy and satisfied with their sexual orientation. But for others it doesn't work - they want to live a heterosexual life and to have a normal healthy family with kids.

I think that the authorities should make new rules that allow people with SSA to seek therapy. I also think that all people from all faiths should stand together to support people like me.

For additional stories and commentary of those featured below, look for the feature-documentary, *Voices of the Silenced* www.voicesofthesilenced.com



Michael

Spiritual, non-religious
Media agency director
Cambridge graduate
40 years

Having sought in vain to find happiness in gay-affirming society and active gay life over the course of 20 years, I finally discovered the truth about myself, and deeply satisfying alternative solutions to my relational and life problems. This was by working with a Core Issues Trust therapist for about two years, who helped me to move away from inauthentic, unhealthy and destructive homosexual relationships, and towards infinitely more fulfilling and meaningful relationships, that are leading to lasting happiness and profound spiritual growth.

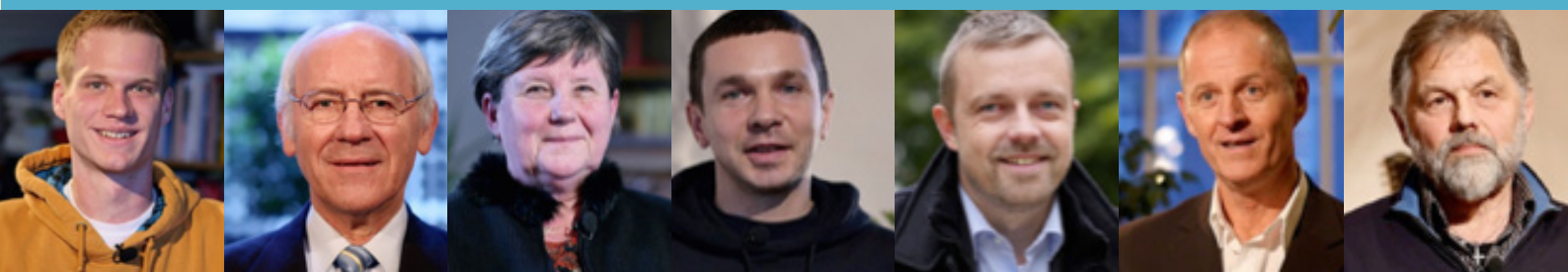
I believe I was born a heterosexual man and I do not identify with gay culture, and I don't want to engage in gay life any more. I have the right to pursue truth and happiness as I understand it; and that is what this therapy has allowed me to do.

I find it unacceptable that bigoted, intolerant people are seeking to disallow others their truth and their happiness, by seeking to ban this type of therapy; effectively telling people like me that I don't know what's good for me, and that their world view should dictate how I live my life. How intolerant, how patronising and how ignorant!

I am an educated professional who did not find happiness in the gay life, but instead disillusionment, sickness and a lie. Now I have sought out and found my own truth and happiness, with the help of a kind, respectful and trustworthy therapist who accepts me just as I am, where I am, and who is supporting me - without imposing any agenda - as I strive to be the person I want to be. I sought this therapy out for myself, and I am more satisfied than I ever was in the gay life.

What right has the Church of England Synod to ignore other world views, to take my happiness away, and to tell me how I should live my life?

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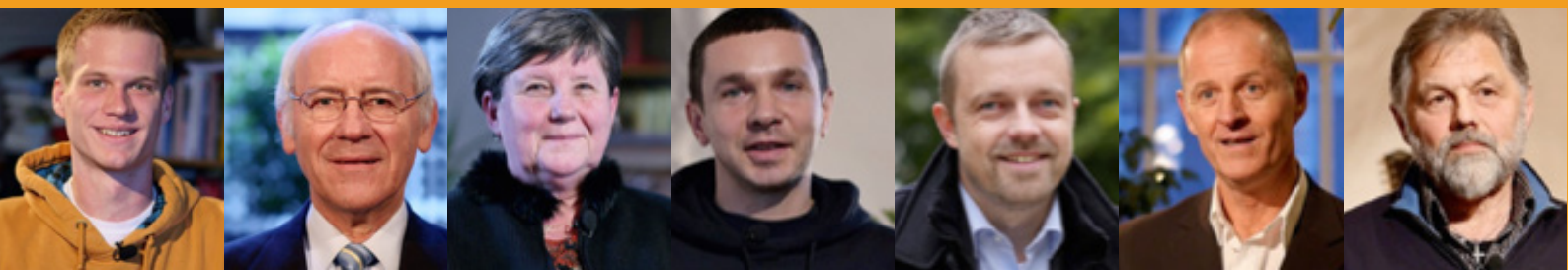


David

Christian
Priest, Church of England
Cambridge graduate
45 years

I've been living with unwanted same-sex attractions for nearly three decades. During that time I have come to understand that I wasn't born with these desires but they grew as a result of bullying and exclusion as a teenager and the way this interrupted my growing into a fully confident and mature adult man. My relationships with men since then have been badly affected. It's only in recent years that my confidence as a man in Christ has grown and my relationships with men have become less sexualised. I have been greatly helped recently by conversations with Core Issues Trust and feel that others should have the opportunity to choose such support if they feel that is it appropriate for them.

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Phil

Christian

Lecturer, Psychotherapist

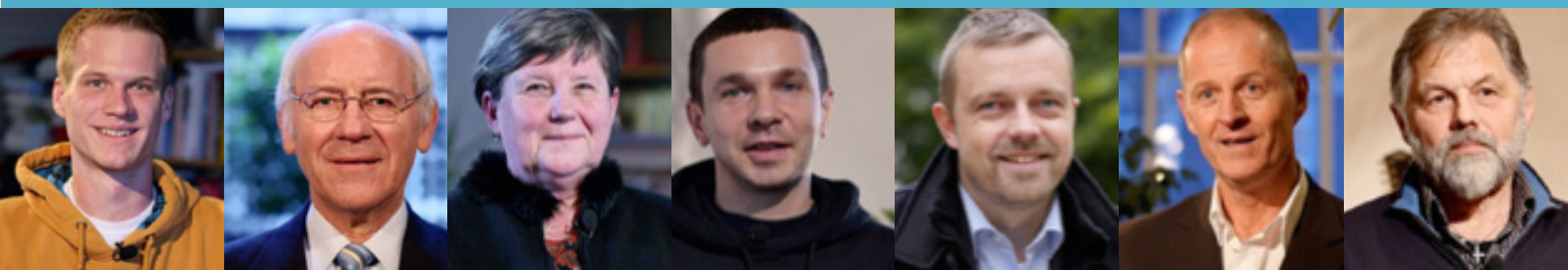
60 years

After many years of despair, depression and confusion my prayers were answered in the form of help from Core Issues Trust. As a child, I was horrifically abused by a family member which changed my worldview, social view and my view of myself as a male functioning in the world. Growing up in a world of greyness I navigated my way through a haze of depression, separateness, isolation and suicidality. My abuse had occurred at an age of ego formation that imprinted the abuse on my brain, negating my normal sexual evolution as a heterosexual male, to be replaced with a sense of non-being, genderless, neither male nor female. I vividly remember leaving school on my bicycle aged 12, after another day of beatings and bullying and making my way to yet another appointment with my psychiatrist trying to make some sense of my chaotic life.

My relations with men were confused in terms of fear on one hand, sexual attraction on the other. I found it impossible to relate to men in a convivial way, was always the odd man out and found it easier to relate to women. However, deep in my inner being I longed for the friendship of other males and secretly observed the easy informality in which men related to each other.

After many years of prayer, the Lord answered me by guiding me to Core Issues Trust. My counsellor has helped with my self-esteem issues enhancing my view of myself as a functioning heterosexual male in society. I grieve for that child who grew up in pain and darkness but have been enabled, through mentoring, to parent that lonely suffering child. The light has finally been switched on, my miracle has happened, I have been set free to be me, the person I was created to be. I finally look forward to the future and am thankful for my mentoring experience.

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Callum

Christian

Father

Self-employed entrepreneur

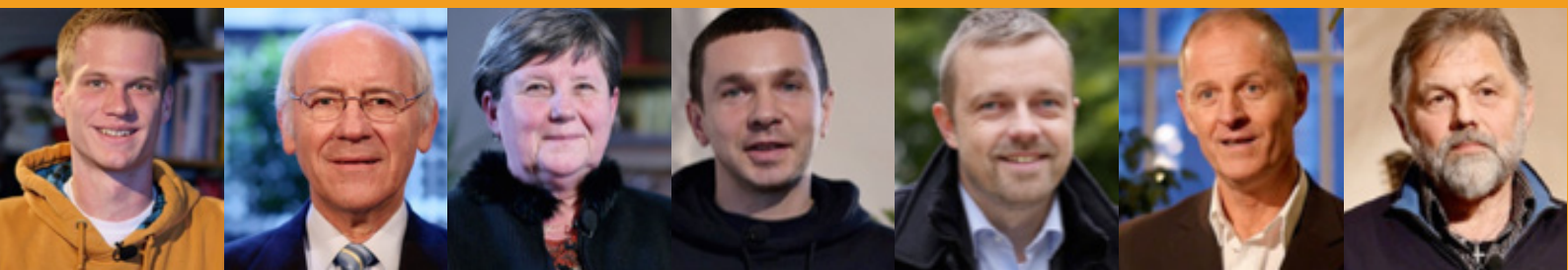
41 years

I availed of Core Issues Trust therapy for a period of approximately two years. I suppose there are really no words to adequately describe the benefit these sessions have been to me. Some people are of the opinion that someone like me who has experienced same sex attraction should be denied the help I have received which enabled me to gain a valuable insight into the emotional developmental issues during my childhood that were involved in the development of these same sex attractions. But to deny me this kind of therapy would have been to deny me my right to self-determination and would constitute the greatest intolerance to my personal wishes and need to heal in this area of my life [...] Some would say this kind of therapy is damaging, but my response is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I came to Core issues trust at one of the lowest and most desperate times in my life and when my marriage was close to failing. Now two years on I can truthfully say I do not even resemble the person I was two years ago [...]

It would be inaccurate though to give the impression that the therapy I received benefited me only in the area of same sex attraction. My CIT counsellor walked with me and supported me in my personal growth and on the redevelopment of my self-esteem and stood with me as I took steps to reach out for and fulfil my personal goals in life. I cannot say how much I have appreciated this, and it seems that it would not be an exaggeration to say that having this support has been a life saver. My personal feeling regarding this therapy is that there seems to be a great misunderstanding in its aims and it's nature. It does not attempt to change an individual from being gay to being straight but rather it helps an individual heal from past hurts and fears and imparts the courage needed to reach out and form the connections that they have needed in order to be happy and emotionally healthy. The knock-on effect of this healing and the nourishment of new closer friendships is that the sexual attraction decreases and the desire for more intimate non-sexual connections rises.

In short, I would not hesitate to recommend this vital service to anyone wishing to find understanding regarding their attractions and to heal from the past in order to be set free from addictive behaviours. The service was also provided completely free of charge which was vital for me at that point in my life and I am wholly more contented both mentally and emotionally as a result.

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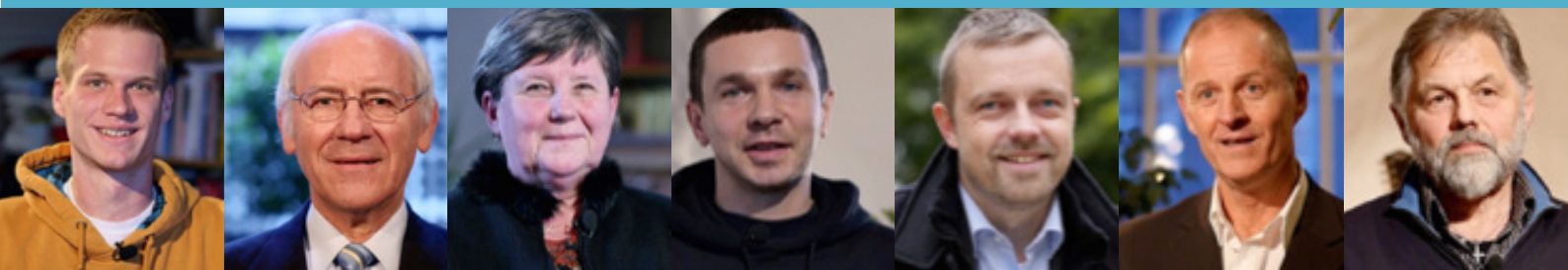


Tzvii

Observant Jew
London
Manager
32 years

My Core Issues Trust counsellor provides an excellent therapeutic model and the support provided is second to none. Vast improvements and positive changes have been evident and I cannot commend them enough for their care, professionalism and help. They provide me tremendous assistance with unwanted same sex attraction and my mental, emotional and psychological health had improved remarkably

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Mohammad

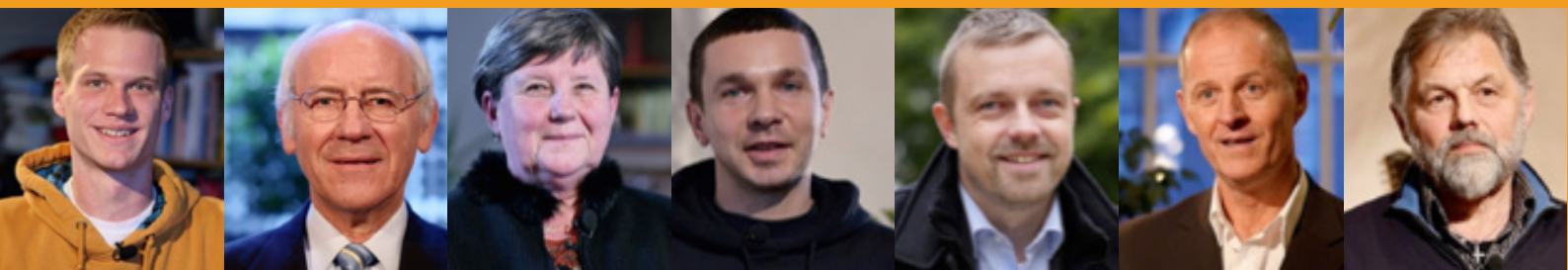
Muslim

Recent UK Physics graduate

24 years

I have been receiving therapy from Core Issues Trust on-and-off for the past two years. I would like to make it clear that I do not loathe myself for my same-sex attraction nor do I believe I was innately born with it. Even before speaking to them, I could identify the factors that I believe led to my current same-sex attraction; a harsh and distant father, early sexual encounters with my male cousins due to extreme segregation and frustration and a feeling of abandonment by other boys. I am very grateful to have someone like my CIT counsellor to speak to about my daily struggles in living in accordance with my beliefs. For those who suggest that this type of therapy is harmful, I would say-in fact-that withdrawing this therapy is harmful. Indeed, I would be extremely unhappy and distressed if I were to give in to my same-sex desires. It is ironic that a society that prides itself on individual liberty wants to enforce its values on others.

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James

Spiritual/Interfaith
Ph.D. in Clinical and Surgical
Sciences, UK
38 years

I've been receiving support from the Core Issues Trust for more than 18 months. The support has helped me understand the evolution of my sexuality and gender identity - unravelling the influence of an emotionally-confused past and giving me the power to create an emotionally-healthy future.

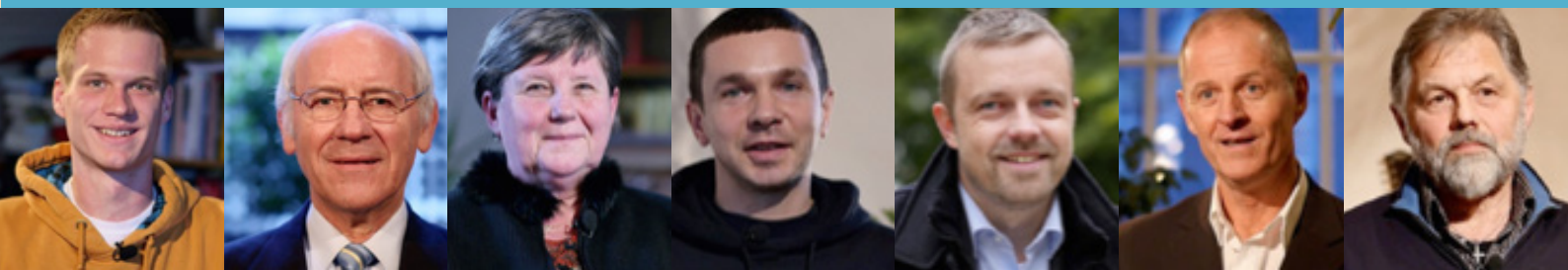
The guidance I've received has driven a huge boost to my self-esteem. I have a new understanding of significant life events which shaped me as a youngster including sexual abuse at the age of ten. Today I feel very confident in situations that once threatened me. For example, I feel like I 'fit in' around groups of men where I used to feel out on the edge. I feel more comfortable receiving appreciation and affection from a wide variety of male peers...Whereas previously, this felt possible only in a sexual context. I am generally happier in my skin! What is more, intimacy with women has become a desirable reality.

I have a scientific background, with Ph.D. in Clinical and Surgical Sciences and am trained in a number of therapies. This helped me absorb the principles of Joseph Nicolosi's reparative therapy and understand how basic therapeutic approaches used in other areas of emotional and mental health can be applied to sexuality and gender identity.

From day one, the mentoring received from the Core Issues Trust has encouraged me to choose my own goals and to explore the journey towards them in an affirmative way. I am not a practicing Christian myself and have felt free to express my own worldview - which is aligned with values and non-physical aspects common to all faiths.

During the past 18 months I've reached and exceeded goals that a few years ago felt far on the horizon. This has opened up new possibilities for me to improve relationships with my parents and peers and foster new healthy relationships with both sexes. I'm very excited about where life is taking me next!

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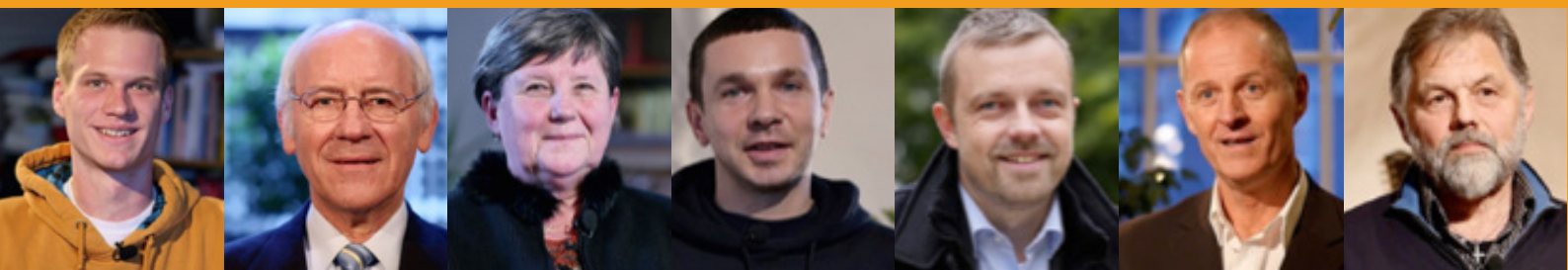
Martin

Christian
Lecturer, Slovakia
39 years

I was born like a heterosexual man. When I was growing up in teen age, I would like to have a sex. I did not want to get a girl pregnant and destroy my life, so I started to imagine sex with man. I was developing my sexual fantasy and my desire was growing up. I thought sex is the same with the women like with the men. I did not have sex because I had the shame and nobody was interest. I fall in love in the age of my 25 years old with older men when I found out I am looking for father and son relationship because my father broke me in my childhood. I was missing a lot of things like father's hug, affirmation, approval and father's attachment. My identity was destroyed and I was looking for substitution of father's love. When I understood my problem, I asked a Core Issues Trust counsellor for helping me develop healthy relationship to myself and other men. I don't want to use other men to fulfil my emotional needs. I would like to be blessing for others and help them to be healthy. I was doing a lot of stupid things. I would like to heal and go through therapy, because I was not born like a gay. I would like to have a family, wife and children. Therapy with my Core Issues Trust counsellor is for me very helpful. I feel free to speak with him about my emotions, which I consider wrong. I don't feel shame before my counsellor because he has similar experience in his life and he has the same understanding of circumstances like me.

It is for me important to speak with my counsellor and be with him one hour every week. I have a connection from heart to heart with him and it is very important to build healthy relationship with an older man who understand my situation. I always get support from him and he always found a time for me even when he is very busy. I am very thankful, because he is giving me hope I will get out of my SSA feelings. I really appreciate he is doing it for free because I don't have a lot of money. When I asked someone else for help, everyone asked money. I can say my Counsellor is really honest and he really wants to help others who are suffering and I suffer because I feel unwanted SSA and my CIT Counsellor is helping me very much. I feel he accepts me fully. I trust him and I am looking forward to Skype with him every time. My self-confidence and self-value is increasing

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Rizwan

Muslim

Recent B.Com graduate

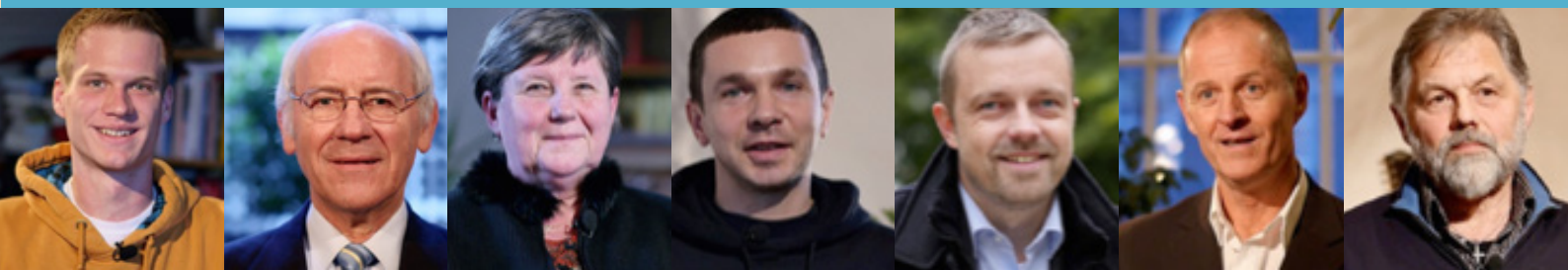
33 years

I have been receiving therapy from core issues past 1 year. I would like to say that I am not attracted to same sex attraction anymore.

Actually when I was a young boy I was been abused and forcefully sex with my elder brother friend who was aged 24 or 25 that time and I was aged 10. After that I lost all my confidence and was scared and confused most of the time. He was secretly abusing me for 4 to 5 years and always told me to quite otherwise he would tell this to everyone and that it will not only damage my reputation but brings shame to my family. Then he moved to other town and left me with this abuse and unhappiness. I was a shy confused and below than average student in my class. Because of that I was always bullied by teachers and students. Not only got physical tortured but mentally as well. I migrated to UK when I completed my bachelors in back home with consistent marks. I started dating older guys. Thought they will be gentle and will not harm me and force me to do anything that I don't want. I was absolutely wrong about that they were as cruel as other men. I started getting counselling with my CIT Counsellor from core issue and he told me to discover my inner man and masculinity that was been taken by that abuser and other men and old men.

He always told me to stop watching gay porn don't do anything that gives me grief and guilt. If dating men makes me sad stop doing that and try to be responsible adult. I start taking things in a different way now I am taking responsibilities now as a grown man. I changed my walking style my speaking style and stop watching porn. It not only gives me inner peace but I discovered my inner man now as well. I discovered masculinity that was been taken from me when I was a vulnerable child. I am on process of healing and I am sure good things will happen, insha Allah. Thanks to core issues God bless.

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Daniel

Christian
Nigerian-born British
Telecommunications
postgraduate
36 years

I was sexually abused as kid in the boarding school from age 11-18. This had a negative impact on my life and led me to depression, self harm and suicidal thoughts. This also affected a lot things in my life

Being described as a gay person was not what I wanted. When I came to the UK, I found that people who have decided to live as a homosexual got all the support they needed but the people that decided change their lifestyle had no real help or where to turn to.

I came across Core Issues Trust by chance during a programme on TV who were actually criticising their activities and I decided to give it a try.

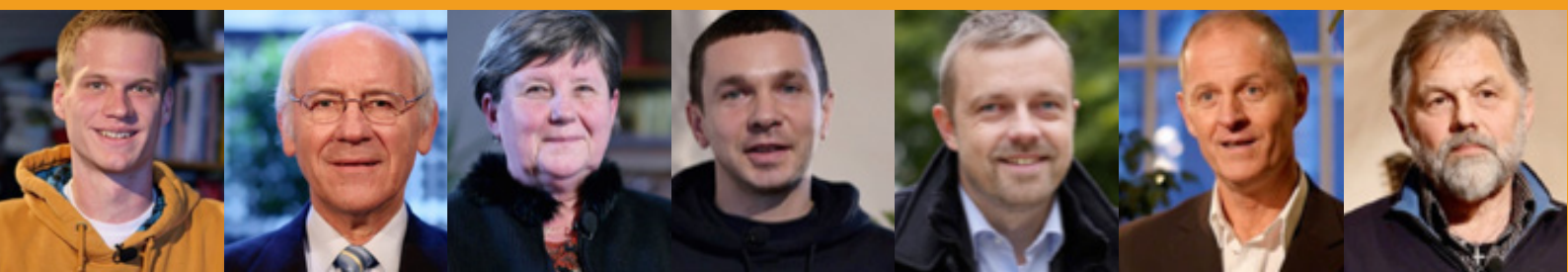
I called them and told my story as it was. I got the support I needed, first I was able to deal with my depression, I also got the support to change to the lifestyle I wanted. I had the courage to say NO to same sex activities etc.

I am not perfect but I have hope in Christ. I am now confident. I am able to keep a job and a career and I can say I have seen the positive changes in my life through their help and prayers. The teachings of Christ from Romans 1vs 1-end and the repentance, grace and the forgiveness that comes from living a Christ like life is present in me as I make my journey through life.

Core Issues trust should be supported for those that seek to leave the lifestyle of homosexuality and follow Christ. They offer this without any condemnation to the individual

I am in full support of the doctrines they teach and support they offer through a network of believers

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Core Issues Trust

Challenging gender confusion;
upholding science and conscience