

Straightforward Advice from a Survivor

by Sue Brown

"Adults Molested as Children: A Survivor's Manual for Women and Men" is a sensitive, informative, and straightforward guide written from the survivor's perspective. It takes the reader through the process of remembering and contending with the effects of childhood sexual abuse. Throughout the book, Euan Bear supports the feelings and experiences of those who have been abused, as well as providing survivors with alternative ways of thinking and feeling about themselves, and about the abuse. "Abuse is something that is done to us. It is not who we are" is a message that echoes throughout the book.

The author begins by using statistics to illustrate the pervasiveness of sexual abuse. A definition of abuse is given along with the clear message that the molester, not the child, is responsible for the abuse. Once the survivor begins to remember and confront their history, it is explained that childhood feelings of "pain, shame, guilt, humiliation and fear" are often re-experi-

enced. Suggestions for dealing with these feelings are given and these include breaking the silence by telling people about the abuse, confronting the abuser, and joining a support group or individual therapy.

In order to deal with the abuse, children often develop coping methods which are not always useful in adult life, such as numbing feelings or acting out. Survivors are encouraged to view these of strengths since they allowed the child to survive a painful childhood.

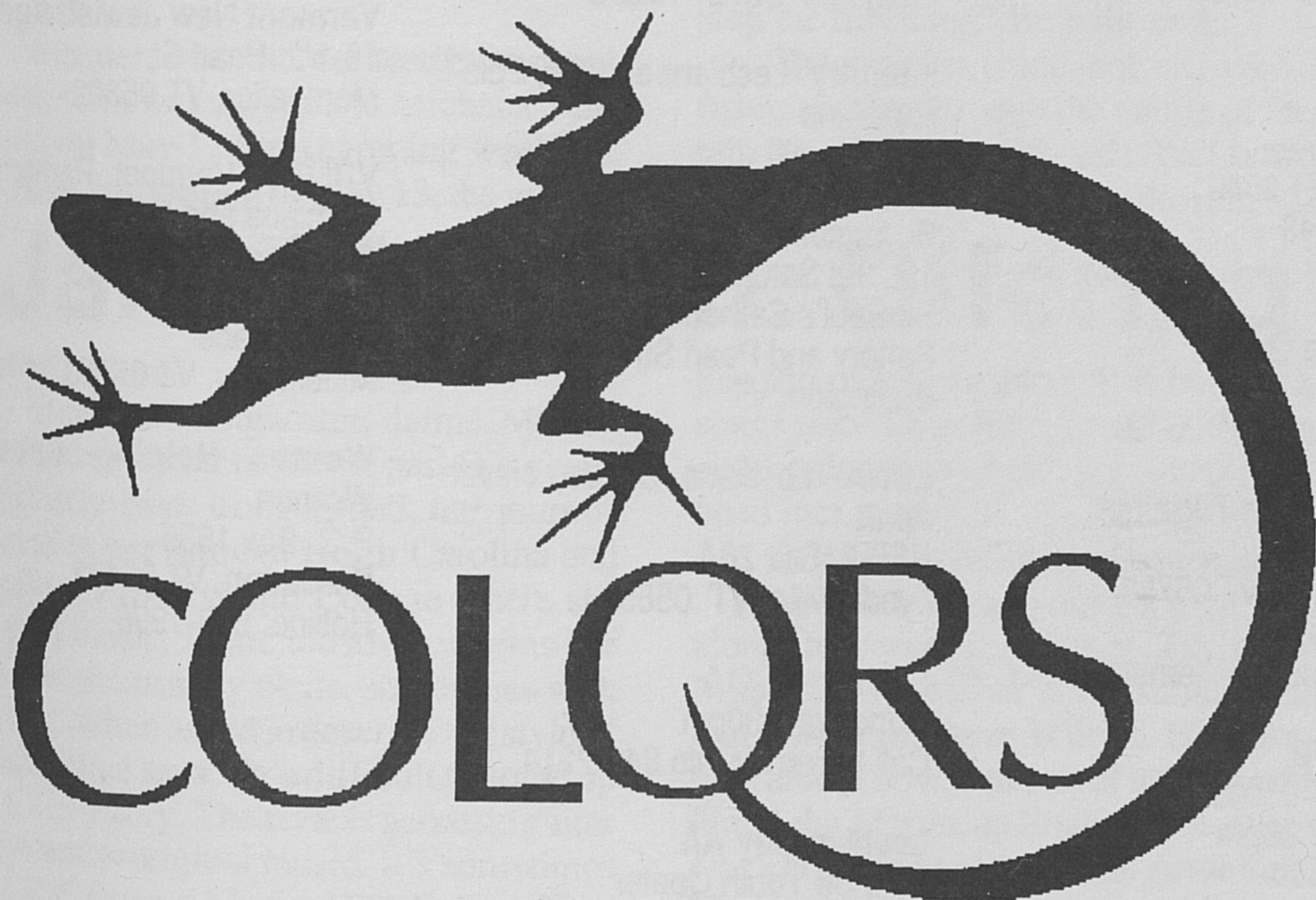
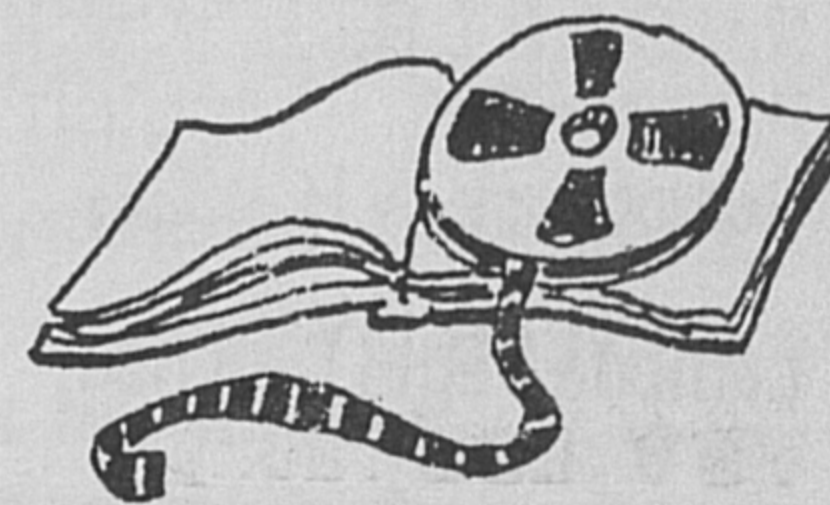
Bear includes a discussion of mental health, social service and legal agencies and some of the difficulties encountered by survivors using these services. This book also offers support for survivors in maintaining their basic rights, and methods for remaining powerful within these systems.

Although directed to survivors of childhood sexual abuse, this book is also useful for those who are not. Friends, lovers and family members may use it as a means for better understanding the victim's feelings and experiences, and as a way to facilitate communication between themselves

and the victim. Social service and legal professionals who work with adult survivors or children who have been molested may find this guide to be a simple and effective tool to educate themselves about sexual abuse.

Unique to this book is that it presents men as possible victims of childhood sexual abuse, and women as potential abusers. Peter T. Dimock, a Minnesota social worker, provides the necessary perspective on issues specific to men who were molested as children.

For those people wanting a copy, "Adults Molested as Children: A Survivor's Manual for Women and Men" is available through Safer Society Press, New York State Council of Churches, Shoreham Depot Road, RR1, Box 24-B, Orwell, Vermont 05760-9756, or at Chassman and Bem Booksellers on Church Street in Burlington.



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