



Support and Education Group for Families and Caregivers

Our Mission and Commitment:

At Steps For Change, our mission is to make communities safer by assisting youth who have engaged in sexually harming behaviors. Our goal is to repair the harm to their victims, their families, and themselves while also reaffirming the youth's intrinsic worth and holding them accountable for their behavior. We focus on the need for corrective care and guidance to stop sexually abusive patterns by drawing on youth's resilience and their abilities to achieve rehabilitation and reconciliation. Through caring and specialized treatment, youth can step onto a healthier path toward adulthood and community involvement.

Steps For Change is singularly committed to restoring health and vibrancy to youth and their families. We have an "*it takes a village*" approach to treatment by combining family-centered sex-specific treatment programs with our youth-centered programs.

For Families and Caretakers:

Learning that your child or the youth that you care for has acted out sexually can be overwhelming and confusing, but you don't have to go through it alone. Our support and education group for families and caregivers can provide you with a space to connect to others who may have similar struggles. It is a place to find support, learn about treatment, and ask questions about healthy sexual relationships and behaviors.

What We Offer

We understand that each family situation is different and therefore, offer support on either a one-on-one basis or through an ongoing support group. For those families choosing to participate in the support and education group, prior to starting the group you will meet with the facilitator one-on-one. This is an introductory session where you will get to know the facilitator one-on-one and ask any questions pertaining specifically to your family or situation.

How to Get Started

Either visit our website at <https://stepsforchange.us/support-and-education-group-for-families-and-caregivers/> to submit the referral form online or contact the Program Coordinator, Ashley Kvistberg, at 612-393-2259 or by email at ashley.kvistberg@stepsforchange.us to get started.

If you are a provider wanting to make a referral you can do so by either visiting <https://stepsforchange.us/make-a-referral/> or by contacting the Program Coordinator, Ashley Kvistberg, at 612-393-2259 or by email at ashley.kvistberg@stepsforchange.us

One-On-One Support

All families and/or caregivers will receive at least one, one-on-one session with the facilitator. For those who opt to not participate in the group and just want one-on-one education and support, individual sessions will be scheduled with the group's facilitator. Families and/or caregivers are also welcomed to schedule one-on-one sessions as well as participate in the support group.

Cost

For youth involved in treatment at Steps For Change, the family and caregiver education and support group can be billed through your insurance, if you have provided your insurance information. For youth who are court ordered to treatment at Steps For Change, group and/or one-on-one support is free of charge. For families that do not have a youth involved in treatment at Steps For Change, the support group is \$180 for 6 weeks. If needed, payment plans are available. Please contact the Program Coordinator, Ashley Kvistberg, at 612-393-2259 or by email at Ashley.Kvistberg@stepsforchange.us

One-on-one sessions can be billed to insurance if you choose to provide your insurance information. Individuals are responsible for understanding their individual insurance benefits including copays and deductibles. For those on MA, sessions are at no cost to you.

For further details please see Steps For Change Fees and Appointment Policies form.

Group Meetings:

- 6:00-7:00 pm on Tuesday; if this time does not work for individual support can be provided one-on-one.
- For a group to be formed, a minimum of three families need to participate. If there are not enough families to form a group one-on-one support will be provided.
- Depending on the comfortability of the group members, the group will either be held in person or via the HIPAA compliant Zoom telehealth platform which protects your privacy and offers easy access. Join using a cell phone, computer, or tablet.
- In person group sessions will either be held at the Steps For Change Brooklyn Center office located at 6040 Earle Brown Drive Suite 420, Brooklyn Center MN 55430 or the Edina office located at 7401 Metro Blvd Suite 495, Edina MN 55439
- Confidential
 - Maintaining your privacy is essential and part of the group's work. Facilitators will address confidentiality at every session.
- No cost to families who child is court ordered to treatment at Steps For Change. For those not court ordered we accept all major insurances.

Group Structure and Expectations:

Each group session will contain a review of confidentiality, a quick check-in, and time to address any of your concerns. Each group session, the group members will decide how they want to spend the time whether that is learning about a topic (see below) or using the group time to process. The facilitator will present on a specific topic and invite discussion from the group. Sessions will be informational yet conversational in style, ensuring you gain the foundation you need to continue working with your youth.

The follow are the group expectations:

- Honor confidentiality: Do not share any information about other group members.
 - If you run into someone in group outside of Steps For Change, do not reveal where you met.
 - Outside of the group, do not talk about anyone who is in the group.
- Be respectful of the speaker and other participants.

- Please attend from a private space to ensure confidentiality for others in the group
- Be attentive. If you have distractions at home, please attend to those and join the group at another time.
- Have your camera on and mute yourself when you are not speaking to avoid any background noise.
- Follow all instructions given by facilitators.
- Ask for and provide support for others.
- All facilitators are considered mandatory reporters. If any abuse that has not already been disclosed is disclosed during group discussion, Steps For Change staff are required by law to make a report to the appropriate authorities.

Topics:

Below are topics that can be covered during one-on-one sessions or during group. If you feel you need further education on a specific topic or cannot connect for whatever reason, please let the facilitator know as we are willing to address your needs.

Facilitator: Lori Alford, MA, LAMFT lori.alford@stepsforchange.us 612-865-1725, text or call

What to Expect from Sex-Specific Treatment at Steps For Change (one-on-one session if applicable)

- No one wants to have their adolescent engage in sex-specific treatment, but we know that with family involvement adolescents do better in treatment. We will take a closer look beyond what you learned at intake at what treatment looks like at Steps For Change and what you can expect your adolescent to learn.

Why Do Kids Act Out Sexually?

- This discussion will focus on what we know about why adolescents sexually act out, and it may not be for the reasons you think.

Sexuality Education: A Refresher on Adolescent Sexuality

- Healthy sexual behaviors are the focus of treatment, yet it is often challenging to understand what appropriate behavior looks like. In this session, we will discuss what is appropriate for your adolescent and answer any questions you may still have about adolescent sexuality.

What is Consent? What is the Law in Minnesota?

- Learn about Minnesota Criminal Sexual Contact. We will also look at what consent means according to the law and how an adolescent would apply consent to their sexual choices.

The Importance of Family Patterns: Genograms

- What was it like growing up in your home? Did your family discuss difficult topics or ignore them? Did you experience love or loathing? In this interactive session, you will create a family tree, or 'genogram,' to map your relationship experiences with those you love. Be prepared with a pencil and paper.

Attachment Theory and Adolescents

- John Bowlby defined attachment as a 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.' How do you 'feel' as a family? This discussion will cover the basic styles of attachment and tips to connect with one another more deeply.

Identifying Primary Needs for You and Your Family

- Human needs are primary needs, which expand beyond our basic need for food, shelter, and clothing. This is the cornerstone of what your adolescent will be learning in treatment as it relates to understanding their sexually harming behavior. We will talk about the need for love and support being met or not, and how these apply to your youth.

How Adolescents Process Trauma and Difficult Situations

- Researchers believe when children are exposed to trauma, it activates their central nervous system and produces a stress hormone that prepares them to deal with potential danger. This increased alertness can be really uncomfortable, and often people try to get away from this feeling by finding different ways to escape. We will talk about how trauma may have impacted your adolescent's experience and learn how treatment can help.

Pornography and Adolescents

- However you may feel about pornography, it is here to stay and your adolescent has likely been exposed to this material. We will talk about how to deal with it when it happens and strategies to assist your adolescent in making healthy choices regarding explicit material.

Common Defense Mechanisms or Thinking Errors

- Why does my kid think that way? They may be using a distorted or faulty way of thinking that is getting in the way of taking responsibility for their actions. This session will focus on some of the most common defense mechanisms and how to challenge them.

Safety and Support for the Whole Family

- This session will focus on how to bring your family back together safely, particularly for those family members who were harmed. We'll discuss any current safety plans you may have and the steps needed for reconciliation or reunification.

The Role of Empathy in Accountability and Responsibility

- Empathy is the ability to stand in someone else's shoes and share their feelings. We will discuss how a shame response to acting out sexually may block empathy and how you can assist in making a difference for your adolescent in making amends.

Understanding Adolescents After Treatment

- Treatment is an opportunity to address harmful behaviors but extends well beyond the therapy room. What can I expect of my adolescent now that they have completed the program? This session will focus on the ways therapy interventions can make life-long healthy changes for individuals.