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Program seeks to help people with abuse, sexual demons

BY MICHAEL TUCKER • STAFF WRITER

Pain and suffering have a way of eating away at a person and, if left alone, that appetite can drive people to desperate measures.

But it doesn't have to be that way, according to Teresa Best.

Best lived a good portion of her life battling her demons and, at long last, she said she is free of some of the guilt associated with her past. And she wants to help other people do the same thing through a program she started last year called Lighthouse Ministries.

"Most people have had some kind of pain in their life and that hurt will hurt other people in relationships and it will continue on and on," she said. "It happened to me:"

Best said she had an abortion at one point in her life and she wonders what type of person might be around if she hadn't made that choice. The topic, she said, isn't easy to discuss with others and is often shoved under the rug.

"I have to live with that choice of ending that person's life," she said.

Lighthouse is a free support group that offers people, particularly women, a way to discuss sensitive issues like abortion and sexual abuse, Best said.

The 8-week program gives people a safe place to discuss emotionally painful issues with other people going through the same issues.

"It's not eight easy weeks to healing," she said. "It's layers of healing and it happens differently for different folks:"

About 30 people have gone through her support groups held in two churches in the Belgrade area, Best said. The shame and hurt associated with sexual abuse and abortion are often ignored in church communities and her program is designed to reach people who might be in need of "safe harbor:"

"You can open up the door a little bit more for people to be safe," she said. "How wonderful is that? We need that so badly now:"

Best leads three main classes, each with a different focus including post abortion recovery, sexual abuse and one that addresses other emotional needs. All are free.

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