



# Things I Wish I Would Have Known

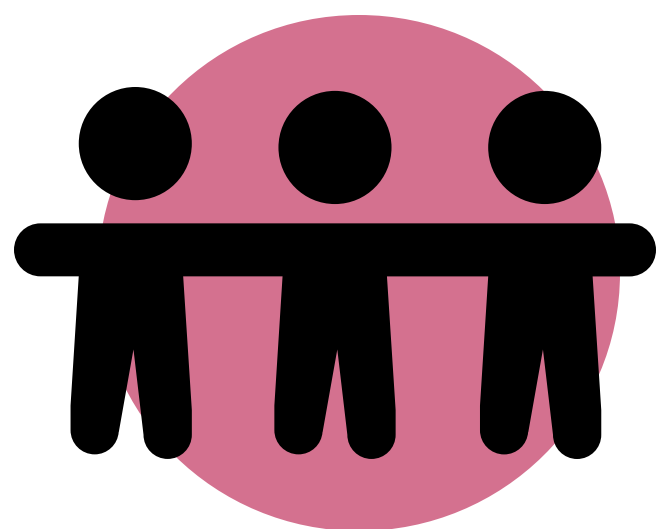
Created by: NCSBY and the Youth Partnership Board

**The Youth Partnership Board (YPB) is made up of youth who have graduated from a group treatment program for problematic, illegal, or inappropriate sexual behavior. The purpose of the YPB is to share the voice, perception, and experiences of youth.**

**One of the main priorities of YPB is to share with other youth who are beginning a treatment program the insights that helped them through the treatment process. Successful engagement in treatment is a critical step in healing for everyone impacted. The following are some of the thoughts and advice they wanted to share.**

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## You are Not Alone



When entering treatment, youth often feel alone and isolated.

*"I felt scared, alone, like no one was there to help me. I just went through court proceedings, entered a jail system, fingerprints and mugshot taken, I felt I brought shame to my family and disappointed my parents. I needed to know I wasn't alone. I want these kids to know they are not alone. I need them to know they are not alone because (when I was in their shoes) I thought no one was going to get it. Maybe i would be the one who did the worst compared to others. Now I know that wasn't the case and there was a group (of youth and therapists) behind me." - YPB member*

## Be Yourself

The first couple weeks of therapy are often difficult but as you put in the work it becomes more helpful. It's okay to observe, listen, and ask questions while in therapy because that's how we learn. You should be able to be who you are without fear of judgment.

*"When you are in services, you should feel supported, respected, and heard"*  
- YPB member



## Uncomfortable



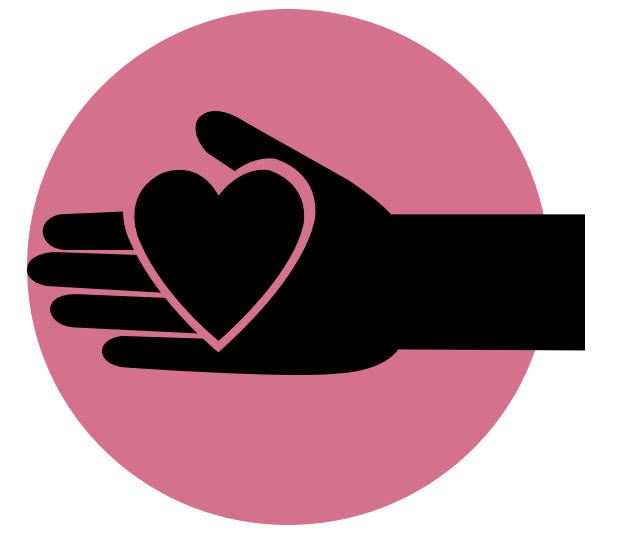
You will be asked about the reason you're in therapy. Discussing these things may make you feel uncomfortable, but it is to help you heal. The more honest we are with ourselves, caregivers, and therapists, the more we grow.



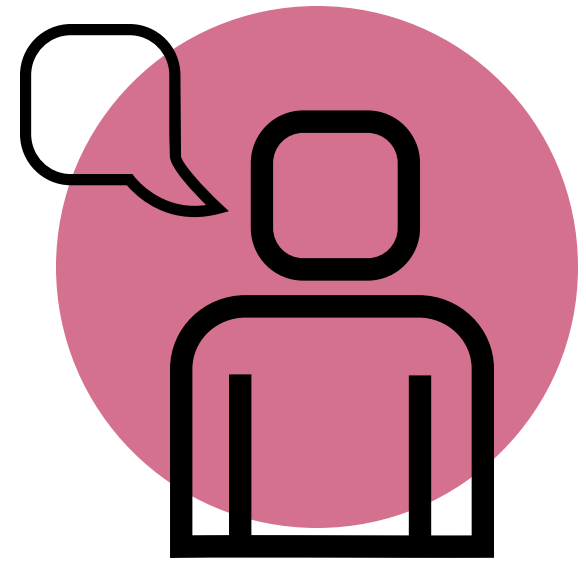
# Self-Forgiveness

Often a big block to opening-up and being honest in treatment is the negative thoughts you have about yourself.

*"We can't change the past. Don't say, 'If only.' Often times the person who is hardest to forgive is yourself. Self-forgiveness is an essential part of change and is necessary to realign your future. Learn to forgive and love yourself." -YPB member*



## Share!

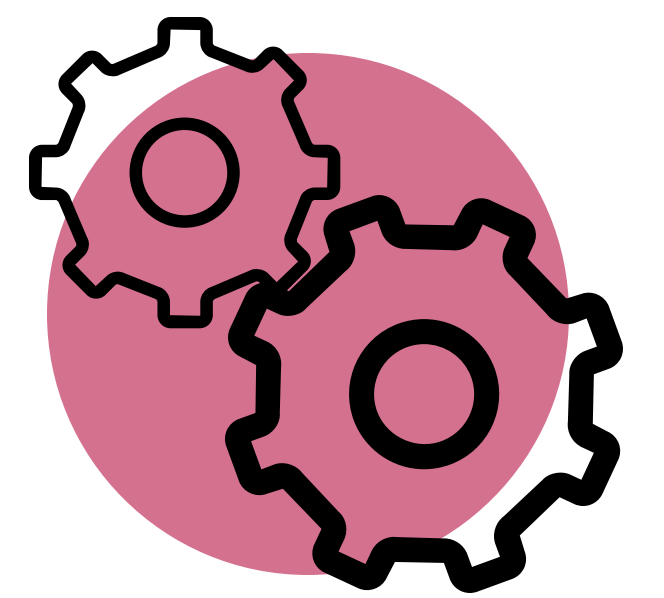


Often there is a desire to sit in a corner and try to just quietly get through treatment. Opening up, while scary, is what leads to self-forgiveness and healing. It is challenging to address the behavior in a way that also acknowledges your worth and ability to heal but it is possible.

*"Disclosing is difficult but the amount of relief that comes from opening up is something I wish I would have known before. It can be very difficult to share your worst decisions and awful memories, but it is a huge step in separating who you are from previous behaviors. Also it helps others who hear us learn to open up and be honest with themselves and others too." -YPB member*

## It's a Process that Works

The individual, group, caregiver therapy and all the things you do here work. It does not come all at once but it's a process and the more you put yourself into it the more it works.



## Grow from the Past



What happened in the past does not change who you are today. It does not make you a bad person. If you choose, you can learn and grow from these past experiences. Most importantly take what you will learn to help those around you, especially others who are struggling and do not yet understand these principles.

## Defining Yourself and Your Future

Your past decisions do not define you. How you respond to your past and how you overcome trials and difficulties is what defines who you are. **Your future is not lost.**



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We share from our experiences and hope it is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Youth Partnership Board



Additional information about youth with problematic sexual behavior can be provided from the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth  
[www.NCSBY.org](http://www.NCSBY.org)

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