

## recommended reading

**Behind Enemy Lines**, Laurie Matthews, 2005  
ISBN – 13: 978-0954346416

**Fight! Rabbit! Fight!**, Laurie Matthews, 2004  
ISBN – 13: 978-0954346409

**Resistance: A Ritual Abuse Survivor Speaks Out**, Mary Smith, 2003  
ISBN – 13: 978-0954474003

**Where Angels Fear: Ritual Abuse in Scotland**, Laurie Matthews, 2003  
ISBN – 13: 978-0953996148

**Who Dares Wins**, Laurie Matthews, 2001  
ISBN – 13: 978-0953996117

**Spirit Alive – A Woman's Healing from Cult Ritual Abuse**, Jadelinn  
ISBN – 13: 978-0889612211

**Stripped Naked – Gifts for Recovery**, Lauren Stratford  
ISBN – 13: 978-0882899671

These books should be available to order at Waterstones' book shops or online at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).

**DABS: Directory and Book Services** runs a specialist book and information service for people who are overcoming childhood abuse, sexual abuse, or domestic violence, and for anyone else who wishes to understand these issues more clearly:

tel: 01709 860023  
4 New Hill, Conisborough,  
Doncaster, DN12 3HA  
[books@dabsbooks.co.uk](mailto:books@dabsbooks.co.uk)  
[www.dabsbooks.co.uk](http://www.dabsbooks.co.uk)



edinburgh women's rape  
and sexual abuse centre  
support, advice and advocacy for women and girls

## useful contacts

**Edinburgh Women's Rape  
and Sexual Abuse Centre**  
0131 556 9437

**Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline**  
08088 01 03 02

Freephone helpline 7 days a week 6pm-midnight for survivors of sexual violence at any time.  
[www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)

**Ritual Abuse Network Scotland**  
[www.rans.org.uk](http://www.rans.org.uk)

**TAG: Trauma and Abuse Group**  
PO Box 465, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2YL  
[www.tag-uk.net](http://www.tag-uk.net)

**Survivorship**  
Forum on survival of ritual abuse based in California  
[www.survivorship.org](http://www.survivorship.org)

**The Freedom Room**  
Forum for and by survivors of ritual abuse.  
[www.thefreedomroom.piczo.com](http://www.thefreedomroom.piczo.com)

**Ritual Abuse Information**  
[www.ra-info.org](http://www.ra-info.org)

All our leaflets are available in larger print. If you would like copies please contact us on 0131 556 9437.

We are committed to providing a high quality support service. For this reason, from time to time, our helpline is monitored internally for training purposes.

July 2008

information for  
survivors of  
ritual abuse  
helpline: 0131 556 9437

administration, outreach  
& training: 0131 557 6737

minicom: 0131 557 6757

fax: 0131 558 1612

support@ewrasac.org.uk  
info@ewrasac.org.uk

c/o P.O. Box 120  
Brunswick Road  
Edinburgh, EH7 5WX

Registered Charity Ref. SC 006208

Registered as a limited company by guarantee No. 297142.  
Registered Company Address: Edinburgh Women's Rape  
and Sexual Abuse Centre, c/o Quartermile One, 15 Lauriston  
Place, Edinburgh, EH3 9EP

## **about ritual abuse**

Ritual abuse can be defined as the organised sexual, physical, psychological (mental) and emotional abuse of one or more children, adolescents or adults. It usually involves a group or groups of people of both sexes. Family members may be involved.

Ritual abuse can be practised as part of a religion or a belief system. Abusers use this as a means to control the individual and justify their actions. As little is known in society about ritual abuse, myths can shape people's understanding, and many assume that it is always satanic (based on a belief system of devil worship). Some ritual abuse does involve this, but some does not.

## **feelings and fears you may have**

### **You may feel no-one will believe you.**

You may feel that what you have experienced in your life or are currently experiencing is too incredible for people to believe. Your abuser may have told you repeatedly that to tell is useless as no-one will take you seriously. This is not true – we will believe you and listen to you. You can call us on 0131 556 9437. Other agencies also have experience of working with survivors of ritual abuse where you can get support and information. For further details please see the back of this leaflet.

### **You may feel that you can trust no one.**

This is completely understandable. Trust has to be earned by people. In time you may feel that you can talk to someone who has earned your trust.

## **You may fear that you will be an abuser.**

During the abuse you may have been forced to participate in the abuse of others. You may fear that you are an abuser yourself. This happened against your will and does not mean you are an abuser. You are no more likely to abuse someone than someone who has not experienced abuse.

## **You may feel that you cannot escape.**

Although it can be difficult to get away from ritual abuse, it can be done. You may have been told that you cannot escape because you will always be found. This is not true. It is a way of controlling you and keeping you involved in the group. As with many abusive situations, such as domestic abuse, leaving is part of a process. People do manage to get away and stay safe. What is important is to try to plan in advance and ensure that you have a good support system in place.

## **You may feel frightened.**

You may not want to talk about what happened to you; fear reprisals – that if you do escape, you or someone else may be killed; or fear that you may be re-involved or feel isolated. These fears are common and are based on past or present experiences. It is possible to overcome them in time.

## **effects you may experience**

It is common for survivors of ritual and sexual abuse to experience flashbacks, panic attacks and sleeping problems. These are often brought about by smells, places or names, which can trigger a memory or an emotional or physical response. You may go out of your way to avoid such triggers. However, there are ways to manage and cope, which can be a step forward.

As a survivor of ritual abuse you may experience a range of triggers, including: calendar dates, phases of the moon, music, certain words or colours. These can be a way to control you when the abuser is not present. You may have been given a trigger to remind you of the abuse.

For further information about ways of coping with flashbacks and panic attacks or information about self-harm, please contact us on 0131 556 9437 to request copies of our leaflets or to speak to a support worker. The websites listed on the back of this leaflet also contain useful information.

## **seeking support for yourself**

At EWRASAC we will listen to and believe you. We will not judge you. We respect the courage and strength it takes to speak out about your experiences, whether it happened a long time ago or is currently happening.

If you are living with ritual abuse you may want to leave but are too afraid. You can contact us on **0131 556 9437** for support and to talk about ways of putting a support system in place to help you. We can give you information about other agencies that can also help you. If you are worried about speaking to someone face-to-face you may wish to phone one of the helplines on the back of this leaflet.

You may be worried that your confidentiality may be breached. Most agencies will only pass information on if a child is in danger, in line with child protection policies. They are legally obliged to do this. If you are worried about confidentiality you can ask a service for their confidentiality or child protection policy before you seek support.