

STRONGER AFTER

Breaking coercion. Building independence.



PLANNING FOR IMPACT IN 2021



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WHO WE ARE

Stronger After was created by a team of people who were impacted by coercion. **We will never forget what it feels like to have someone else dominate our thoughts, feelings, and actions, nor the role that others' help played in the lives we lead today.**

Recognizing the need for accessible and informed support, we are now paying it forward by offering **free, online resources to people harmed in coercive settings**, many of whom cannot access support in any other way. In addition to experiencing higher prevalence of PTSD, depression, anxiety, etc., many of those we serve have been shunned, under-educated, and otherwise kept from crucial support and resources.

We invite you to take a moment to learn more about who we serve, how we do it, and how we're going to help more people in 2021.

“

I had left with my life but not much else. I felt empty and like a shell of my former self. Because I did not understand coercion, I kept ending up with abusive people. I had never learned to have healthy boundaries. I felt alone, helpless with addiction and suicidal thoughts. I kept thinking I'm all alone in this experience. - Mark, former member of an extremist group

”





WHO NEEDS SUPPORT

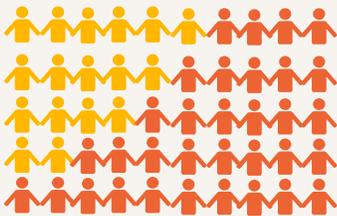
Millions are grappling with the long-term effects of coercion experienced in settings of intimate partner violence (IPV), human trafficking, cultic extremism, and more. The criminality and harm of some of these environments are well understood, but the methods of psychological control and their grave impact are not, leaving an essential gap in help for those we serve.

Initial survey information collected through our intake form affirms the need for our specialized and accessible support:



Average prevalence of respondents who report past **behavioral, emotional, financial, occupational, and intimate control.**¹

67% of respondents **experienced sexual abuse** (**double** that of women reporting sexual abuse in general). Coercive systems further inhibit reporting.¹



68% report feeling "**often**" or "**always**" **alone** and having difficulty connecting with other people.¹

“
The survivor [of coercive control...] is burdened by major impairments in self-care, in cognition, in memory, in identity, and in the capacity to form stable relationships.²
”

- Judith Herman, M.D.





ROADBLOCKS

Not only do victims of coercive environments face numerous personal hurdles to finding help, therapists and social workers rarely know how to intervene or provide lasting support.



More than half of mental health professionals felt they **lacked sufficient knowledge and support** for victims of IPV.³

1 in 4 psychologists reported having seen **current or former members** of cultic groups, yet no formal treatments exist.⁴



Stronger After provides **free and accessible support by professionals**. Since April 2019, we have helped individuals rebuild their lives through our 1-on-1 Educational Coaching program. With your help we can develop videos and online classes to **reach even more people**.



I finished my 5 sessions and learned a lot about myself. It is so validating to hear that my experiences were real. I am just so grateful my journey has led me to Stronger After and I don't have to carry the weight of the coercive group I was in anymore.

I can live, grow, and move forward with confidence and make healthy choices for myself and my children.

- Heather, former member of a cultic organization



HOW WE HELP

One-on-One Educational Curriculum

1. Common Challenges After Leaving:

Evaluating and processing the aftermath of coercion, discussing goals and autonomy.

2. Characteristics of a Coercive Environment:

Learning about manipulation, isolation, gaslighting and how to take back control.

3. Exploring Boundaries and Identity:

Understanding how personal boundaries were violated, establishing healthy ones.

4. Reducing Anxiety and Developing Confidence:

Coping with stress, fears, and overcoming psychological barriers to independence.

5. Moving On and Continuing Support:

Navigating new relationships, new settings, and pursuing ongoing support.



Live Classes and On-Demand Videos

DECODING COERCION

- Identify coercion and its impact
- Tools used by manipulators
- Authoritarian upbringings
- Loss and grief
- And more...

(RE)BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

- Culture shock
- Self-trust and decision making
- Saying "no" and boundaries
- Finding doctors and therapists
- Self-care
- And more...

MOVING FORWARD

- Healthy relationships
- Regulating stress & anxiety
- Education and career moves
- Integrating your story
- And more...



YOUR SUPPORT

“

I recommend this program 100% to people who are not only suffering the loss of family, but loss of identity, support, and their basic foundation of life. I didn't have to worry about payment, and while I was saving up for therapy, Katharina helped me focus on very practical and specific things I could practice in the meantime. She told me I didn't need to rely on other people to validate myself. I desperately needed to hear that.

- Jessica, survivor of family violence and group coercion

”

By contributing to Stronger After's Program Expansion Campaign you are helping us meet those in need with life-altering resources.

By supporting us, you are alleviating suffering and stopping future victimization. Let's help individuals and families lead healthy autonomous lives.

Having personally grown up in coercive groups, without adequate education and care, we know firsthand that the difficulties faced by those we serve are immense. We also know the impact of informed support and would not be where we are today, without loving family, friends and qualified therapists.

Unfortunately, the burdens of trauma and a lack of effective resources keep most from accessing vital help. We invite you to join us as we begin to fill the alarming gap in services for people who, like our team, were terrorized by coercive individuals and groups.

On behalf of myself and the Stronger After team, thank you for your interest and support in our work.

Sincerely,



Katharina Meredith, Executive Director



2021 PROGRAM SUMMARY

With your help, we will be able to continue and expand our programs, supplying them to those in need without charge, while building a sustainable organization.



Live Virtual Classes - Connecting survivors of coercion with expert instructors, providing structured classes and worksheets.



One-on-One Coaching - Providing those most in need with an empathetic and knowledgeable coach and reading materials.



On-Demand Videos - Offering a growing library of educational videos on coercion and its impact, available to the general public.



Resource Library & Blog - Collecting educational materials and developing text resources (book lists, worksheets, Q&A, etc.).



Conferences - Connecting professionals, academics, lawmakers, former members, and more - in conjunction with universities.

2021 BUDGET

Live Virtual Classes	12 Classes	240 Enrollees	\$3000
One-on-One Coaching	144 Units	30 Participants	\$15000
On-Demand Videos	12 Videos	6000 Viewers	\$2500
Resource Library & Blog	12 Posts	2400 Readers	\$500
Conferences	1 Virtual Event	200 Attendees	\$1500
Admin and Efficiency			\$4000
Outreach & Fundraising			\$1500
Overhead			\$4500
			<hr/>
			\$32500



IT'S A BIG PROBLEM WE CAN CHANGE THAT

12 million annual victims of
Intimate Partner Violence in the USA⁵

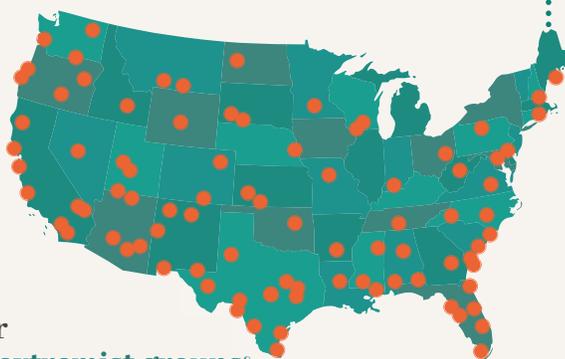


86% experience **coercive control** in IPV⁶



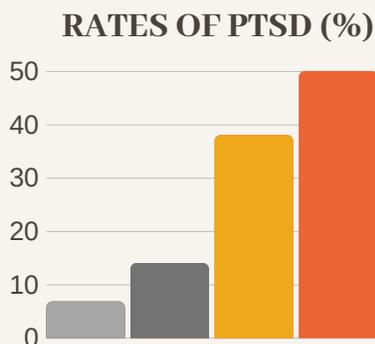
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US extremist groups
tracked in 2018⁷



ZERO

formal rehabilitation for
ex-members of cultic or extremist groups⁸



30.1 million victims of
trafficking annually⁹

- Trafficking victims exposed to **coercive threats**¹⁰
- Trafficking victims **exposed to violence**¹⁰
- U.S. military veterans¹¹ (for comparison)
- General population¹² (for comparison)

1. Stronger After Intake Data (2019) 2. Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror. (1992, 2015)
 3. A survey of mental health professionals' knowledge, attitudes and preparedness to respond to domestic violence. (2013)
 4. Prevalence of Cults: A Review of Empirical Research in the U.S.A. (2005) 5. Workplace Homicides Among U.S. Women: The Role of Intimate Partner Violence. (2012) 6. Coercive Control: The Entrapment of Women in Personal Life. (2009) 7. Southern Poverty Law Center Hate Map. (2018)
 8. When Terrorists Come Home: The Need for Rehabilitating and Reintegrating America's Convicted Jihadists. (2018) 9. Global Slavery Index. (2018)
 10. Mental health, violence and psychological coercion among female and male trafficking survivors in the greater Mekong sub-region: a cross-sectional study. (2018)
 11. Invisible Wounds: Mental Health and Cognitive Care Needs of America's Returning Veterans. (2008) 12. National Comorbidity Survey. (2007)

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