

A Family Counselor In Spain Uses The Internet To Help Individuals Struggling With Unwanted Same-Sex Attractions

Maria Jose Mantica has an M.A. in Marriage and Family Counseling. She has lived and worked in Latin America, the United States, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and now lives in Spain. During the past five years, her work has involved helping individuals with unwanted same-sex attractions. She was interviewed by a member of the NARTH editorial team.



Maria Jose Mantica

Please describe briefly your current work.

I presently participate as a counselor in a non-profit organization that provides on-line Reparative Therapy. We assist 2,500 Spanish speaking SSA individuals. The group is comprised of males and females, whose ages range from 13 to 66, are either single or married, and are from more than twenty different countries. Some parents of homosexuals also reach out for advice. Our members attend a series of workshops based mainly on Dr. Nicolosi's work. Books and articles by Gerard van den Aardweg, Jokin Irala, Richard Cohen, Jeffrey Satinover, Elizabeth R. Moberly, David Morrison, Anne Paulk and Janelle Hallman are also used.

When did you learn about reparative therapy?

While I was living in Madrid, Spain some seven years ago, a well known psychiatrist asked me to contribute to an investigation regarding homosexuality. Using Dr. Gerald van den Aardweg's findings as a point of departure, I came across NARTH's web site and discovered the most complete and scientifically-backed information on Reparative Therapy I have yet encountered.

How did you get involved in working with SSA individuals?

After becoming aware that unwanted homosexuality is a problem that spans all ethnicities, religions, nationalities and ages, and encountering people who strongly wanted to change their sexual identity but did not know where to get help, I decided that I needed to learn more about Reparative Therapy. In 2004, I attended a conference in Milan given by Dr. Joseph Nicolosi. I was impressed by his work and the respect and admiration homosexuals themselves have for him. Since then, I have been present at a NARTH national conference, and recently participated in Dr. Nicolosi's "The Time for Truth" conference in London. I hope to further my education on this subject matter, and will dedicate a great part of my professional life to helping SSA individuals.

What sort of opposition have you encountered in Spain?

Spain's socialist government has legalized gay marriage and it harshly opposes anyone who considers homosexuality to be an attachment problem. A specific date has been designated National

Homophobia Awareness Day. Any mention of Reparative Therapy is judicially punishable, persecuted, ridiculed by gay lobbyists, and silenced, as it counters the government's official stance.

Can you describe what your experience has been with SSA individuals?

My personal and professional life has been enriched in many ways by working with SSA individuals. I respect all homosexuals, as they are sensitive people who have endured a lot of pain in their lives, but I also admire and honor those who while suffering with their condition have the courage to change.

Imparting Reparative Therapy through the internet is extremely rewarding. I see progress every day. While some individuals take small steps forward, others have already experienced enormous changes. Those who have successfully given up their homosexual lifestyles serve as discussion moderators on our web site. Both their example and solidarity offer hope to those striving to understand and repair the wounds that drove them towards their same-sex attraction.

What advice can you give to others who may wish to use reparative therapy?

Doing Reparative Therapy is a very serious matter; not doing it correctly can be very damaging. It is extremely important to be well trained and well informed. I would advise anyone who wishes to apply Reparative Therapy to SSA individuals to closely follow Dr. Nicolosi's work. NARTH, Exodus, Courage and JONAH also offer excellent sources on Reparative Therapy.

Do you ever regret doing this work?

I will always respect those who choose a homosexual lifestyle, but will also lend a hand to all who struggle with their homosexuality and exhibit a desire to change. It is impossible to regret this line of work when you can alleviate the excruciating pain felt by some SSA individuals. As expressed by one of our members' personal testimony:

I am a 25-year-old man, and believe that through my testimony, I might be able to help someone out there, as another's testimony once helped me. I was born to a 17-year-old mother; my father was of a similar age. The circumstances of the time led the two to marry in order to raise me. Thank God they did not opt for abortion, as some family members of mine had recommended. After three years of periodically abusing her, my father ended up mur-

dering my mother. Years later, he committed suicide in prison. I was left under the care of my grandparents: an overprotective mother/grandmother trying to keep me from committing the same mistakes her daughter had, and a distant father/grandfather figure. Amidst this tumultuous childhood, I felt defenseless in the classroom, and experienced what I deemed was a sort of social marginalization.

I found it impossible to relate to other boys, and was afraid of all the girls. At the age of 15, I was initiated in the practice of homosexuality, and from that point on, until I discovered Reparative Therapy, I maintained a daily regimen of sexual relations with multiple partners.

None of these relationships were lasting or fulfilling, so at the age of 16, I joined a homosexual association as a proactive member, collaborating in magazines, web pages, and a few conferences.

We worked to change the world towards a more gay-friendly attitude, and to promote lasting relationships. I later understood this was an impossible goal. All of my partnerships were short-lived, and the longer lasting ones were fairly "open." From that point on, and until I turned 23, I was involved in all sorts of homosexual activity, from the more ordinary variety, to the practice of orgies and sadomasochism. I grew more and more empty and depressed each day, and attempted suicide more than once.

I tried to force myself to become attracted to women, or even remain chaste, but was unable to resist the temptations surrounding me, and always regressed into my old habits.

Today, I am new man; that is to say, I am the same person I have always been, but am no longer held hostage by homosexuality. I came across a website, where I was offered the opportunity to undergo web-based Reparative Therapy. At first, I was very skeptical. How could a website ever help me make headway with my problems? Especially considering all the efforts I had already made? Impossible! Yet, the thought of others' success gave me hope.

I worked on improving relations with my parents, battled with my inferiority complexes, successfully maintained chastity, and was able to control homoerotic thoughts. As a by-product of my work, and without having to force the situation, I became attracted to women.

At the moment, everything is great, but I understand I have to continue my efforts and therapy for many years to come. This is a comfortable and pleasant thought, though. Everything has been happening so fast, and I would hate to regress in my condition. I owe my life to Reparative Therapy. Through it I was able to understand how and why homosexual tendencies and feelings arise. A window of hope was opened for me. If I have been able to experience change, why not you?