

**From:**

**Sent:** Friday, September 23, 2005 10:00 PM

**To:** heal@heal-online.org

**Subject:** Aspen Ranch violated my rights.

I wish I knew where to begin. I know that there are many more programs that are probably more abusive than what I experienced here but that doesn't take away from the facts. I will try to focus on the most disturbing experiences I can remember but, like many other survivors of such programs I find myself having a hard time remembering everything that went on. For the first two weeks you arrive at Aspen Ranch you are placed on a level known as round-up. During this period of time you are either silent in a basement, or outside doing manual labor (changing watering pipes, building fences etc). You can not have any contact with your parents and get to talk to a therapist maybe once or twice. One July morning when I refused to go outside, the sheets were ripped out from under me and I was carried and thrown onto a staircase where two men put my shoes on, picked me up and dragged me to the field where I was to work. Afraid of any other forms of punishment, I did. Being physically threatened is a major way they get you to follow the rules. Every week you got to speak with your parents, on speakerphone, with your therapist present for 20 minutes. If you ever tried to tell your parents about the torture you were suffering through the conversation would be immediately terminated. All letters were read before sent, all incoming mail opened, read and inspected before given to you. The only contact allowed was to your parents and had to be positive. On top of whatever work project your team was assigned to each day you also had to participate in an hour long physical, no matter how physically drained you were. People would sometimes pass out or break down begging to stop but, for the most part the physical went on for as long as the supervisor saw fit. The psychological abuse was never ending, if you were suspected of doing something wrong you would be forced to go into the basement and sit at a desk until you admitted what you were accused of. We were often threatened to be sent to an out of country program where we were told there was no child labor laws, I still don't know if this program exists but, the mere threat was enough to keep most of us "in line". I could go on forever with stories of this sort. My main point though, please do not put your child through this, two years later I am still suffering from the lies I was fed.

Please protect my identity. I know this is not a complete story but I think it gets the point across. If you need my full name and dates I attended the program for your own records I can let you know, thanks so much for raising awareness about such horrible programs.

-[Anon]