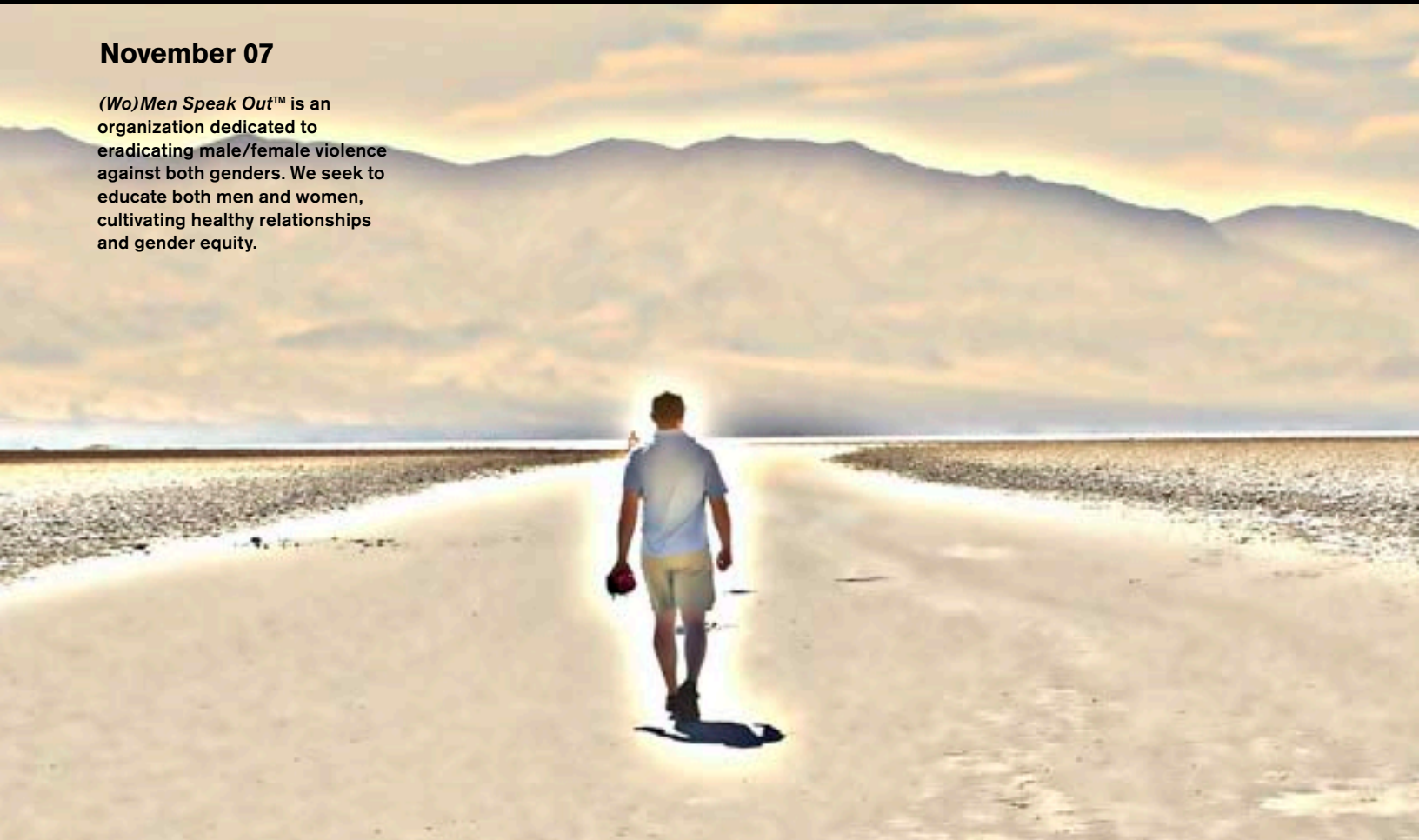




November 07

(Wo)Men Speak Out™ is an organization dedicated to eradicating male/female violence against both genders. We seek to educate both men and women, cultivating healthy relationships and gender equity.



WE EXIST

BY CHRISTOPHER DESSERT

When I was writing this article a vague memory came to my head. I was in a small town where I grew up. It was a parade down main street. The very first float was this large white convertible. Propped high in it's back seat was this young man. A soldier, in full dress uniform. His arm was in a sling. He looked so proud to be there. He was honored, and I knew that he must have done something good to be at the head of the biggest parade of the year.

He was injured in combat. He fell off of a jeep in the Korean War, and was never quite the same. But to see him at that moment, and it was a great moment to have, it seemed like the twirling batons and claps of applause all belonged to him. I felt happy that he got that, at the very least.

The memory wasn't complete however. A couple of blocks away there was a dark, wet alley. There was a little boy standing in the alley with a balloon in his hand and a look of terror on his face. All I could see was the child's little hand, shuddering, then releasing the balloon. It played over and over and over again. The little hand opening. The big, red balloon releasing into the air. Then I woke up.

There is something about experiencing trauma that makes a man want to feel acknowledged. It's real easy to be proud to have survived combat. There are parades. There are letters from loved ones. There is a certain manner you can carry yourself for holding that distinction.

There are other traumas though, and we are taught that no two traumas are the same. A war veteran is not weak because war allows him to retain his sense of manhood, his pride, his stoic honor and all those emotions that men believe belong to them.

The circumstances of our trauma dictate the reception we receive in our society. If the circumstance, for a man, is sexual abuse then it can be exceptionally difficult. The meaning of sexual violation in our lives can, and will, have devastating consequences. We are broken, not only as people, but as

men. We are so broken that no one is willing to even broach the subject.

There are no parades for sexual abuse survivors, men or women. A celebration of the survivor is an acknowledgement our failure, as a society. But to celebrate our broken men? That would be truly mad. Wouldn't it?

Our broken men are everywhere. I say this, and I can be easily refuted because there have been only slight, indirect attempts to survey our compile statistics to see just how many broken men there are out there. So I say this out of personal experience. I say it in the voice of all the men who have told me, in confidence, and those few souls who have said it in broad daylight.

We are not properly equipped to deal with the victims. Certainly not the male victims because to put the two words together, male and victim, would be to go against everything we expect our males to be. So it is the expectation to not acknowledge what males are not supposed to be.

The leader of Iran was recently at Columbia University, giving an open forum. When asked about how his government deals with gays in his country, he said that we don't have that problem, we don't have gays in our country.

Everyone got so upset at his ignorance, and his willingness to voice it in an institution of learning, where we all know better. Really? If we truly know better then why are the shelves in our bookstores still empty? The amount of books in any bookstore on any given day on male issues and, more specific to my cause, male survivorship, number no more than the number of fingers on one of my hands.

Here's an assignment. Go to a bookstore. See for yourself. Any bookstore. Begin the count.

Now let's count the number of men and women in any prison who were abused as children, as adults. The number of serial killers. Rapists. Murderers. Felons.

I wish the leaders of this country would stand up and say male abuse doesn't exist. They are already displaying this attitude in their actions. If we continue to deny that survivors exist they will continue to act out in unhealthy



Christopher Dessert is the Co-Founder of *(Wo)Men Speak Out*™, Advocate for VAWM & survivor of childhood sexual violence. A public speaker, Christopher shares his personal experience in the video series *(Wo)Men Speak Out*™, his writings and public speaking forums throughout North America.

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and potentially destructive ways.

There is a huge gap in this country. The gap is created once men are abused. We are the abused, but we must pretend that we are not. We are being denied our sense of maleness every day by the ignorance of people. It says to us that you can't be a victim. To be a victim is to lack value, lack identity as a man. So we live false lives that we can never truly conform to. We want to strike back at this lacking.

But don't you see? The book shelves are standing empty and the prisons are filled to capacity.

I used to feel that I lacked value, that I wasn't a man, that based on what was done to me and my inability to stop it, that I deserved nothing. I am not lacking. It is this world that is lacking, as long as it refuses to receive us. We are survivors and proof that flowers can grow through cracks in the pavement.

I am grateful for survivors. When I am with a group of survivors I see a better way. I am overcome with the realization of what everyone else seems to be missing.

We want to strike back at the lacking, but it isn't the lacking within us, it is the lacking around us. This simple distinction often marks the difference between a murderer, a prostitute, a crack addict, and an advocate for change.

So I say to every leader and politician, include us, embrace us, accept the survivor. I can never condone ignorance, but the leader of Iran displayed his openly, and we were able to voice our objections openly, directly.

In this country the ignorance is subtle, hushed, and indirect. It has no focal point for our objections. It hides under false faces, very similar to the ones we are expected to don out of the shame they shoved on us. So we must create a focal point of our own. We can only use our voices. We can use our fingers, which diligently type out our stories over the internet. We can word our discontent with the inaction of OUR representatives in government.

When we believe, they will have no choices left. They will be forced to voice our existence, and maybe some day politicians in office, celebrities at the height of their stardom, and athletes in the prime of their careers will put a voice to what we knew all along. That they are survivors like you and me. This is the acceptance we demand.

So I humbly ask you, the reader, to take one action today. It could be a few cents in a charity box. It could be a letter to those we are paying to represent us. You might want to send a message into cyberspace. One action proving our existence.

We exist. Now help me prove it.

ADVOCATE OF THE MONTH

Stacey Branchini

Stacey Branchini, a lifelong resident of Niagara County, New York, began her career as a nuclear med technician, but retired from working in 1986 to care for her aging mother and two young daughters. In 1999, her career path changed again when Stacey and her husband, Tom, created the *It Happened To Alexa Foundation*. The foundation's mission, both meaningful and unique, is to assist rape victims and their families by easing the financial burden faced when attending criminal trials.

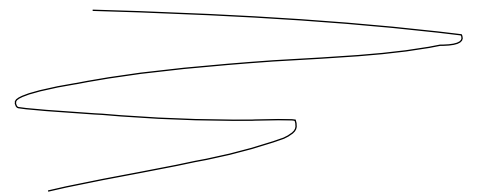
The Branchini family was motivated to create the It Happened To Alexa Foundation after one of their daughters was raped while attending Boston University. Traveling back and forth from the town of Lewiston, New York to Boston for legal proceedings, the Branchini family soon realized that for some families, the costs of a trial would be prohibitive, involving travel expenses, trial delays, and loss of work. In addition, it was their belief that no victim should go through the criminal process alone.

Awarded the New York State Senate *2006 Woman of Distinction* award, Stacey was named one of Lifetime Television's *Champions for Change*. She continues to speak at schools, universities and conferences throughout the country in order to raise awareness of the struggles that victims of rape and sexual assault face, as well as educating others on the burdens of criminal proceedings on a victim's family. It is evident that Stacey's personal challenge to provide support to her daughter has evolved into an opportunity to offer comfort, hope, and justice to families across the country.

To find out more about It Happened to Alexa Foundation please see our website at www.ithappenedtoalexa.com or call our toll free number 1-877-77- ALEXA.



ACTION OF THE MONTH!
Please vote for Stacey Branchini in the Volvo for Life Award. Vote now! Vote often! [Click here.](#)



I HURT MYSELF TODAY

BY OPHELIA-DAWN
SHONA POWER-
DESSERT

Self-injury is probably the most widely misunderstood form of self-harm amongst survivors of abuse. The many myths that are often associated with self-injury make coming forward and seeking help difficult for those dealing with their addiction. I know because I am a recovering addict myself. Just recently, I put together a public service announcement for self-injury. The feedback from survivors who saw the video and wanted to talk about it was overwhelming. I can only imagine the numbers that were too afraid to come forward or perhaps too embarrassed to admit that they too suffered from this wide-spread and harmful form of self punishment.

It has been argued that self-mutilation is not an addiction but a mental illness, however, I'm not sure that I agree. According to the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual-IV (DSM), an addiction is a recurring compulsion by an individual to engage in some specific activity, despite harmful consequences to the individuals health, mental state or social life. However, there is little mention in the DSM that acknowledges self-harm as such, except in the most extreme cases including castration or removal of limbs. If no one is talking about the truth surrounding self-harm, how do we expect to dispel the myths? It's not surprising that friends and loved ones are left with the impression that people who self-injure do so willingly, to be dramatic or in order to manipulate those around them. For me and many like me, this simply isn't our reality.

I had coffee with a friend of mine the other day. I confided in him that just a few short weeks before, I found myself on my bathroom floor, taking a razor to my arm in an almost trance-like state. His face was gentle and kind but I could sense from his expression that he was taken aback by my experience. Being an advocate, there is a general assumption of recovery in that it is picture perfect. Self-mutilation shouldn't exist in the world of the advocate. Full recovery from abuse is what often allows others to look up to you and to gain hope in their own recovery. The truth is that advocates are every day people,

not super heroes. The burden of expectation from others can breed the same shame and fear that keep many in their silence to begin with. I set myself on a very high pedestal most of the time, so high that even those closest to me often don't recognize the fear and pain that hides deep within me, placed there by my father and continued in the actions of the little girl within me who is still healing.

I was 7 years old the first time I took a knife to my arm. It was in the early hours of the morning and my parents were in bed. I remember going downstairs, walking to the kitchen reaching for a steak knife in the cutlery drawer and taking it to my arm. I remember telling myself how I was deserving of pain. I remember feeling as if I had to punish myself because I wasn't good enough. Looking back, I recognize that harming myself was a way of trying to gain control of the external chaos in my home and somehow quiet the repetitive voice inside my mind that was screaming to be heard. Silence breeds silence. In this case, it allowed me to live in shame of my self-injury and in the fear that those who may find out about it would fear me insane or dramatic.

With every addiction, it becomes increasingly more difficult to stop over time. Not unlike alcoholism, bulimia, anorexia and sex addiction, self mutilation is a life line that allows the survivor to gain a perceived sense of control over themselves. Though, over time, the need to act upon urges increases and what may have been a "once in a while" band-aid solution becomes a compulsion that cannot easily be stopped. The result from self-injury is not just psychological but physical, as it allows for a release of chemicals in the brain that change the way reality is perceived. It's the reason why such things are so difficult to stop and why it is necessary to seek professional help in order to learn healthier, long term alternatives to self-mutilation. Alternatives that are encouraging and hopeful instead of self-deprecating and negative.

Knowing all that I do about the effects of trauma and of the various positive alternatives to self-harming, I am often asked how I can continue to harm myself while at the same time, advocate for survivors. "Walk the walk", they say. Looking inward, I see that it is a need for perfection that allowed me to get this far in my self-harm and by speaking out I am choosing to reveal another secret about myself with others. By talking about my own experience, I am more able to accept myself and my pain for what it is and not something that it is not. In Alcoholics Anonymous there is a saying; "One day at a time". To acknowledge that you are not alone and that you are only human. To be okay with making mistakes and allowing yourself to learn from them. In doing this, we are able to move forward and actually make some headway in our recovery. Ultimately, it is not how you see me that is important, but instead how I am now able to see myself.



Ophelia is an Assaulted Women's & Children's Advocate & co-founder of (Wo)Men Speak Out™. Ophelia shares her personal experiences online, through her music and in person at various anti-violence events throughout the United States and Canada.

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THE NEXT VIRGINIA TECH

Are we ready?

BY BRENT SCARPO

Two weeks before the worst school shooting in the history of the United States, I was presenting my diversity program, "Journey to a Hate Free Millennium" at Virginia Tech. April 16, 2007 will go down in history where the subject of HATE reared it's ugly head on college campuses. It will also become the day where the memories of Columbine will be laid to rest because Columbine will no longer hold the distinction of being the worst school shooting in the United States.

It now belongs to a beautiful campus called Virginia Tech, where the face of hate has taken a new turn when it comes to college students. Mental health, stress and the rigors of a college life will forever be examined more seriously given the tragedy at Virginia Tech. But, are we ready? What have we learned in such a short amount of time since Virginia Tech? I worked with the programmers for about a month afterwards in an effort to help them through this horrible form of hate.

Yes, HATE, for this young man hated both himself and the fellow students on campus and chose to send a message of hate to everyone that day by killing as many students and teachers as possible before he took his own life. We don't have him alive to explain his actions but we have the memories of those he killed and hurt and a myriad of questions of how to keep this from happening again.

I have been speaking on campuses with my diversity programs for nearly ten years now and sadly, I suspected that something like this might happen on college campuses given what happened at Columbine. It truly was just a matter of time before a high school student suffering from mental health issues, depression and stress reached college level and remembered Columbine and how those students chose to voice their inner demons.

So, are we ready for the next Virginia Tech for it is coming. The number of copycat crimes that happened after Columbine ranges in the hundreds if

not thousands. We did not hear about them on the news for they were either thwarted or the deaths did not reach the magnitude necessary for the news to do a proper story. Since September of this year, there have been over a dozen shootings at middle, high school and colleges throughout the United States, which in my opinion are a result of what happened at Virginia Tech.

Touring campuses, I have noticed changes and schools are taking seriously this particular issue. Here are some of the proactive solutions I have seen around our country.

1. Text messaging services for students so that in the event of an emergency, students are notified much faster than what happened during Virginia Tech.
2. Emergency alarms on campus that can be activated by students if an immediate threat happens on campus alerting everyone to the issue.
3. Hiring additional counselors for counseling departments so as to deal with the vast population of students suffering from extreme depression and mental health disorders.
4. Education – Bringing programs such as mine into schools and creating an environment of dialogue and problem solving skills so that the campus is prepared for any disruption.

These are just a few of the solutions I have seen campuses begin to implement. The difficult part of this entire ordeal on college campuses is that they are not high schools. You just can't take a fence and surround the entire Virginia Tech campus and keep out those that would do harm to their students outside. There are not enough metal detectors to post at entrances and exits on college campuses as there are at high schools.

No, college campuses were meant to be beautiful and hate free allowing students to freely express themselves during a journey that is supposed to bring good memories for a life time to come.

That has all changed after Virginia Tech.



Brent Scarpo has more than 20 years experience as an educator, producer, writer, director and actor in Hollywood, California. Outraged by the brutal deaths of the student shootings at Columbine High School, James Byrd, Jr., and Matthew Shepard, Brent created the film, *Journey to a Hate Free Millennium*, a multiple award-winning documentary and speaking presentation. www.brentscarpo.com

Keeping the Promise to Our Children

Making Prevention of Sexual Abuse A Reality

BY KAREN A. DUNCAN

“Our national security is meaningless if we cannot keep our own children safe in their homes, schools and communities.”

The Bureau of Justice reports that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will experience sexual abuse of some kind before the age of 17. In the United States alone, 500,000 children a year experience the trauma of sexual abuse and the majority of these children are less than 8 years of age.

These statistics are staggering because behind each of these “numbers” is child or teen who had the right to live safe and free from the harm of a sexual offender. These numbers reflect the profound impact that this traumatic crime has had on these lives of these youth and their families. Yet, even with this reality, we have yet to make a concerted financial investment to bring prevention education into the homes of children and into the minds and hearts of their parents and caregivers. The fact is this: it takes caring, concerned and committed adults to prevent child sexual abuse, report suspicious people and confront this pandemic crime against our children.

Awareness has had an integral part in changing societal attitudes so that more adults accept that sexual abuse does happen. Awareness education has created programs for children in schools which in turn has increased reports of sexual abuse and resulted in some offenders being reported, investigated and prosecuted. While these programs are useful they are not always willing (or perhaps allowed) to address the fact that the majority of

perpetrators of sexual abuse are family members or “friends” of the family. Awareness programs (even when unintentional) place responsibility on our children to stop sexual abuse rather than placing the ownership of prevention squarely on adults who are collectively responsible for the welfare of children. Let us never forget that it is the offenders themselves who have the most responsibility for reporting and stopping their crimes of sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is a long-standing trauma that is pervasive within cultures across the world. However, awareness alone is not enough to prevent child sexual abuse. Together—increased awareness, adult education and a willingness to act—form a bond for the next step to take place and that step is the prevention of sexual abuse. For prevention to take hold, we must come face-to-face with the reality of child sexual abuse, cease our avoidance of talking about this trauma and embrace the truth of this epidemic. It is time for parents and other adults to step forward and accept the responsibility for our children’s safety wholeheartedly.

Honest and frank discussion will free thousands of children and millions of adults from the grip sexual offenders have on their daily lives. Action taken to prevent sexual abuse will commit our resources to stop perpetrators in their tracks. In doing so, we will not only prevent this crime, but make a commitment to support screening, treatment and recovery so that the restoration of lives for individuals who have already experienced this trauma becomes a reality.



Karen A. Duncan, M.A., LSW, LMFT is a licensed therapist, author and national speaker known for her advocacy work in the treatment and prevention of sexual abuse and family violence. She received the 2005 Social Worker of the Year Award for Region 7 from the National Association of Social Workers-Indiana Chapter. Her book *Healing from the Trauma of Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Journey for Women* (Praeger, 2004) is focused on healing and recovery, advocates for prevention education for parents and families and encourages reporting and exposing known offenders within the family while discussing the challenges women face in doing so. Duncan is the author of adult education programs that encourage personal healing and the prevention of sexual abuse and other types of personal traumas. For more information on Karen and her work please visit: www.healing4women.com.

A RECOVERY BILL OF RIGHTS FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS

BY THOMAS V. MAGUIRE
Ph.D.

By Virtue of Your Personal Authority You Have the Right to...

- Manage your life according to your own values and judgment.
- Direct your recovery, answerable to no one for your goals or progress.
- Gather information to make intelligent decisions about your recovery.
- Seek help from many sources, unhindered by demands for exclusivity.
- Decline help from anyone without having to justify the decision.
- Believe in your ability to heal and seek allies who share your faith.
- Trust allies in healing so far as one human can trust another.
- Be afraid and avoid what frightens you.
- Decide for yourself whether, when, and where to confront fear.
- Learn by experimenting, that is, make mistakes.

To Guard Your Personal Boundaries You Have the Right to...

- Be touched only with, and within the limits of, your consent.
- Speak or remain silent, about any topic and at any time, as you wish.
- Choose to accept or decline feedback, suggestions, or interpretations.
- Ask for help in healing, without having to accept help with everything.
- Challenge any crossing of your boundaries.
- Take action to stop a trespass that does not cease when challenged.

For the Integrity of Your Personal Communication You Have the Right to...

- Ask for explanation of communications you do not understand.
- Express a contrary view when you do understand and you disagree.
- Acknowledge your feelings, without having to justify them.
- Ask for changes when your needs are not being met.
- Speak of your experience, without apology for your uncertainties.
- Resolve doubt without deferring to the views or wishes of anyone.

For Safety in Your Personal Dependency in Therapy You Have the Right to...

- Hire a therapist or counselor as coach, not boss, of your recovery.
- Receive expert and faithful assistance in healing from your therapist.
- Know that your therapist will never have any other relationship with you – business, social, or sexual.
- Be secure against any disclosure by your therapist, except with your consent or under court order.
- Hold your therapist's undivided loyalty in relation to all abusers.
- Obtain informative answers to questions about your condition, your therapist's qualifications, and any proposed treatment.
- Have your safety given priority by your therapist, to the point of readiness to use all lawful means to neutralize an imminent threat to your life or that of someone else.
- Receive a commitment from your therapist that is not conditional on your "good behavior" (habitual crime and endangerment excepted).
- Make clear and reliable agreements about the times of sessions and of your therapist's availability.
- Telephone your therapist between scheduled sessions, in urgent need, and receive a return call within a reasonable time.
- Be taught skills that lessen the risk of re-traumatization: containment (boundaries for recovery work); control of attention and mental imagery; systematic relaxation.
- Enjoy reasonable physical comfort during sessions.

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WE HEAR YOU

THE IMPACT OF SPEAKING OUT

Dear Chris and Ophelia,
I wanted to tell you how great the second *Minizine* is. The way it is presented is beautiful and easy for people to read and understand. I was actually told the *Minizine* was out by one of my friends. I hadn't realized the release date but got an e-mail from her. She told me she was crying over the stories and then revealed to me that she was abused. You can imagine the initial shock to me hearing this, but I thought to myself, this is the purpose of this site and the *Minizine*. So if you ever wonder about your impact, I have living proof of its importance. THANK YOU. This *Minizine* was her outlet to break her silence, so please never let go of it.
-K.S.

CHOOSING THE LIGHT

Dear Chris & Ophelia,
Rape is an epidemic crime, and the one with the lowest conviction rate of any violent crime. We must raise one powerful voice for justice, and we must be one family of light for healing! Thank you for creating such a meaningful organization.
Peace and Light to You.
-J.

ANSWERING THE QUESTION

Dear Chris & Ophelia,
You asked survivors online what it is like to see others experience in writing. I wanted to answer your question. It was overwhelming at first. I am still, after reading so many stories, shocked that someone is talking about abuse. I'm not sure if that will go away or that one day it will be "normal." Maybe one day I will think "Another person is breaking the silence. Good for them!" It inspires me to tell my own story. Every time I read a story, including those in your *Minizine* I think "I want to do that!"
Thank you!
-Kathy

TIRED OF HIDING

Dear Chris & Ophelia,
My name is Stacey and I am a survivor. I am tired of hiding. It is not my shame. Please print this so that I can see this in writing. Maybe then, I will realize that it is real, that it is me and that I can move forward in some small way.
Thank you for this forum, for your *Minizine* and for all the stories you allow to be told, including my own. I am not alone.
-Stacey B., Denver, CO, age 28

Do you have something to say about this month's *Minizine*?
Email us at menspeakout@gmail.com

Q&A

In response to a number of emails that have been submitted regarding female safety, *(Wo)Men Speak Out™* enlisted the help of fellow Advocate & Safety Expert, Erin Weed in dispelling some of the myths surrounding this issue.

The Top 3 Women's Safety Myths

Myth #1: Rapists are more likely to attack women wearing their hair in a ponytail or are wearing overalls.

This just isn't true. If a rapist really wants to grab a woman on the street, he doesn't need a ponytail or overall straps to do it. All he needs to do is grab her arm, her free-flowing hair, a backpack, her legs, etc. While technically anyone can grab you on the street, the goal is to deter them from doing so in the first place. When you're walking, be aware of your surroundings. This means you want to be looking around at the people and things in your environment, walk strong with good posture, try to keep your hands free and your arms moving confidently. Making eye contact with people you pass on the street is good, but don't stare them down. Overall you're shooting to present yourself as calm, confident, in control and ready to stick up for yourself if you have to.

Myth #2: If you are walking by yourself, call someone on your cell phone so you seem like less of a target.

This is probably the most popular myth I run into. Many women have told me that when they are walking by themselves, the first thing they do is get on their cell phone and call a friend. While this might make you FEEL more safe, it's actually making you seem "distracted" to an attacker. To him, this makes you look like an easy target.

Why? Because while you're talking to your buddy on the phone, you are not hearing him get closer to you, you are simply not paying attention to your surroundings. Instead of talking on the phone, I recommend you simply grasp it in your hand. If you are feeling threatened by a person from a distance, call 911. If you are actually being attacked, use your phone as an improvised weapon. Cell phones are hard plastic or metal and make for excellent striking objects to the nose or forehead in a dire situation.

Myth #3: Never walk alone at night.

If you can walk with someone, the buddy system is always ideal. Seek out others to walk with if you can. But think about it... what woman living in America can possibly follow the advice of 'Never walk alone at night?' As independent women, we are going to be alone at times, and we need better safety strategies than to just never be by ourselves. Instead, we need to be prepared if something does happen. (Learn to fight, for starters.) While I am not recommending that you find the darkest alley possible and walk down it, I am telling you that I only give advice using the words "always" or "never" if it is humanly possible for women to apply it to their everyday life. In this case, I just don't think it is. "Don't be scared...be prepared."

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Erin Weed is a speaker, author and founder of *Girls Fight Back!* She travels the nation educating people of all ages about how they can be their own best protectors. The second edition of her book, *Girls Fight Back! The College Girl's Guide to Protecting Herself*, will be released in September 2007. For more information on Erin and her organization, please visit: www.girlsfightback.org or www.erinweed.com

I, ANONYMOUS: DIDN'T SEE IT COMING?

BY ANONYMOUS

Entitlement. I am entitled to take what I want from you because I am, because I can. I give myself permission to take your dignity, your free will, your mental space, and your sense of self. I will create a world so off balanced and crazy made; you will question your sanity and your self worth. I will create a 'you' for myself that only has the time and space to anticipate my next move. I will define your occupation as preventor and protector. I will show you a place in you that has the capacity to believe your only directive in life, is me. I will render you powerless, no helpless, yes, powerless: run your bath (the wrong temperature), manage your belongings (so you can't find them, without me), remind you of your human failure, scream into your face, kick the cat across the room (you're next), withhold affection, push you across the room, tell you there is something wrong with you (everybody thinks so), never make plans, never have dreams, push you into a wall, ignore you, push you over backwards, ignore the children, punch you and put your teeth through your lip with the force of my hand – cause I can.

The journey I took was long, it was slow, silent and successfully, succinctly, insidious. I was the victim of what I refer to as the entitled one. I didn't see it coming and upon reflection I could never understand the magnitude of what the infraction inflections would bring. Looking back I can pinpoint what the experts call the warning signs and feel they were far too subtle to have calculated. In this, I forgive myself, I was victimized, but now I pledge to not just survive, but thrive.

When I speak with my eldest daughter, we agree, it is the way 'they' talk. There is a language of power, I need you to, I will let you. There is a way you are left feeling when they are speaking, like, there couldn't be a response because there was no sense to the delivery. Or something like that. Off balance. Silenced. So subtle and it appears most unfortunate that experience is the best teacher of this unique, damaging language.

My experience robbed me more than fifteen years of my womanhood. It has taken years to begin to reclaim my emotional, intellectual and sexual power. The healing process is a two-step, one step forward, and two steps back, often led or guided by a therapist. A lot of my healing has come from listening to an un-entitled man, a gentler man who truly wants to be with me, who debates without fists, converses, compromises, whose kindness and perhaps kisses leave me dizzy – not his behaviour. I continue to look for these men, I think of myself as a seeker; I seek out men who demonstrate intuitive, uncontrollable, un-entitled relationship-ness and I am finding them! I am transferring my seeking, into learning, my learning into sharing, sharing, sharing... into teaching others (and my daughters and son) how to see – how to sense – its coming and how not to become one.



Send submissions (Max: 600 words)
for I, Anonymous to:
wso.ianonymous@gmail.com

FEATURED ARTIST

Jan Goff-LaFontaine

Jan Goff-LaFontaine is a photographer and author whose ongoing work is dedicated to bringing awareness and healing through art. Using 35 mm and medium format cameras, she focuses her attention on people, spending hours to capture a moment, then returns to her darkroom to make her large black and white prints. She handcrafts each of her sensitive portraits to offer viewers a glimpse into the essence of her subjects.

Women in Shadow and Light: Journeys from Abuse to Healing – which won the Independent Publishers' Book of the Year Award – offers an intimate glimpse of forty women – ages nineteen to ninety-five – who found the courage to triumph over trauma. Photographs combine with text to portray the essence of each woman's journey from the violence of sexual and physical abuse to transformation and healing.

info@janlafontaine.com | www.janlafontaine.com

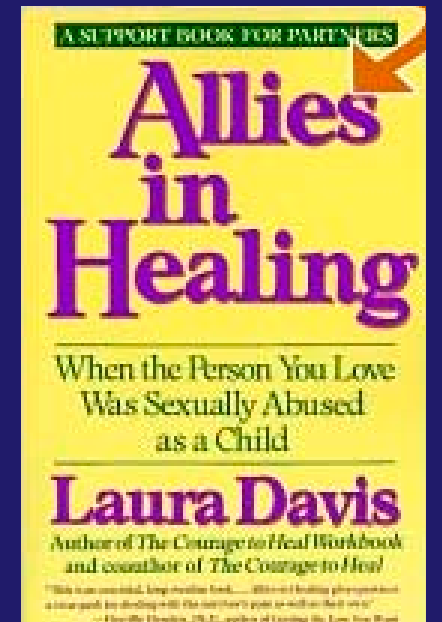


Photograph from her book, *Women in Shadow and Light: Journeys From Abuse to Healing*

FEATURED BOOK

Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love Was Sexually Abused as a Child by Laura Davis

Based on in-depth interviews and her workshops for partners across the country, Laura Davis offers practical advice and encouragement to all partners – girlfriends, boyfriends, spouses, and lovers -- trying to support the survivors in their lives while tending to their own needs along the way. She shows couples how to deepen compassion, improve communication, and develop an understanding of healing as a shared activity. Addressing partners' most important questions, *Allies in Healing* covers common questions about abuse; key concepts of working and growing together; teaches partners to recognize, value, and express their own needs; strategies for handling suicidal feelings, regression, and hopelessness; practical advice on dealing with distancing, control, trust, and fighting; guidelines for coping with flashbacks, lack of desire, differences in sexual needs, and frustration; ideas for interacting with the survivor's family; explores the struggles, triumphs, and courage of eight partners.



CLASSIFIED ADS

POINTS WITH PURPOSE

My name is David Ilan and I am a celebrity artist. When celebrities pose for me, I create a drawings of them using only dots, a technique called pointillism. For the first time in 10 years I am creating a non-celebrity drawing for a project that is very close to my heart. This project, named *Points with Purpose*, gives my dots a greater meaning by associating each dot with a real person who has been raped or sexually abused.

If you have been raped or sexually abused you can join the project at www.PointsWithPurpose.com (It's free), giving your real name or an alias, and have the option of sharing your story. I add one dot for every person who joins until the drawing is complete. The final drawing will be of a woman looking confident, proud and beautiful. By joining the project, thousands of people with a shared tragic experience will work together to form a work of art meant to show others that they too can feel confident, proud and beautiful again.

STOP RAPE ON CAMPUS

College-age people are more likely to be sexually assaulted than any other age group, so raising sexual assault awareness on college campuses is very important. Become an Advocate in your community by helping raise awareness for both men and women.

Contact *(Wo)Men Speak Out™* today to book for your 2008 college campus event. menspeakout@gmail.com

PROMOTE YOUR ORGANIZATION

The *WSO Minizine* offers an opportunity for individuals and organizations to reach survivors & professionals in the field. Advertising discounts for charity and non-profit organizations. All proceeds are donated back to *WSO Minizine*. Send inquiries to menspeakout@gmail.com



EVENTS

11/09/2007

St. Paul, MN

The Fillmore County Family Violence Council is sponsoring a Stalking and Strangulation Training at F & M Bank in Preston from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The \$20 registration fee includes materials and refreshments. For more information, call 507-765-2684 or 507-765-2316 or e-mail: kberg@co.fillmore.mn.us.

11/10/2007

Providence, RI

5K TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On November 10th, the Providence College Sailing Team will be hosting the annual 5K Walk to Support Survivors of Domestic Violence. All proceeds will go to the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence www.ricadv.org

11/10/2007

Oakland, CA

“PARKS FOR PEACE” PROJECT AT ARROYO VIEJO PARK

In response to the increase of street violence in Oakland, the City of Oakland's Office of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with various community groups, have developed The Community of Spirit Program, a consortium designed to develop constructive, creative ways to address the violence plaguing communities throughout Oakland. Join the committee in speaking out.

www.oaklandnet.com/parks/news/083007a.asp

11/13/2007 – 11/15/2007

San Antonio, Texas

CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICES CONFERENCE, 2007

Journeys to Excellence: Directions in Advocacy

View the Conference Website for information and to register:

www.oag.state.tx.us/conferences/crimevictims2007/

11/16/2007

Ohio, Nationwide Children's Hospital – Stecker Auditorium
PREVENT CHILD ABUSE OHIO'S STATEWIDE NETWORK MEETING

Join Prevent Child Abuse Ohio for our next Statewide Network Meeting on Friday, November 16, 2007 from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM in Columbus, Ohio. The topic of the meeting, “Human Trafficking II: Survivor, Program & Legal Perspective.” The presenters for the day's events include Theresa Flores, LSW M.S. – Author of “The Sacred Bath”, Kathleen Davis, Polaris Project Ohio Coordinator and Ken Lawson, Detective with the Sexual Assault Unit at the Columbus Police Department. For more information, visit: www.pcao.org/news/events.cfm or email: pcao@nationwidechildrens.org

11/19/2007

WORLD DAY FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

www.woman.ch/home.php

11/24/2007

RECLAIM THE NIGHT UK

Last year over 1000 women gathered in London to march through the streets claiming their right to walk safely and without fear of attack. This year's event promises to be bigger and better, with a women-only march and a mixed rally with music, bands, speeches and a reclaim your right to party. Put this date in your diary now! For more information, visit: www.ldnfeministnetwork.uk.com

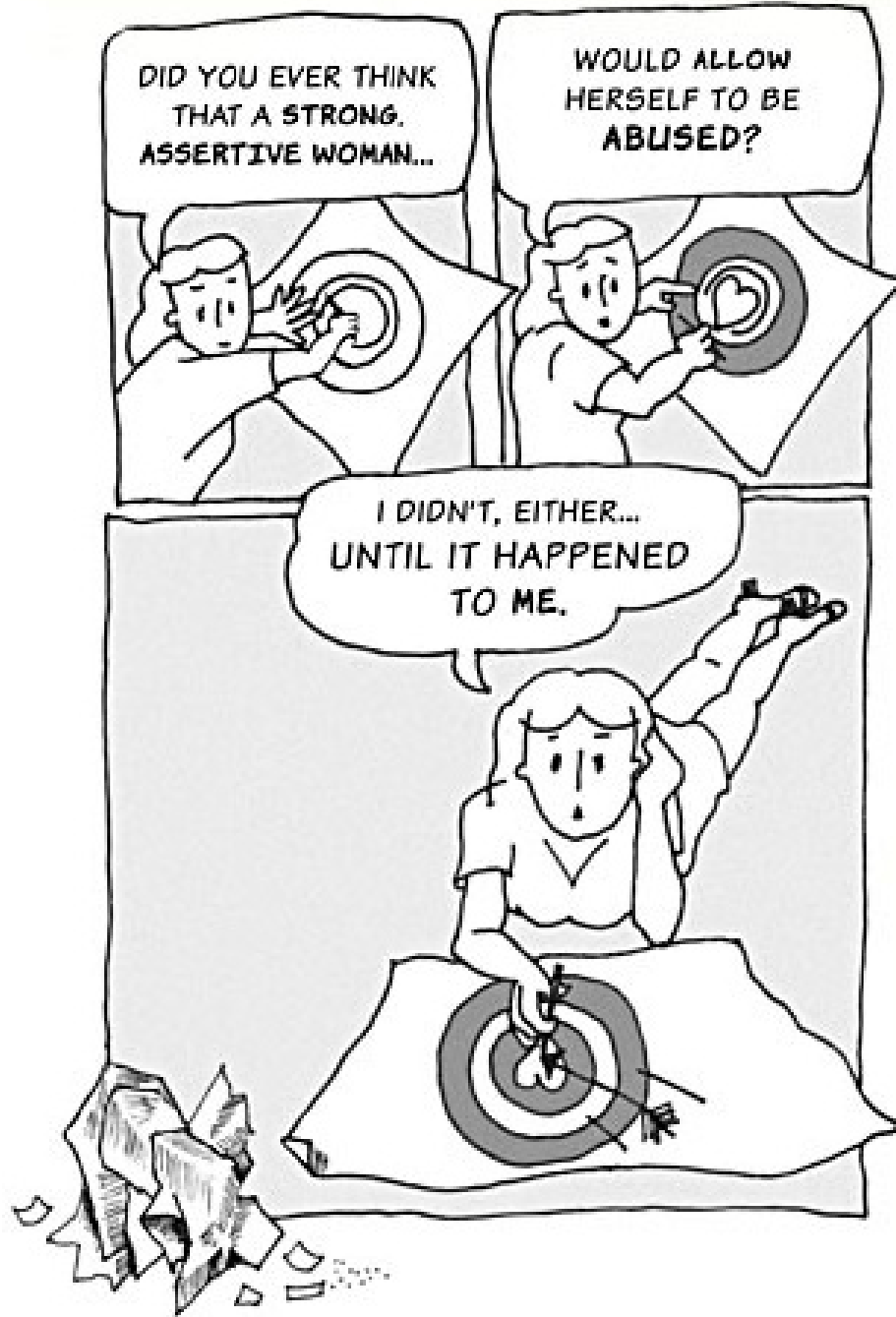
11/25/2007

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

November 25, the International Day to End Violence Against Women, was declared by women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981. The day commemorates the death of the Mirabel sisters who were brutally murdered in the Dominican Republic in 1960. Sixteen days have been set aside for “activism against gender violence”.

Correction: The article *The Incest Survivors' Aftereffects Checklist* (October 2007, page 12–15) contained an error in that the copyright information was remiss. The copy printed in the issue should not be redistributed due to copyright issues. No portion of the below mentioned list may be copied or reprinted without the author's permission. The complete © 1985–2004 by E. Sue Blume, C.S.W., Diplomate in Clinical Social Work. All Rights reserved is downloaded at www.menspeakoutnow.com/ChecklistJuly2004.pdf .

CARTOON OF THE MONTH



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OUR STRENGTH

IS NOT FOR HURTING.



Men can stop rape.

Show your strength. Stand up. Speak up.



Dear Reader,

Thanks so much for taking the time to read this month's edition of the *(Wo)Men Speak Out™ Minizine*.

Let us know what you thought of this issue. We would love to add your comments to our new "We Hear You" section to let people in on your side of things.

Also, feel free to add a video response to videos on our YouTube homepage: <http://www.youtube.com/menspeakout>

Your opinion is important to us and we can't wait to hear what you have to say!

Thank you for all that you do.

Regards,

Chris & Ophelia
Founders, *(Wo)Men Speak Out™*