

“This is a determined agency to make change, and they’re involved in all aspects of the community with the homeless, employment, education, rape crisis victim services, and they are responsive. When somebody needs something, this agency comes through.”

~ Teresi, Volunteer at The Women’s Center



omen’s Center  
onologues

*eleven40seven*

Chapbook Series #3

Texas Christian University

Fort Worth, Texas



**omen's Center**  
**onologues**

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“Founded in 1979, The Women’s Center’s mission is to inspire and empower women, men, and children to overcome violence, crisis, and poverty. It is a place of hope, opportunity, and better futures for families of Tarrant County.”

Before this project, The Women's Center was just another place to me. I did not know of their services, their staff, or about the countless lives they had changed over their 40-year history. During the first round of volunteer interviews, the genuine care and concern of all the volunteers and staff in that room became palpable. Stories of struggle and triumph and the want for a better tomorrow were spoken, recorded, and printed onto paper, so that others may catch a glimpse of what it's like to be a part of The Women's Center, both as a client and staff member.

I would like to thank the staff and volunteers of The Women's Center for sharing their stories with us and letting us use their voices. Thank you to my team members for all the time and effort they invested in this project. Lastly, I want to say that I am so appreciative for the opportunity to have worked with all the wonderful people who helped bring this chapbook to life.

Saraisabel Perez  
Editor in Chief, Fall 2018

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# PARTICIPANTS

JOHN

TERESI

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*Describe The Women's Center in Three Words*

Necessary, Peaceful, Versatile

Hope, Transformation, Courage

Compassion, Empowerment, Healing

Determined, Responsive, Involved

Encouraging, Empowering, Helpful

Survivor and Support

Impactful, Fun, Variety

Supportive, Resource, Life Changing

Professional, Respectful, Compassionate

Hope Starts Here

## THE WOMEN'S CENTER

JOHN

I was drinking from a fire hose of knowledge when I first got here.

TERESI

This is a determined agency to make change, and they're involved in all aspects of the community with the homeless, employment, education, rape crisis victim services, and they are responsive. When somebody needs something, this agency comes through.

TIM

One reason that I chose to work here is because in my community, the African American community, there is not a lot of voice given to child abuse and sexual assault, and that is really one of the reasons why I came, and why I stayed, is because there needs to be an African American voice, I think, to add to this discussion, and there also needs to be a male voice as well. I'm a Play It Safe trainer, and this is my fifth year, and in the five years out of all the trainers we've had, we've only had two men. Because a lot of times from

the outside looking in, you see Women's Center, and you're thinking, it's just restricted to just dealing with women's issues. But as I came to work here, you know, one thing that I discovered is that...even though it started off specifically dealing with women, as the program has grown, particularly the Play It Safe program, it is dealing with counseling for men, women, boys, and girls.

#### TERESI

When I look back at the history of The Women's Center, you know, it started out as almost grassroots around someone's kitchen table, an idea that there were victims out there that weren't taken care of. So we've gone from probably three or four people having a conversation maybe over coffee about what this community needs to this agency. With services that are, they're all encompassing: education, employment, housing, victim services. There's nothing that, that they can't at least have gotten to send somebody in the right direction for. We have a legal team, and the fact that they serve men and children, as well as women, I think is important.

#### SARAH

I don't work with clients directly, so I don't necessarily have that experience of, you know, if a male comes in for services, how comfortable are they? I can say whenever I've worked with groups of men, you know, I'll say I'm from The Women's Center, and then they're like, "Oh, so you only serve women? Right?" And it's like, no, we actually serve men. Like I've actually had men telling me that they don't believe me whenever I say that we provide services for men. So, you know, I do think that there might be some hesitance, because we don't only provide services for survivors. We have other departments as well. So we have an

employment department, and we have a general counseling department where people can access those services as well. But I think just coming into a women's center as a man sometimes can, like there's a little bit of hesitance there, like maybe it's kind of a hit to the ego or something.

#### ROSALYN

What I tell someone that needs to come here, you know, I would say that The Women's Center has changed people's lives. They're not here to judge. I've been here for almost going on the fourth year, and I've only heard really great positive things about it. And that's come from people who have used the service, and so you know, you can trust in it. You can call them. I'll tell them about the services that we offer, sexual assault counseling for free. And that we also have general counseling on a sliding scale, and if you're not comfortable coming in, then call our 24-hour number that has trained staff at the other end.

#### TERESI

I worked with domestic violence for almost 20 years, and anywhere that there's domestic violence with an intimate partner, almost guaranteed sexual assault's a part of it at some point or another. And so I've not ever been a victim of sexual assault, I will tell you that. I think for myself, like most women, one of our biggest fears is being sexually assaulted. Whether we talk about it or not, we all have that fear of the stranger jumping out of the bush when we're in a dark parking lot or whatever, right? So I also saw this as an opportunity to confront my own fear. And it certainly has. It's made me more aware. I walk a little harder, make eye contact in a way that I never did before. So I think that was kind of, you know, it was all encompassing. It was an opportunity for me to grow, a fear I had, and it was kind of

a natural fit for me, just because I didn't want to leave the industry that I was in, the field I was in, but it just seemed like a good fit.

#### SARAH

I work with mostly professionals in the community. I do a little bit of work with other adult populations as well, but I would say my main clients are professionals. So we work with several of the law enforcement communities around or law enforcement departments around the community. And really my role with them is trying to help them understand how to interact with survivors in a sensitive way. Sexual assault, sexual abuse is such a traumatic event in somebody's life, and being able to help them understand if you are the first responder, if you're the first person who is interacting with them after this event has happened, it's critical that you do that in a way that is sensitive to what they've been through, and that's empowering to them to heal. So that's, that's really my role to help them understand how to work with survivors in a sensitive way.

#### MS. B

During our training one time, somebody says, "Can you just write out a script?" And I looked at him and I said, well, you can't, because every story is different, and what you write one day is not going to work the next time that you go, or the next person you talk to you, because everybody's different, and you have to reach them where they are. And so, if we're listening, then you'll know which way to go in your conversation...For those who don't have a family, we're here. For those who do have a family, we just get added to the family, so everything that we do requires flexibility.

## JOHN

One of my colleagues said, “You gotta be Gumby.” Because you're just being stretched all the time. You've got to be flexible. I couldn't have said it better myself. This job requires flexibility, period, because even though you have a schedule that says you're in this classroom from 8:30AM to 9:30AM that may seem cut and dry. That may seem pretty specific, but miraculously I walk into that classroom, and it could be, instead of one class, you have two classes in the classroom today. Or it could be that today the power's gonna go out in the middle of your presentation, so you won't have any AV support, and you'll be in the dark. Or you know you'll have a fire drill, or any number of things. You just have to be prepared for it.

## HEATHER

The only thing we're told on the phone is “you have the victim,” you know, “at this hospital.” We're not told if it's a male, female, we're not told their socioeconomic [status], we're not told skin color, anything like that. And it doesn't matter. But in the same sense, you have to be, you have to be knowledgeable and aware of cultural,...certain ethnicities look at things differently, and so you have to be sensitive to cultural differences, to the way we would respond in our response is always the same. It's compassionate, it's support, but a homeless victim is going to need different things than, you know, a 22-year-old college girl in the sense of with the homeless, I'm going to provide them with lots of extra clothing and toiletries, and I need to give them a place to sleep in a shelter that night and all that. Whereas, with a college kid, I don't need to necessarily worry about those things. So I'm not knowing if it is IPV, interpersonal violence, inter-partner violence, where I've got to worry about, you know, getting cops involved with restraining

orders, or if there's children involved, not necessarily as victims, but do I need to call CPS? You know, there's a lot of things you have to kind of walk into there blindly and just go, well, here's how we handle it.

MS. B

You know, life happens, and sometimes this is really not for everybody. It's really hard; sometimes it rips your heart out. And sometimes it's hard to recover from that, but there's so many things that we do here that it doesn't have to be the sexual assault part. It can be the recovery time, you know, it could be employment solutions where you're looking for a new life in a new way, a new job, and hopefully everything that we do here, and they've planned this out where it's the totality of a person that we look at, you know, and if you'll let us, as a survivor, we will help you walk through every aspect of your life until you can stand on your own. And I think that's really important, because it doesn't always happen.

MS. B

I ask them why they're nervous. A lot of times it's because nobody really will believe, and I'll say, oh, we've been here for 30 years, and that's what we specialize in, sexual assault, domestic violence and suicide, and that we take your story seriously. That this is one place that your story is safe, and that we're here to help you get through the trauma that you've gone through. And I also explain to them that this is not a pill that we can offer, that we're not trying to get them over it, which means never seeing the elephant in the room, but dealing with all of the traumas and dealing with the triggers and that going through counseling is like defusing a bomb. You know, you have to go in, and you really have to work on that thing, and it's painful, but when it's over, that's one less trigger to set you off.

## HEATHER

That's compassion. That's meeting someone where they're at, you know, whatever their circumstances are, whatever their belief system is, whatever their needs are, and I always try to tell my victims that, you know, I'm just here for you. The cops are gonna need you to give a statement, the same nurse is going to need you to give a statement. I don't need anything from you; I'm just here to support you, whatever that looks like. If you want to lay your head down and go to sleep, we don't need to talk. If you want to unload your burdens on me, I'm here to talk. Whatever it looks like. I'm here for you. And so not only case-by-case, each person responds differently to trauma, and so what does that look like for that person right then. So in a way it's cookie cutter because it's, it's compassion, you know, it's support, and you either understand it or you don't. And it's very simple in nature, but the circumstances, you know, providing resources can be a little different.

## PAMMELLA

In fact I've talked about that with clients because they are nervous to tell. They get embarrassed, and I tell them first of all, I promise that this agency has been around so long that you're not going say anything they haven't heard before. But people think that their story is that different. But the truth of it is, it's usually the same story wrapped around. And I tell them, they wanna know do I have to talk about it? And I say, yes, but you can go at your own pace. You don't have to blurt it out all at once. Your therapist will be skilled. Because that's painful. It's hard to think, well I want to do better, but I'm going to have to talk about one of the worst experiences of my life, if not the worst, and maybe it's not an experience. Maybe it's a series, a



lifestyle. Because that does happen to some. Sometimes it happens that they're victimized as children, and they're victimized again as an adult. You know it's heartbreaking. Give it a shot. If you don't feel comfortable, you tell the therapist, they'll slow down. Nobody is going to make you talk about something when you're not ready to talk about it. And just know that you're not alone, and the fact that they do it individually and in groups I think helps, because some things are easy to say individually, sometimes it's better in a group, because other people kind of encourage you, you know, to know, well, I'm really not alone in this experience. Just give it shot, especially since the services are free of charge, so you can't beat that. You can't deny it, especially since therapy out there is incredibly expensive, even if you go through insurance companies, they usually have a limit of what they'll pay. So it's an unbelievable blessing.

#### JOHN

I have to say that I have been extremely impressed, blown away even, by the approach that The Women's Center takes, because it's more than a rape crisis center. We don't just respond after the fact. And I'm not saying that's a bad thing, that responding after somebody has been victimized is extremely important. I think about the old saying, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And that struck me one day when I was talking about all the services we provide that we're out in schools talking to young people, we're reaching out to parents as many as we can to empower them and equip them. We're doing everything we can to actually prevent it, you know, to get the word out. And on top of that we are providing that pound of cure. So we are the ounce of prevention and the pound of cure where we're responding after the fact and helping people get back on their feet and recover.

## JOHN

I always like to think that there's the positive at the end of the story. You know, as tough as the stories are, I think of myself as maybe a bridge, you know what I mean? Think of the child on this side of a river that they can't get across. And on the other side is the help that they need. I'm not the person who's going to provide therapy. I'm not the person who's going to investigate, intervene. I'm simply the person that's going to be the bridge that's going to connect that child to all those people that can help. So, so the way I look at it is, because I don't know how it turns out, I just have to look at it as every child who I get the opportunity to talk with, every time they get the opportunity to help, have to think they're one step closer.

## PLAY IT SAFE

PAMMELLA

Play It Safe is always educating about child sexual abuse and physical abuse. And the interesting thing about that is I was a caseworker for 10 years out of that 23 and I was a supervisor, so I saw it first hand, and I can't tell you the times I say to kids it's not your fault. You didn't cause this to happen. That is part of the script for Play it Safe, because victims will almost always think they've done something to cause it to happen, whether it's physical abuse or sexual abuse, and so when I saw that originally at the interview years ago and it's the same thing I've been saying one on one to kids for years, and so to say it in large numbers is so helpful. And the fact that we back it up every year is so important, because kids being kids, they listen to adults, and one year if we did it one year and not succeeding years, it probably wouldn't stick with them, because it's hard sometimes for the kids to understand we can tell on an adult, even adults that we're supposed to trust, or you know you're not supposed to tell on them. And just making sure that they know that there's at least one person they can tell...some kids are blessed, just by birthright, with a

large group of people that they can trust. Other children are not so fortunate, just depending on where you're born and who you're born into. You may be born into a family that doesn't have any trustworthy people in it. And that's hard to imagine, especially if you came from a family that has people that you can trust and can go to in an emergency, but I just saw it first hand, so I know up close and personal that some kids don't get that, you know, I - always want them to feel comfortable... I have had kids that will tell you, you know I've never told anyone this before, and you know they're really afraid, and hopefully by the time they finish talking about that, hopefully they at least think they have someone who wants to help. They don't think they're going to be absolutely alone.

TIM

From Pre K all the way to high school, we talk about all issues that deal with any kind of violence towards children. We talk about how to recognize, and how to report child abuse, physical abuse. We call it unsafe touch, whether it be any kind of touching, or taking a picture of a child's private parts, we call that confusing touch. So we talk about those things, and we teach children how to recognize it when it's happening, and also how to report it. So we teach them a safety rule. A safety rule has three parts to it: 1. Say no, 2. Get away, and 3. Tell a trusted adult.

MELISSA

My job is to believe. No matter what anybody else says. My job is to be there in that moment with that child and believe what they say. And then I pass it on to investigators, and then they can figure out how, you know, what the actual details of everything is and if it warrants further action. That's not my job. And so the ability to be able to throw all

that away and just listen to the child, it's not, it's not my concern whether or not what they are saying is completely accurate or not. I just get to believe them and then pass it on to people who can help keep them safe. Does that make sense? It takes a lot of pressure off of us, and it also gives me peace of mind, because with children who have been abused, a lot of the fear of not saying anything can come from feeling like they're not going to be believed. So the belief that I'm validating someone and not contributing to that fear that has kept them quiet...that's really important.

#### PAMMELLA

I know what brings a lot of people here is the victimization part, but they have other services as well. I think obviously the community sees the benefit, or I don't think I would be here, and I certainly don't think Play It Safe would be growing the way it's growing. I don't think you could ever get too big to go out and talk to kids, I really don't. Every time the numbers grow, we're all excited, even if they weren't kids that I was talking to, and every time we add schools, it feels like you're winning.

#### SARAH

People are funny whenever you're presenting to them; they will come up with some really off the wall comments. Probably some of the funnier ones come from little kids, you know, they say really ridiculous types of things. Like if you ask what is somebody who is a trusted adult, they might say things like Santa Claus, or they might say things like the president, or Beyonce, or somebody who knows Kung Fu, so that you start saying really funny things. Whenever you ask questions about, you know, what's a safe touch? They might say, sharing your toys with your friends. So they have really funny answers. We've actually

started compiling, like writing down and compiling, funny things that kids could say during presentations, to read like at trainer meetings or things like that where just to kind of laugh at some of that shared experience.

### ROSALYN

I feel like it's more than just giving info. I feel like I'm really saving a kid's life. There's not a lot of jobs that let you do that. There's not a lot of jobs like that. I feel like when I'm saying my information about physical or sexual abuse or both, what we do, that they're going to take this information, and not only am I going to save their life, but then, especially elementary, they're going to take this, and when they're playing teacher, they're going to educate their brothers and sisters, so I've not only affected that child, but I've affected that whole family, and so now my message is going to get to them, and I've made them safe too. And hopefully they'll keep passing that down to people they know and relatives, you know. So it's, it's really powerful in that way that you really change people's lives. You really save people who would have been stuck in a situation where there was abuse, and now they're going to get help. I mean, you even have teachers who are like, man, I wish they had had this program when I was their age, because maybe I should have gotten help. And so you have teachers that are disclosing to you, you know that, that happened to them. So it's just an amazing job that you, you really are changing people's lives.

### KELSEY

Older kids are wiser, I guess streetwise, and they know if they speak up, something might happen, so they don't want to speak up as much, which is really sad because it does happen just as often.

## ROSALYN

We do a twelfth grade [video] that's really heavy too. But it's a really good one. It's one of my favorites, actually, because it's twelfth grade, they're about to go to college, and so it's about girls who have this real testimony, like you see them, and they're telling their story how they got assaulted, and they got assaulted at school, going to college, and then we have this video of a story, a movie, you know, sources, skits, or whatever of them, of them being at university for the first year, and how she got sexually assaulted. This is all a true story...So, it's a powerful one...so every time I put the video on, you know, I'm always like assessing the crowd to see is there anyone affected...so a lot of times I go by with their face, you know, and if I see they're tearing up, I go to the counselor, because they didn't disclose to me, but I can see it affected them. So I go talk to the counselor, I get the name from the teacher, and then they'll tell me their name and so I'll take that to the counselor and want her to follow up on that.

## JOHN

I often think about the teachers in the classroom, because when we go into the classroom and one of their students makes an outcry, we're there. And if the child talks to us, we pull them aside and discreetly let them tell their story, and we give them complete privacy, as much as possible. You know, we don't want them to tell their story to the whole class. And, and as hard as that is for me to hear, I know that I'm going to go get that child help, but then I think about the teacher who is in that classroom with that child day after day, and they saw that child making a disclosure, making an outcry, and they may or may not have been aware of it, or they may or may not be aware of the circumstances, they have to deal with that day in

and day out. They have to come in every day and see that child and, you know, my hat's off to these teachers for that reason. They deal with it every day, and they are that support network. They're part of that child's support network every day. Whereas I'm in and I'm out, and as much as I'd love to say I play this critical role, the only role I play is that I'm providing that education that they're not getting somewhere else. And maybe something I say just gives that child the idea that they can trust me enough to come to me and tell me their deepest, troubling secret. But I do see a movement in the community, whether it's with professionals, whether it's with teachers, I hear the language of a trauma-informed approach and dealing with things in the trauma-informed manner. And the more we hear that, and the more we talk about it, the more people will begin to understand that when a child acts up in a classroom, instead of asking, "What's wrong with you?" asking "What happened to you?" it's nonjudgmental...let's find out what happened. Let's find out, because obviously there's something that child's reacting to, and it's probably not that immediate situation. So, it changes the whole dynamic, and it provides a safe place for the child to get help.



## CONSENT EDUCATION

KELSEY

It's usually more serious with high schoolers, because they understand the gravity of the situation, or they'll just try to act out because they don't know what to do with it, and they just start acting the fool and just doing whatever to kind of make it less awkward.

AMELIA

Whereas [when we talk to] the younger kids, elementary school ages, it's focusing on, going over, you know, what safe touches are, what unsafe touches are. That's our term for physical abuse. And then what we call confusing touches, our term for sexual abuse, so we talk about what confusing touch is, and it involves your private parts. What are your private parts? We have little dolls where we explain to them. They're not anatomically correct, they have swimsuits on, so we tell little stories with the dolls. We talk about, you know, how nobody should ever touch or look at your private parts without a good reason. What are those good reasons? Well there's not very many, there's only like three. Doctor, diaper change, bath time. That's it. But if

somebody tells you that you have to keep it a secret, or that they're playing some type of a game with you, then that's not a safe touch, and you have to follow the safety rule. Which is: say no, run away, and tell a trusted adult.

#### JOHN

I think it's starting an open dialogue and having an open dialogue with their parent, their caregiver, and knowledge they need to understand their bodies. They need to understand that they have the right to set boundaries around their bodies. They have the right to say, "Yes you can, or no, you may not." They have the right to change their mind. They have the right to say, "You know what, I thought this was okay, but I'm not okay with it now." You know, they need to understand all of those things. And on the flip side, they need to understand that when they're with somebody that, that person has a right to set those boundaries, and that they need to listen for that and respect those boundaries.

#### MS. B

It's a time to teach our children how to truly have relationships, how to date, how to respect each other. We need to unlearn the old lessons. Pulling hair does not mean someone likes you. Beating a person doesn't show love. Teaching and giving permission to seek mutuality in relationship, respect, honesty, and seeking the best for someone else, and treating others how you want to be treated, not how you have been negatively been treated.

#### ANN

That boys will be boys thing. I grew up in a house full of boys, and that's one of the reasons I'm doing the work that I'm doing now. I grew up in a household where my mother and I did all the slave work, and the boys got to play. It's

pretty much how it was. Not, not totally how it was, but I mean, I cleaned their toilets until I was 16. I finally said I'm done. I'm not gonna clean their toilets anymore. So you know, there was...and that you take that message with you, that's a very subtle message, but it's that you're not quite as important as that. And I think that was a message that was imparted to a lot of us in the fifties and sixties and seventies. Our mothers were very traditional. They raised us the way they were raised, and really the women of my generation and just the generation ahead of me were the first ones to say "Eh, it's not alright." So. I think it starts early. I think it has to start at home.

#### HEATHER

You know, so long we've taught our girls how not to be raped, which plays into the victim blaming...I would love to see more training for young men to truly understand what consent is. If for no other reason, than for their safety, you know, there would be nothing worse than for a young man thinking that this is culturally acceptable, but now I'm being accused of rape, you know? And so for their safety too, it's not a male bashing thing. They need to understand how slippery a slope consent is, and interpret that to protect themselves going forward.

#### ANN

I was out with a group of friends the other night, all women of about my same age, and we were talking about how things have changed in the workforce in the last 40 years. I mean, I graduated from TCU in 1977. It's been a while. And back then in the workplace you could expect to have your behind patted. I've had my breast squeezed. It was like the women in the office were playthings and that was a cultural...that was just kind of a cultural thing that it was

very, very pervasive, not just in the workplace, but at home as well, that women were subservient. They weren't to be respected or whatever, and I think what we have to do is we have to start very, very, very early and let our boys and our young men know that it's not okay. No means no. And we also need to teach our young girls that no means no. And to be assertive enough, to be self-confident enough and assertive enough, to say keep your hands to yourself. You know what I mean?

#### AMELIA

(On women raping men.) And that's still hard to explain to people. They can. It is possible. Men don't have a concept of the fact that they can say no to sex. They can say no, and the person has to take them seriously and not continue. Men can say no just as much as women can say no. Like consent is a two-way thing. Both people get to say it. Get to give it, take it back, they get to give consent to whoever they want whenever they want. Yeah guys don't have a, you know, oh, we can? I thought that was something you had to convince women to give you. No a women should give it freely, you should not have to convince her. If you are having to convince her to do anything sexual with you, you're not in a good situation. You get to give consent, too. If there's something where you're just like "I'm not into this" or "you're not as pretty as I thought you were, so I don't want to do this with you" which is fair... Say no. You don't have to keep going just cause you're a guy.

#### SARAH

I'm really passionate about prevention. So while I do work mostly with how to interact with survivors once it has already happened, occasionally I'll get to do presentations about prevention topics. And how do we, how do we pre-

vent that first time perpetration, right? Because a lot of times what we focus on is how do we prevent people from becoming victims when, if we're ever going to actually prevent sexual assault and sexual abuse and dating violence and stalking and all of those things, we have to prevent that first time perpetration. So keep the offenders from offending the first time. And that's really the only way that we're gonna see a change. And so I think that's really where my passion lies, is prevention in that aspect. Being able to talk about systems and talk about culture and media influences and things like that to help people understand, you know, how do we shift a culture to ultimately reduce the amount of crime that's happening?

JOHN

I think we need professionals, police officers for example, not only to know how to respond to victims, but they also need the same education. Just in general. I think all humans need that education around victim blaming, for example, that no matter what the circumstances may look like, none of this was that victim's fault. A victim may have done things that in their eyes, put them in a vulnerable position, but somebody made a decision to victimize that person, to prey upon that person, and so that education, I think, is critical.

JOHN

Parents, whatever style they use, I don't fault them for it. I think what I try to do is come in and provide a framework for them to work in those little, those little pieces, little changes that are not even changes. Little nuggets. Empowering them to teach their kids, you know, the names of other body parts. For Pete's sake, we have elbows not benders. You know, if somebody has a penis or a vagina,

that's okay to say it rather than saying, you know, what is it, cookie or turtle or whatever it is they call it. Their kids need to know that it's okay for them to, you know, to have that language and to have those conversations, and so that's where I come in as a parent, as a parent educator and say, you know, whatever their parenting style is, just think about these things, incorporate these words, incorporate these conversations into your day to day.

## RAPE CULTURE

ANN

Alright, the conversation goes as follows. "Well, I went to a party on Saturday night, and I got really wasted, and I woke up on Sunday, and my panties were down around my ankle, and I'm not sure how it happened, but I think I might have been sexually assaulted." That's very common. It's not an every time thing, but it's a very, very common thing. And so what I would say to you as you go back into your own setting, if you have a girlfriend or close women friends, or just classmates, you're not to blame. But it's not an unusual thing to have happen when you let go of control of your surroundings. And we've all been there. I mean, I was a college student back in the seventies, and it was wild! Streaking and all that kind of stuff. And drugs and alcohol are a very prevalent thing. It's not an every time thing, but it's probably an 85 to 90 percent thing. It's very, very common, and what I would say is, you know, what we tell our girls and women that have experienced this, it's like, okay, the only thing you ought to expect from a really wild party is a hangover. Not a sexual assault.

MS. B

Well, it's like, well, what were you wearing? I told you not to go out and party. I told you what partying does, you know. What you wear? Do they ask men what they wear? No, they don't. Do they ask men what their intentions are when they're going out? No, and so everybody gets to go party, and everybody gets to go home safe in my world, and when someone crosses the line and somebody doesn't get to go home, that they end up in the hospital, that's the line that I won't allow to be crossed. Does that make sense? Everybody gets to date. I mean, you get to choose. You get to choose to go home safely. The person who chooses not to let you go home safely, I'm sorry. That's not acceptable. It's like stealing. Stealing is against the law, last time I checked. And so I bring that to the forefront of anybody who's with a survivor, and I say, okay, this is not about you, or what you think. This is about them, and they're already beating themselves up of yes, they told me not to do this, and they told that, and they're already beating themselves up. Stop it. What your job right now is, is to be a support group, and if you can't support them, then why would you take them home with you? And so, that's kind of my job is to make sure that everybody feels safe, and if you're beating up on that person while you're in the room, that's not safe.

MELISSA

One of the things that I always make sure that I completely just pound on is that you can do everything wrong. You could make every wrong decision. Every poor decision you can think of, you still do not...nobody has the right to attack your body. Nobody has the right to commit a crime against you, and that you can see how difficult that is for people to process, and that's a cultural problem that we have, that there is some type of blame that needs to be afforded to the



person who was hurt. And I don't...I would like to do a lot of research on that. I don't understand where that comes from. Part of me feels like, personally this is just my personal opinion, that it comes from fear that we like to, because especially something as violent and as violating as sexual assault is, we like to point to things that we wouldn't do so we don't have to be scared of being a victim. Like, well, I wouldn't go there and I wouldn't hang out with that person and I wouldn't drink that. And if I did, I wouldn't drink that much of it. You know, point to those things that would keep us safe. Like that person did those wrong, so that's why that happened to them. But really why that's happened to them is that at some point, somebody decided to have sex with them without consent. That's when the rape happened. It didn't happen when they put on the dress, or when they drank what they drank, or whatever. We have so much work to do when it comes to how we listen to and how we take care of victims and survivors of abuse, of sexual assaults, of any kind of victimization.

#### HEATHER

There's a lot of internalized guilt. There's a lot of internalized shame. That's what rape culture is about. And that's what perpetrators rely on. The victim is going to feel so ashamed and so guilty that she won't tell anyone. She's not going to report. It is a crime that is kept in the dark for many reasons. And most people, you know, with rape culture, we victim blame more than any other traumatic crime. We talk about what they were wearing or what they were drinking or how they were acting. And you know, let's face it, the only consequence for too much drinking is a hangover. I mean it's just, we don't ask. We don't ask our mugging victims, "Why did you take that much cash? Did

you not think you were going to get mugged by carrying that much cash?” Or, you know, we don't ask carjack victims, “Why were you driving this nice car? I mean, you're kind of asking for it because you drove a nice car.” Right? But we do that with our rape victims.

#### HEATHER

Rape is, you know, it's not a subject that people are comfortable with. I mean, I have to be careful telling my story just because it's heavy, you know, and it affects people. So for me, it happened, and I've dealt with it and stuff, but even I've had people that have heard my story and they're like, I haven't slept, and I'm like oh my gosh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean my story to be a burden. It's hard because I think it's a huge fear of people's, you know, people have lots of things that they're afraid of happening to them, but rape is just that thing. They just don't even let their brain go there. You know, it's just, it's really too much to even consider. So there's that aspect of it that it's hard to, people don't want to hear about it, they don't want to discuss it, you know, and then there's, and rightfully so, that victims should have the ability to decide if they want to tell their story or not. But the internalized shame and guilt keeps a lot of people from being vocal about what's happened.... But that's hard. And that's not everyone's comfort place. You know, a lot of people that have experienced that don't have that. It's just hard for them to vocalize, to verbalize to them, you know, it's a hard crime to talk about. Yeah, we need to talk about it. We need to have it out there, but it's hard for people to hear.

#### KELSEY

No, nobody deserves to be hit like that. You don't deserve that. Or for a kid who has been sexually abused, like that's

just normal, that's just a part of our family, and that's what my uncle did for so long, and they don't realize, no, it's not normal. You know, you have a right to your own body, and you have a right to be treated with respect. So I'm more on the kind of informational side. And so what I do is I introduce a lot of these topics to kids when we talk in the presentations. We always emphasize that most people are good people, and they would never do this to anybody, but even people that, you know, even people that you love could abuse you. And if they have, then you can speak up about it.

#### AMELIA

[When I was in school] I did learn about things like sexual harassment and sexual assault did exist. I didn't get any education about what I could do about it. What am I supposed to do? So, I think as a girl, and then as a young woman, and as an adult woman now, it's like really the only thing that you learn as a woman to do about sexual assault is just 'not get raped'. That's what you learn. Like don't get raped. It's on you. It's on you to prevent it from happening. It's not "let's teach men not to do it anymore," it's, "let's just teach women to- you know- make sure they're not going out alone at night, and make sure that they always have- you know- somebody with them if they have to walk alone to the parking garage to their car. Or make sure that they dress modestly when they're going out in public, and don't dress- don't dress too slutty because you're just kind of asking for it at that point." And things like that. We teach women that you can take a self-defense class when really it's like, "Why don't we just tell men not to rape women?"

## AMELIA

It's still the old...don't walk alone at night. Have a man go with you to your car in a very vacant parking garage. It's, if you don't want to get attacked and don't want somebody to hurt you then you need to not go to the bad parts of town. Don't go to that club after midnight. You know, why did you park so far away in the first place, you knew you were gonna have to walk down that one street. Why did you choose to walk down an alley? So it's all these things we're not supposed to do. They're not written down anywhere, it's not like a law we have to follow, but it's things that society is telling us that we should not be doing. So yeah, there are boundaries that are set. They're just not boundaries that are set down on paper anywhere...but that's where all the victim blaming comes from. A victim does not behave how a typical victim is supposed to, you know, if a woman is sexually assaulted, then it's what were you wearing? Oh, you went to that frat party all by yourself? Well how much did you have to drink? Oh, ok. A lot was enough. The unwritten rules about drinking. You know women are allowed to drink, but don't get drunk. Because if you do, what happens to you is gonna be your fault. And don't wear anything, or something that's too short, because if anything happens to you, you were obviously sending mixed signals. So that's your fault too. Right?

But victim blaming happens with rape victims, male and female. It just looks a little bit different for women than it does for men. For men it's more, you're a guy. Why didn't you just fight them off? And it's definitely a lot more... a different kind of shame if it's a man who's been sexually assaulted. Especially if it was by another man. There's a lot of deep-seated shame that comes from being socialized as a boy growing up, but that's not...that you're supposed to

be strong, that you're supposed to fight back when somebody's trying to hurt you, and... so that must mean that if this happened to you that you let it happen. Or you must have liked it, that's what it is. Right, so you're judged for that, because there's this stereotype that boys are not supposed to let things like that happen to them. They're supposed to be strong and fight back.

#### TIM

A lot of people who don't know, and me being a male doing this in this industry, I hear a lot of stuff from men that I do presentations to, or guys in middle school, high school, they come in with a certain perspective, and as a male I can address that. There is victim blaming and she did this or she wore that or whatever, you know, me being able to address that from a man's standpoint, I think, is very important, because a female can address it, right? But to give it a real strong impact, I believe, there needs to be another man speaking to another man about what sexual assault is, about what harassment is. I think it's important for men to speak to that.

#### KELSEY

I mean, I think, yeah, probably the older you get, the harder it is to speak up, because there's this whole idea of masculinity. Right? And how could anybody ever do that? I get that question all the time from men, from especially juniors and seniors. So a guy could never be sexually assaulted. That's not true. It can happen. It does happen. So it is harder. There is a video y'all need to see. There's a group called One in Six, and it's about victims of sexual assault who are male and they have a few videos up on YouTube. One of the videos, a group of women, they're reading these testimonies of sexual abuse, and you think it's theirs, but

it's actually guys' stories, and it's really impactful, because you see, man, these guys are just the wide range of, you know, football player, I'm an air force officer, nerd, whatever. And they've all been affected this way. And I think just really making it more normal and getting more survivors' stories can help.

#### TERESI

I am very pleasantly surprised. When [the Me Too Movement] first came out, I thought, oh gosh, here we're going to have a cute little hashtag "Me Too" for a little while, and then the whole thing will blow over, and it hasn't. I mean it's growing. It's not just stayed steady, it has picked up, it's growing. And I'm real excited about it, because like I said, I'm seeing clients now that I wouldn't have seen a year ago, because they either a) didn't know they were sexually assaulted, [because] what they would hear from friends and family is, you know, you drink too much, or whatever, and no judgment around that, but you drink too much, blacked out, you passed out, you woke up to being sexually assaulted. Their response to her would have been, "Girl, don't drink like that when you're by yourself again." Total victim blaming. Now the response is, "You were sexually assaulted, you need to go get an exam, you need to get checked for STDs, you need to get a Plan B pill, you need to make sure you're okay." So I think, I think it's a good thing. I really do think it's a good thing. I'm excited and hope it continues to build and keep growing.

#### SARAH

I think whenever I first started working here, especially in a full time capacity, you know, that's something that we talk about a lot within our department, is that when you start becoming more aware of some of these issues of sex-

ual abuse and assault or domestic violence, dating, violence, stalking, all of those interpersonal violence issues. And when you start learning more and you start understanding the effects of it, and you start understanding offender characteristics, what tends to happen is, you have a baseline level of knowledge, and then your eyes are open and your pendulum kind of swings to where you start to see it everywhere. Or if you feel like it's everywhere. And I do think that that happens for a little while. Or if you have significant life events that may bring it back to the forefront, you know, for me recently having a child kind of brought it back, brought that pendulum swing back to be like, oh, well now I have to teach him all of this stuff that I've been teaching other people for so long. But, you know, I think it's something that you have to consciously keep in check when you go out in public. Not everybody is an offender. Not everybody is trying to hurt other people. There are tons of really good people, really compassionate people out there.

But it also has changed my perspective of, I guess like working with survivors and really understanding how resilient people can be and how it really makes me feel, like I understand and can be more understanding of people when they may act in a way that doesn't make sense to me, because one of our longtime employees here, it's kind of her motto to say, "You know, if it's hysterical, it's probably historical." Meaning, if they're acting hysterically, there's probably a reason behind it. If they are making it difficult for you, they're probably being triggered by something. So I think I've been able to kind of have a good or a better understanding of that and whenever people are, are acting in a way that doesn't really make sense to me, being able to say, you know, take myself out of it. It's not about me. It's about something that's making them uncomfortable.

## HEATHER

There's no good way to be raped so please don't misinterpret this, but I think... I was raped by a serial rapist. I mean I was asleep in bed and he woke me up over me. So I think that rare stranger rape makes it a little easier because you can call 911, you know, and they're the ones that say, "You should go to JPS." And so I went. I think it's harder when it's a known [person] and the majority of rapes are with someone they know, whether they know well, or it's this guy that was hanging out at a party. It's hard because then there's that, "Well if I go, then what if people talk about me..." You know, there's so many things that make it more difficult for stories like that. I think it makes it harder.

I think it would help to know if victims knew that they don't have to report. So you can go and have your forensic exam, that will kind of take care of your health, if they will give prophylactics for STDs, or Plan B to make sure you're not pregnant, they're going to help you. They'll store the evidence for two years, and you have two years to decide if you would like to report or press charges. And so I think knowledge of kind of that, they don't have to make that decision to report immediately. They can just go and have their health taken care of and have the evidence collected, because you only have a certain amount of time, you know, limited amount of time that, that evidence is gonna remain, and then after that it's really, you know, you've lost evidence. And then I think if people knew that there were people waiting on them, that they're going to be there, whether to actually hold their hand or you know, not literally, but you know, even just to be there and support them so that they're not going to have to go there and do this alone. That there's going to be someone there that's going



to be a support system for them. I think if people knew that that was available, that maybe they would be more encouraged to go.

### TERESI

With every core muscle in the heart, you can't give me a scenario. Not one. And people tried, believe me, stupidly tried to give me scenarios where that was okay, and I can refute it each and every single time with one simple little question: Would it ever be okay if I walked up on you, and you were asleep, or you were passed out, and you were even buttass naked laying on a couch. Would it ever be okay for me to sexually assault you? Doesn't matter male, female, straight, gay, the answer's always no. Well then there you go. If it's not okay for me to do it, why's it okay for any other human being that walks this earth to do it? Just to me it's that cut and dry. No means no, and if you don't say to somebody, yes this is an experience I'd like to share with you, you don't even have to say no. If you don't convey that with your words and your actions, not or, and, your words and actions, the answer's no. Period.

## MOVING FORWARD

ANN

A defining moment in your life ought to be something really positive, not something like a sexual assault.

TERESI

I have women ask me all the time, if I find myself in a situation where I'm going to be sexually assaulted, what should I do? And I give the same answer every time. You do what you have to do to stay safe as you possibly can in a terrible situation. You're going to do one of three things. You're going to fight, you're going to flee, or you're going to freeze. And instinctively, there's something instinctive in us, we know what we have to do. Instinctively, depending on the opportunity, you know, you can fight your way out of this. There's another part of you, instinctively, that's gonna be like, if you start fighting, you're not going to live through this, so you don't do that. You freeze. Instinctively, you may say there's a little crack in the door, this is my one shot, and you flee, and you do it. But nobody can tell another person what they should do in that situation, because you know what, they're not there. And that's something I was think-

ing about this morning. So if you ever have that opportunity to answer, what would you do, because I hear it all the time, well if it was me, I'll tell you what I do, you have no clue what you would do. None of us do until we're in that situation. But that is the answer. That is the answer. You do what you have to do to stay safe as you possibly can in the worst situation. Easy answer, difficult situation.

MS. B

Well, let me tell ya. I think the first time I ever encountered physical abuse and sexual abuse, I was 12. I didn't know what to do. I just knew how to...I just wanted to hold their hand. I have a real high empathy, so it kicked in, but I didn't know what to do. It's sad that almost all of my life I seem to have been put in that position where I'm holding somebody's hand. For the last almost six years though, with training, with great tutors, I feel like I now wish I could go back and relive some of the moments where I really didn't have an answer other than, I guess I was a good listener, and people would tell me things that I had never asked them to tell me. And so maybe I did some things right just by listening, but now I feel more equipped. And so I think life's experiences and just being trained on the possibilities of help for anybody is possible.

HEATHER

So you talk about kind of what we offer as far as hope. Back in August of 2001, I was raped by a serial rapist in my home, he broke in, and I actually went to JPS for the forensic exam and was on the receiving end of a victim advocate. So I had someone from The Women's Center meet me there at 4 in the morning and provide that support. And it was crucial for me on my journey from being a victim to being a survivor. And after that happened, I went through

counseling here (they offer counseling for you, and I went through the counseling). They did eventually catch my attacker, and we went to trial, and he was sentenced to life in prison, and The Women's Center was with me through the trial process. They were there to counsel, they were there to guide, they were there every step of the way. So they, in so many ways, really put me back on track, you know, and I always swore that I would turn around and help the next person.

### AMELIA

My dad is a survivor of child sexual abuse from the age of three. He was an incest survivor. And he obviously didn't get anything like this in school either. And so he's reading through an elementary school script, and I don't know which grade it was, it doesn't matter from which grade though, he's reading through it and at the end he starts crying, and there's tears streaming from his face. And I'm like, "What's wrong?" And he's just like, "You know, I'm sitting here and I'm thinking about, I'm reading this, sitting here and thinking, if somebody had come into my classroom when I was little and told this to me... if I had heard this when I was little, that what was happening to me at home every day was not ok, was not ok, was not normal... but that it wasn't my fault and I was still a good boy...if someone had come and told me that, that I needed to tell somebody so it would stop. I sit here and think about how different my life would be right now. Like how vastly different it would be if someone had given me this information. And that's what's making me cry." He was just so upset about how a simple program that's forty-five minutes that they get once a year, that could literally change the course of his entire life. You know? So that's why I stayed. Cause I realized that this is important. It's something you don't realize;

it's not something you're really witnessing, not witnessing changing the course of a child's life into adulthood. You don't know that kid. You see them for forty-five minutes one time a year. But you don't know, you don't know. It could literally change everything about how they grow up. You know, so that was why I stayed. So that was the formative moment for me, seeing my dad be like, not sad because he was remembering the things that had happened to him, but just sad that knowing that it could have been so much different for him, it could have been so much better, had he had forty five minutes of information. Know what I mean?

#### PAMMELLA

I was at a fair recently...and this lady came up to me, and I didn't know her, and I was sitting and got up, and she stood there and picked up some brochures, and she started chatting. She's talking about her life and having been victimized, so I just got up and moved a little closer to her, and as we're talking, she's saying some things, and parts of my script just come into my mind, because she's saying her daughter feels guilty, she's having a hard time, she's struggling. And I just said, you know, most victims will think that it's their fault, and I said, but it's not. It's never the victim's fault. She just looked at me with tears in her eyes, and she said, I feel like it's my fault. She's the mother and felt that way. I've never given a lady at a fair a hug, and I just... she was younger than me; it was just instinctively. And she just responded. She just needed to hear that for herself. It's not her fault and that there is help out there. You know that touched me, too, because you really think that just those few words said at the right time, and you don't really know what they're going to be, and I've never really had that kind of one on one. It was very brief obviously, but I felt like the words were kind of guided. So that felt good.

## MELISSA

I always tell my school kids there are some things that are too heavy for you to do by yourself. It's okay to admit that. It's okay to call a hotline, and that's why we push our hotline a lot with the older kids, so they are much less likely to be like, what happened, you know, that's not gonna happen. And so the hotline is something anonymous that they can call, and then they can find out how this place has somebody who can support them here.

## ANN

When we had sex trafficking, the young lady that I saw is sex trafficking here a while back. She was totally shut down emotionally, totally shut down emotionally, and two volunteers from Dallas from a crisis center brought her here because she was being sex trafficked in Fort Worth. So there was a Fort Worth police report and Fort Worth follow up, right? But I soon realized that she had had all the contact with people that she could possibly manage psychologically. And so all I did was I sat there until she was totally finished with her exam and have all the information from the nursing staff, because she wasn't going to talk to me. And that's okay. She was not in a place where she could have that conversation. And that's one of the other things that I should tell you is that we say to them, to our clients. You can feel free to talk to me about this, or you can feel free to not talk to me at all. Or you can talk to me about your homework assignment. We don't have to talk at all, and you're going to have to repeat this same information. Who, what, where, when, and all of that stuff. During your physical exam, the nurse is going to have to record all of that. Who did this to you? Where do they live, how many cocktails had you had? All of that kind of stuff. So my job

is to be there and just listen or just to be there... You know, I mean I haven't had an a-ha moment, although I've had a couple of a-ha clients where I thought, okay, this is where I need to be. I think for that moment, for that woman, it made a difference, and you never know, because you don't have to follow up with them, and you know, they're going to see - they're going to probably see a doctor, they're going to see a nurse examiner, they're going to see me, then they're going to come over here and...I mean, they're not going to remember who I am, but if they remember at the end of the day that it wasn't just an awful experience, then we've done our jobs. We try to be compassionate. It's all about listening.

#### TIM

A lot of people just want to know that you care. In ministry we call it the power of presence. Which means sometimes even if a person is hurting...sometimes you may not have exactly what to say. And sometimes when people are going through trauma, and are going through grief, if you were there with them, if you ask them later on, "What did Tim say to you today that gave you encouragement? What did he say to you?" They say, "I don't remember what he said; I just remember that he was there."

#### MELISSA

I had a class that was challenging one time, and I just kinda sat down afterwards, and I was just like, oh my goodness. And on the way out a young man stopped, and he was like, "Hey. You did a great job today." And he was serious. He didn't have to say that. And that was, I think that was a senior in my class...Anyway, it made my day. I just had a whole classroom of people that I felt like were not listening to me and weren't taking it seriously. And then this one

kid left and was like, hey, like that acknowledgement that he knew it was tough, and he listened. I was like, that was worth. It was worth it. It changed my whole day.

#### HEATHER

I had a really great support system: family, friends, faith. And I sought them out, you know. I sought help with counseling. I was able to see justice. I know a lot of people in this system are not able to see justice, so that was a huge, huge step for me to be able to kind of put that away in that, in that aspect, so I don't know that I would go back and change anything honestly. And then people that are afraid to come in here, I just don't, I don't even know if I have the words to implore, you know, to just say this is vital, this is crucial, and it's free. You know, it is a resource that is so needed.

#### MELISSA

When we moved here, I had two young kids, and so I stayed home for a little while, and then my mom actually had seen [The Women's Center's Play It Safe Program] advertised and had told me about it, and it was just everything. And my mom is a sexual abuse survivor, and I've known that since I was really, really, really young. And so for me, being able to go out and talk to kids about, about what this is, and about how they don't have to feel ashamed of this, is one of the main things that we say in our scripts. It's not your fault. You didn't do anything wrong. Because there's so much shame involved with those feelings that they have from being abused, even kids who have been physically abused, and they have so much trouble not blaming themselves because usually, maybe they did do something that they deserve to be disciplined for, like every kid does. They don't understand that they didn't deserve to be hurt that way.



And so, just trying to take the shame out of it and knowing that my mom is, you know, she still has the effects of being abused, that she's educated, and...she's been a teacher for years and years and years and helping children, and you know, this isn't a death sentence. Like these kids don't have to feel like, I'm damaged. And I know that because I see an example of it every single day.

And so being able to go out and kind of carry that with me and know that this step, this conversation might be the first step for them becoming somebody completely different. Somebody healed, somebody who can go out and not have to suffer from this forever. Then that's what specifically brought me to this nonprofit work just because it's kind of where my heart is. This specific cause. Because I have lived with it my whole life, really, just knowing that it happened to my mom, and how she's battled it and recovered from it and the strength that she found in it and how that's possible.

## JOHN

We typically use the term “survivor” for anybody who’s been through something like this. Victim’s a word that carries with it a lot of negative connotations and baggage. And for somebody who is, like I said, already dealing with a lot of self-blame and guilt, and struggling with feelings of, you know, why. We don’t want anybody to feel like a victim and, and here’s the thing: something has happened to them, and they need to understand that there is hope on the other side of it. So we use the term “survivor” because whatever they did in that moment to get through that moment, to put them here in this moment where now they can begin to heal. They’ve survived. And so now let’s begin to move forward.

## CALL TO ACTION

### KELSEY

A lot of times with physical abuse it's like, well, it wasn't really that bad. You know, my mom only hits me sometimes, but we talked to them about the difference, because here in Texas, I mean, it is legal to spank your kids. Okay. So we talk about the difference between a spanking and a beating, between spanking and physical abuse. And we try to go through that with them. Overtone problems have gotten worse. I think they're just always there. I don't know if they've gotten better or worse, but maybe people can speak out more than they used to be able to. So that has gotten better. But honestly I think this isn't something that's going to be easily solved just with education. There has to be a cultural shift, and probably even with the cultural shift, there will always be this issue, and so we always will need to talk about it.

### SARAH

I think the Me Too movement had a really positive impact on allowing people the freedom to come forward and to access our services, and just kind of a weight that was lifted to be able to seek help that they may have been needing for years.

But I mean with other types of climates, you know, you also see the flip side of that, where different political climates may affect how people, when you're out in the community educating people, how they think or how they speak about some of these issues. So I've seen both sides of that where, you know, I do think that the Me Too movement has provided some freedom for people to be able to come forward.

ANN

What I think we've seen is a big increase in the number of reported assaults, and I don't think it's that the assaults are increasing. I think because of the Me Too movement, women are feeling more comfortable in reporting. There's less stigma.

KELSEY

I think I see more often the signs of that even in my own community, and it's given me kind of a place where I can speak into other people's lives apart from work, but I also look at music a lot differently now. At first, you know, you just don't listen to the lyrics, but if you listen to a lot of pop lyrics it's encouraging abuse, it's encouraging dehumanization of other people, and that's not something that I want in my own culture, and I think we need to change that. For example, Maroon 5's "Animal." Y'all watch that music video. Basically he's looking at a girl like a piece of meat. Literally it's like he's in a butcher shop...And it's not only towards women, it's towards guys as well. And I'm not saying it's just a women's issue, but I think seeing stuff like that, it makes me not enjoy it as much anymore...I think that has to change. I think in Hollywood and in the music industry, they lead the culture, the culture kind of follows it, and that's something I think needs to change. How about we

sing about respecting the person that you're dating, you know, or that you're in a relationship with?

#### ROSALYN

I think we need to look more at men, because you know, when the Me Too movement started in the very beginning, there was this male model who was talking about the industry, which I thought was interesting in how he had been solicited and lost jobs and stuff because he wouldn't do that. And then his voice went away and then the women dominated that. And I think his voice is very important, because as a male model, there are problems. I mean modeling period, there's problems, and that's almost expected. And so I really would love us to develop a program for men, because just like that newscaster, that's....I don't know if you remember that new sports newscaster who said he'd been sexually assaulted as a boy on a soccer field...and he regretted he didn't say anything, because he's like, how many victims did that guy make? And so when people don't speak, that protects the predator. He'll keep making victims. And so I would love for us to target men, young boys and older men, and then to get some role models that people can look at and say, okay, well if he could talk, then I can talk. I'd love us to go culturally there as well.

#### SARAH

I would say that movements need to be intersectional, and kind of what I mean is like being able to look at survivors holistically, and not only as a survivor of sexual assault, but also what other sorts of problems are facing them. Because what we see is a lot of times they're facing multiple forms of trauma. Not only are they experiencing and have experienced sexual assault, but they may also be experiencing homelessness, or they may also be experiencing, you know,

drug addiction, and all of these different intersections that we have to approach holistically with the way that we provide services.

#### HEATHER

I can't imagine not volunteering and helping someone. I just, I think that it changes your life and it is the thing that feeds your world more than anything, and it really creates a sense of gratitude in your life. So I think anyone that doesn't volunteer at some point has really missed out on a blessing, personally. So I don't know that I could ever leave.

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