



Pathways for Change

ending the silence....ending sexual violence

Pathways for Change, Inc.

ending the silence... ending sexual violence

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Victim Centered. Trauma Informed.



Who is Pathways?

© Rape Crisis Center in Central MA

- 47 cities and towns
- Main office is Worcester
- **Deaf Survivors Program:** Statewide Hotline & Services
- Survivors with developmental/intellectual disabilities

© Counselors are Community Health Workers

- Not therapists: can't and don't diagnose, nor do assessments, nor treatment plans and all those things that therapists can do
- *State sanctioned training:* experts of the dynamics and impact of SV
- a bridge between the community and systems: health care, government and social service
- Coping strategies for dealing with the aftermath
- Support Advocacy

© Access to Privileged Information

- Protected from the “first disclosure” laws
- Able to keep information private and confidential



SV is Oppression

- ③ SV is any type of unwanted sexual contact
 - from sexist attitudes and actions to rape and murder
- ③ Includes words & actions of a sexual nature against one's will
- ③ Tactics include:
 - force,
 - threats,
 - manipulation, or
 - coercion
- ③ Social norms that contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence:
 - condoning violence,
 - using power over others,
 - traditional constructs of masculinity,
 - the subjugation of women
 - staying silent about violence and abuse



SV is Oppression

- © Oppression is Cause and Effect of SV
- © SV has ties to inequality
 - Interpersonally, Culturally, Systemically
- © Offenders target
 - vulnerable people
 - People with less power in the world
 - Making it hard for a Survivor to report SV nor seek help
- © Culturally
- © Victim Blaming & Desensitized Society
- © Systemically
 - Recy Taylor (1944), Anita Hill (1991), Tarana Burke (2006), Christine Blasey Ford (2018)
 - “For every 100 rapes and sexual assaults of teenage girls and women reported to police, only 18 lead to an arrest” (*UMass Lowell Study*)



Consent

- © Legal age of consent in MA is 16
- © CANNOT EVER ASSUME CONSENT
- © “Incapacitated” (includes consumption of alcohol, narcotics, prescription drugs, injuries, etc.)
- © Complying with a rapist’s demands to avoid further harm is not consent



Regardless of Court

- © Most SV isn't reported
- © Most of those reported do not result in prosecution
- © Nonetheless, ALL SV is harmful
- © Pathways will support all survivors of SV



\$ 122,461



“Lifetime Economic Burden of
Rape Among U.S. Adults,”
concludes that the lifetime cost
per victim
is \$122,461

(Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017)



Facts

- © Most Survivors know their assailant
- © Most men don't sexually violate
- © The few that do often commit multiple assaults
- © Most people tell the truth about SV
- © SV affects everyone
- © SV can happen to anyone, anywhere and at anytime



Trigger Warning

The following content may be difficult or challenging to participate in.

Please do what you need to do for wellness and self-care.



Q: Why does sexual violence happen?



A: Symptom of Society

- Entitlement
- Power Imbalance
 - Family Dynamics
 - Intimate Relationships
 - Gender
 - Sexuality
 - Culture
 - Economy
- Media
 - Print
 - TV/Film
 - Music
- Toys
- Internet/Video Games



Symptom of Society in Games



‘When people spend hour upon hour using a game controller to kill people, steal things, hire prostitutes, beat women, it begins to blur the edges of what’s okay in real life.’

Mary DeTurris Poust, 11/19/14



Symptom of Society in Print



1950s



2000s



Symptom of Society in Print



Growing Up in a Pornified Culture

Gail Dines;

www.culturereframed.org



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YpHNImNsx8

Growing Up in a Pornified Culture

- © Average age of consumption begins around 11-12
- © Decreased Empathy for sexually violent
- © Victimization a.k.a. desensitization
- © Limited Capacity for intimacy
- © Increased risk of depression & anxiety (of the consumer)
- © More likely to engage in risky sexual behavior



Violence Exposure (APA)



- ③ less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others
- ③ more fearful of the world around them
- ③ more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others
- ③ Restricted thinking
- ③ Lack of empathy
- ③ Reduced emotional reactivity to real life exposure to violence



Sexually Violent Culture...



SIGMA NU



Fall 2017



Sexually Violent Culture...



Two beers, \$7, three margaritas \$15, four jello shots \$20, Taking home the girl who drank all the above. Priceless.



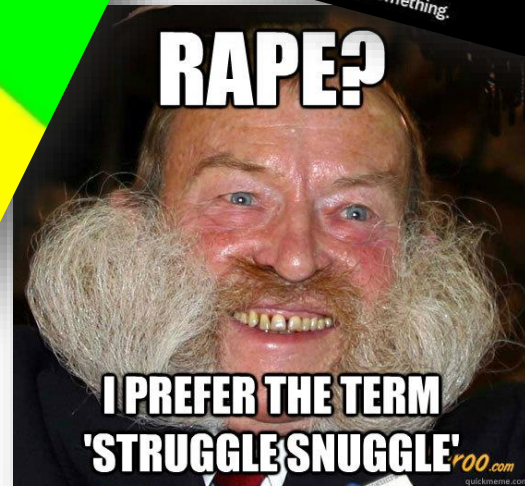
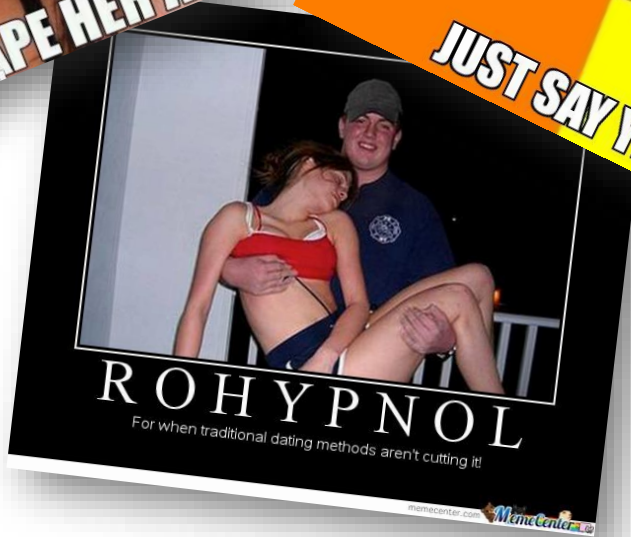
I RAPED THE BAR EXAM



It's not Rape! It's a Snuggle with a Struggle



Symptom of Society Memes



Q: Why is sexual violence called a “Silent Epidemic”?



A. Reporting Fears

Why Bother?

- © Mistrust of institutions (medical, court, police, school personnel)
- © Long, drawn out court proceedings
- © Deportation (regardless of status)
- © Reaction by first responders and others
- © Not knowing what happened was illegal
- © Not being believed
- © No memory
- © Retaliation



Aftermath of SV

- © How do victims/survivors present after SV when considering reporting?
- © How about after time has passed?



Sexual Violence a Heinous Crime

- © Intimate Crime
- © Makes Society Uncomfortable
- © Media, Games, Movies, etc. desensitizes
- © Victim Blaming by Society
- © Is a form of oppression: Power & Control
- © Effects survivors intimately, sexually and physically

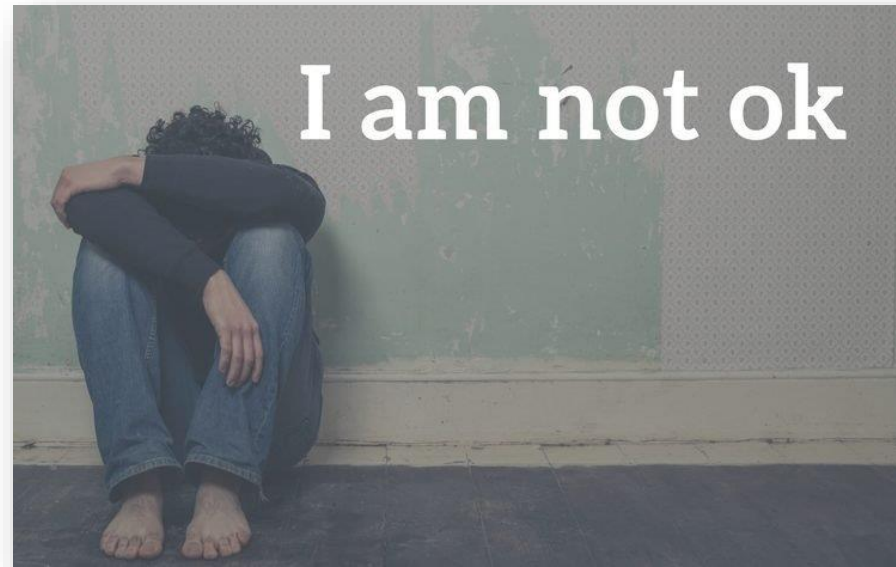


What is Trauma?

- © Emotional response to a terrible event, like SV
- © Right after sexual trauma:
 - experience shock, fear and denial
 - hoping the feelings and memories will just go away
 - worried no one will believe them
- © Reactions even after some time has passed
 - unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, triggers,
 - challenges to relationships
 - isolation: feeling like they don't want to socialize with anyone
- © And survivors may even experience physical symptoms like headaches or nausea



Surviving a Traumatic Event



*Doesn't mean the
Survivor is Okay*



Surviving a Traumatic Event

- © **We do NOT survive horrific experiences through**
 - thoughtful decision making nor
 - deliberate planning
 - not logical, may not even be conscious
- © **In the face of threat: we can't think nor plan**
 - we “make it” because our bodies and brains are prewired for Survival Instincts
 - our brains prioritizes survival above all else



But there's a problem...

© Our bodies and brains adapt to trauma by

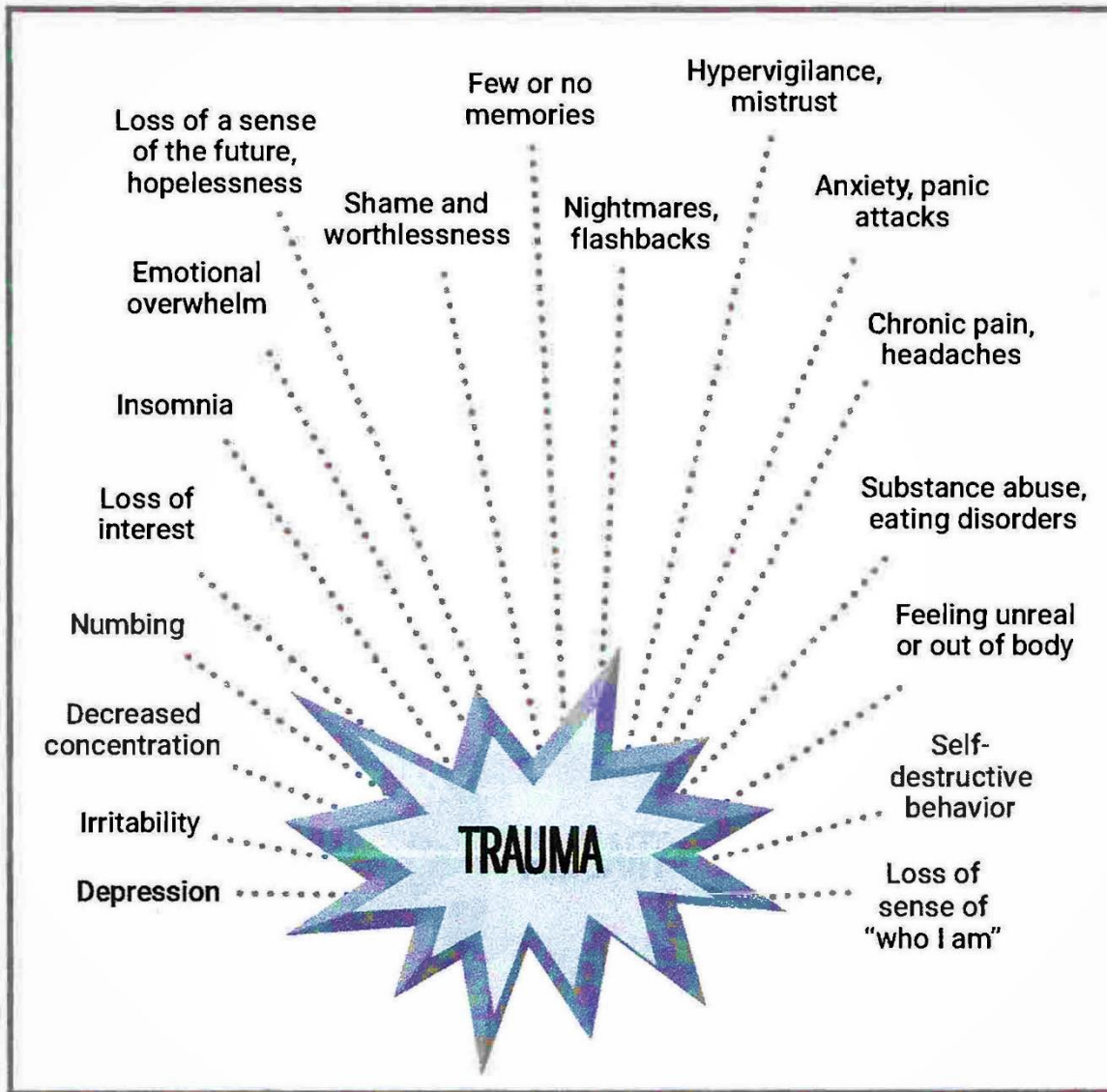
- developing anticipatory patterns to protect us against the same dangers repeating themselves

© Meaning....

- bodies and emotions still respond to the people and situations around them as if the danger had never ended

© This is the “living legacy” of trauma





Living Legacy of Trauma



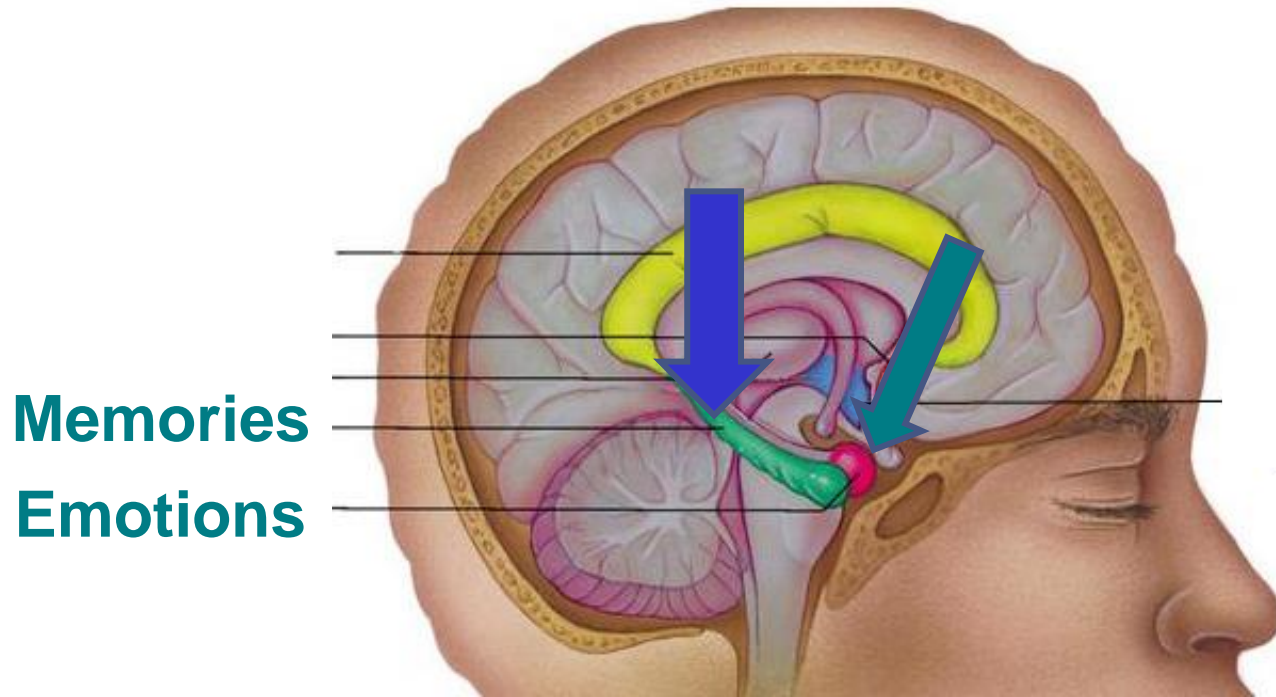
How does Sexual Trauma Impact the Brain?

“A trauma informed approach begins with understanding the physical, social and emotional impact of trauma on the individual. It includes an understanding of the neurobiological impact of trauma and how specific experiences impact victim trauma, memory and behavior”.

*~ Lt. Andrea Munford, MSU Police
on the Detective in Larry Nassar Case*



Limbic System



Trauma Memories in the Brain



Traumatic Memories

- © Delayed disclosures
- © Fragmented Memories
- © Barriers to reporting
- © Imagine taking lecture notes on post-its



Traumatic Memories

- © Not stored in the same part of the brain as 'regular memories'
- © Memories disjointed, unorganized, non-linear
- © In time...
 - With supportive systemic interventions
 - With adequate and supportive responses from individuals/institutions
 - Counseling and/or therapeutic interventions
 - Healing is possible!



Supporting Survivors

© How can first responders support a victim/survivor of SV?

© Why does it matter?

“Every criminal justice system interaction has the potential to either help or hurt a sexual assault survivor. Every interaction can either support that victim’s healing or cause them to be re-traumatized.”

~ Dr. Becky Campbell



If Someone Discloses

© *Just listen & Validate*

- They turned to you because they trust you.
- Let them know that what they just shared matters

© *Believe them.*

- Survivors of SV often self-blame.

© *Remind them that it is not their fault.*

- For example, if they say, "I shouldn't have been alone with them," remind them that they trusted someone and that the trust was violated

"You cant go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending"

~C.S. Lewis



Calling Our Hotline

© *Free & confidential support 24/7*

© *Request for accompaniment*

© *Professional support & resources*

© *Well trained counselors*

- *Unique role in supporting/empowering survivors & significant others*
- *A wide range of resources for different supports/needs*



Deaf Survivors Program

- © Like all Survivors of SV, Deaf Survivors have unique needs
 - There is more than one way of being Deaf or Hard of Hearing!
 - Cultural and ethnic background, cognitive ability, socioeconomic status, education level, etc...
 - DeafBlind or DeafDisabled may require additional accommodations
- © Communication/Linguistic Preferences
 - Speech/speechreading
 - American Sign Language
 - Protactile
 - Written communication
- © Be aware of cultural/physical differences
 - Eye contact, facial expressions, physical distance/contact
 - Shoulder Tap/Waving are OK
 - Patience, respect, & awareness of differences
especially in such a stressful situation



Systemic Barriers to Services & Reporting

- © People's attitudes toward the Deaf/HOH
 - © Perceptions/Biases about the Deaf/HOH
 - © Treated as incapable
- © History of lack of privacy and mistreatment
- © Internalized oppression
- © Limited access in medical and legal settings
- © Limited interpreting services
- © Lack of access to information
- © Fear of backlash from the Deaf community



Accommodations & Accessibility

© Technology and Accessibility

- There are different categories of interpreters
 - ASL (including Healthcare and Legal)
 - CDI
 - ProTactile
 - Voice
- Some individuals may prefer other forms of accommodations
- We have an Equipment Donation Program

© Interpreters **MUST** be certified interpreters

- They **CANNOT** be friends, family members, police officers themselves, etc.
- MCDHH, TLC, and Partners Inc. are strong resources
- Always ask and work with the Deaf individual to accommodate their request



Practicing Allyship

- © Ask what communication approach they *prefer*
- © Provide their preferred communication approach
- © Know where to refer Deaf/HOH survivors
- © Know how to request interpreters
- © Advocate for the Deaf/HOH individual!



Survivors with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

- © 7-9 out of 10 people with Developmental Disabilities will be sexually abused in their lifetime
- © Of those that are sexually abused,
 - *HALF* will be abused **10x** or more in their lifetime
- © 80% of women, 30% of men,
- © Little known regarding Transgender Survivors with IDD



Survivors with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

© High Risk examples:

- Some may rely on caregivers for daily personal hygiene assistance (*ex. dressing and bathing*)
- Not often provided much needed healthy sexuality/relationship ed. resulting in:
 - Not understand that the abuse is wrong, *even if it hurts*
 - Using wrong language for body parts
 - Not understanding they have a right to boundaries
- For Society:
 - Infantilization: wrongly thinking people with disabilities are asexual and/or unable to have healthy sexual relationships
 - Not believed when they do speak up



Survivors with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

@ Barriers to Speaking Up:

- Fear
- Shame
- Not understanding what happened to them was a crime (see again: Healthy Sex Ed)
- Not knowing process of reporting.
 - How and whom to report to
- Not being able to describe what happened clearly
- Support people (family/caregivers etc.) may not understand full impact of sexual trauma
- Sound familiar?



Survivors with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

@ Social Sabotage:

- Lack of Community. Isolation
- Infantilization; treating adults like children
- Age or Developmentally Inappropriate Sexual Education
- Boundary Awareness
- Lack of Belief/Inadequate Investigative Procedures
 - Leave questions to the authorities
 - Not understanding ones body, or names for “private parts”
 - Not consistent tracking of offending caregivers But there is change~



Survivors with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

© The Abuse Registry Bill

- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dppc-abuser-registry>
- Phone (857) 403-0295
- In 2020, MA enacted a law requiring the DPPC to “establish and maintain a registry of care providers against whom the [DPPC] has made a substantiated finding of registrable abuse.”
- effective July 31, 2021
- intended to protect individuals with ID/DD
- barring care providers who have a substantiated finding of registrable abuse from working with other persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities



Survivors with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

@Final thoughts:

- Compliancy
- Complacency
- Education, Education, Education
- Allow choices
- Patience and Creativity



Who RCC's Support

@ Survivors:

- Childhood Sexual Abuse/Incest
- Rape
- Attempted Assaults
- Sexual Harassment
- Any form of SV
- Sexually Exploited individuals

@ Significant Others:

- Parents or Guardians
- Other Family (*siblings, cousins, grandparents, etc*)
- Partners (*spouses, girl/boyfriends*)
- Friends/Classmates

@ Professionals:

- Collaborate services
- Trainings, workshops
- Provide Technical Support



Pathways for Change Counseling Services

- © Free & Confidential
- © Accompaniment (medical, *police* & court)
- © 24/7/365 Voice Hotline: 800-870-5905
- © 24/7/365 Video Phone Hotline: 508-502-7681
- © Counseling- Face to Face & Support Group
 - 11 & older, and SO's
- © Deaf & HoH, ID/DD, *Sexual Exploitation*,
Campus Assault, Teens and more
- © Comprehensive Referrals and
Resources



Questions?



Need More Information?

Please contact us at **508-852-7600...or:**

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