

*We*  
**BELIEVE**  
*Survivors* 

LEARN ● ACT ● HEAL – Resource Booklet

**anova**

a future without violence.

# *In solidarity with* **ALL SURVIVORS**

The Hockey Canada Trial of 2025, and EM's bravery as a survivor, sparked a powerful movement that we will continue to grow louder with every voice raised in support. Conversations about rape culture, injustice, and survivor dignity took place across Canada. As we all witnessed, in action, the pitfalls of our legal system and how it obstructs survivor voices.

This public discourse inspired the **#WeBelieveSurvivors** campaign, designed to:

- ♥ Affirm belief in survivors
- ♥ Challenges rape myths
- ♥ Support those disclosing harm
- ♥ Provide healing tools for survivors
- ♥ Invite Canadians to act in solidarity

This is a movement of healing, collective power, and belief. Together, we will make it undeniable. Now is the time for communities to show up. Let us continue to respond, not with silence, but with action.

# Here's what you can do

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## LEARN

- Each section will challenge a topic surrounding the trial and all others like it. With the purpose of educating communities on topics like memory, trauma response, and consent.
- Read carefully these messages and share with others what you found.

## ACT

- When you see this symbol: 

We are challenging you to **ACT**.

- Share a message of support
- Repost images from our social media kit
- Call on your community to address rape culture and demand survivor centred change.
- Support your local sexual assault centre.
- Share your support using **#WeBelieveSurvivors**

## HEAL

- Our **HEAL** pages are daily tools (grounding practices, journal prompts, rest tips, etc.) We encourage you to use these tools and take care of yourself. Your survival matters. Your healing matters.
- Hold space for friends who may be hurting. Ask: "How can I support you right now?"

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*We*  
**BELIEVE**  
*Survivors*   
*because...*

- most don't ever come forward, so when they do we show up for them.
- no one would volunteer to be put through the hell of cross-examination for fun.
- their experiences matter, and their future is important too.
- they deserve support. They deserve safety. They deserve care and so do you.
- justice isn't always found in the courtroom.



# BELIEVE

## Survivors

If you believe survivors, here's what you can do..

- Share a message of support
- Call on your community to address rape culture and demand survivor centred change.
- Share your support using **#WeBelieveSurvivors**
- Support your local sexual assault centre.

Download the We Believe Survivors social media kit at [anovafuture.org/we-believe](https://anovafuture.org/we-believe) - let's flood the timeline so that survivors know they're not alone.

# HEAL

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## AFFIRMATION

*My story matters, even if I never tell it.*

## ACTIVITY

List 3 places or people where you feel safe.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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# JUSTICE *is more than a* VERDICT

How do you find justice in an unjust system? For too many survivors, the answer is: you don't. The system wasn't built with survivors in mind—it often silences, retraumatizes, or turns them away. We know that justice doesn't begin and end in a courtroom.

It begins when a survivor is believed.

It grows when they are supported.

It lives in every safe space, every act of care, and every community that refuses to look away.

We stand beside survivors through the failures of the system, the heartbreaks, and the uphill battles. And we fight for a future where justice is not a privilege, but a right.



What does justice mean to you?

How do you find justice in an unjust system?

Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL

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## AFFIRMATION

*I define my own justice.*

## ACTIVITY

Light a candle, turn on a soft light, and sit quietly for 3 minutes.



*(unfortunately still common)*

# RAPE MYTHS



*that survivors face  
in the courtroom*

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## MYTH:

Victim/Survivors are partially responsible for their assault.



## TRUTH:

If the rapist hadn't made the choice to rape someone, a rape wouldn't have happened.



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## MYTH:

If it was actually an assault, the victim would have said no or tried to escape.



## TRUTH:

It is extremely common during an assault for the brain to go into "freeze" or even "fawn" mode in order to survive.



*That does not equal consent.*

## MYTH:

People frequently lie about sexual assault because they regret having sex or because they're trying to punish an ex/partner.



## TRUTH:

False reports of sexual assault are incredibly rare. The likelihood of a false report making it all the way to court is next to none.



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## MYTH:

A victim/survivor's memory is most accurate immediately after the assault, and fades over time.



## TRUTH:

Experiencing trauma interrupts the normal memory consolidation process, and it is not uncommon for more details of the assault to come back to survivors as time passes.



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## MYTH:

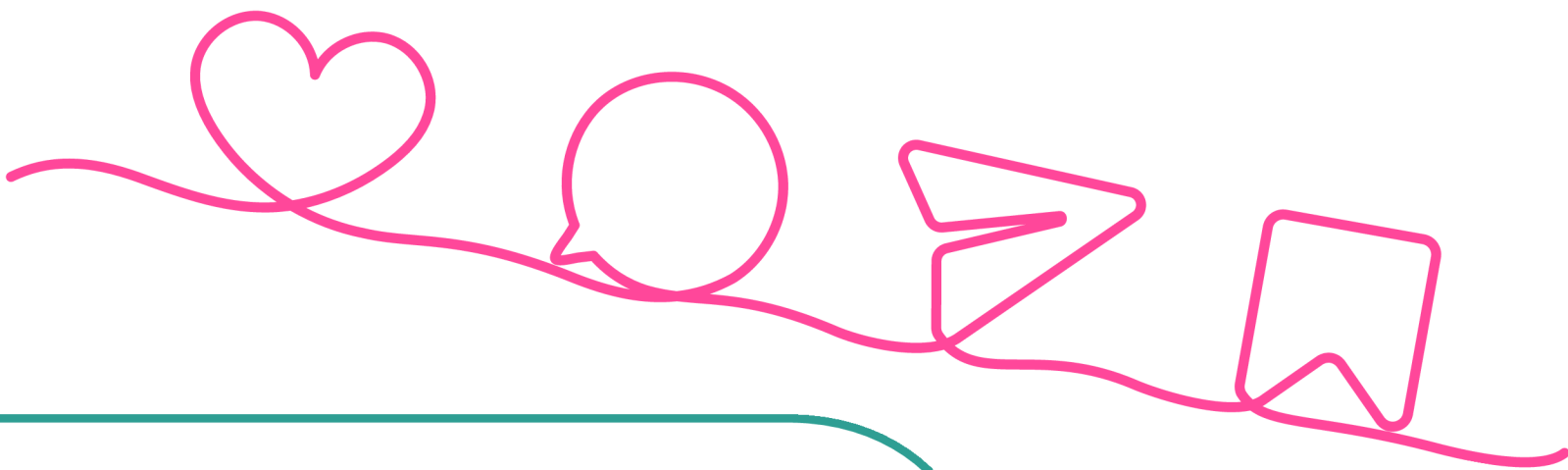
Not remembering every detail of an experience makes you an unreliable witness.



## TRUTH:

When someone has experienced a trauma, they will not remember every detail in chronological order. That doesn't mean the parts they DO remember are any less accurate or truthful.





What are some other myths you've heard?

What do you wish more people understood about testifying?

Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)



# HEAL



## A F F I R M A T I O N

*I never have to prove my pain.*

## A C T I V I T Y

Cross out myths you've internalized on paper, write truths instead.

**MYTH:**

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**TRUTH:**

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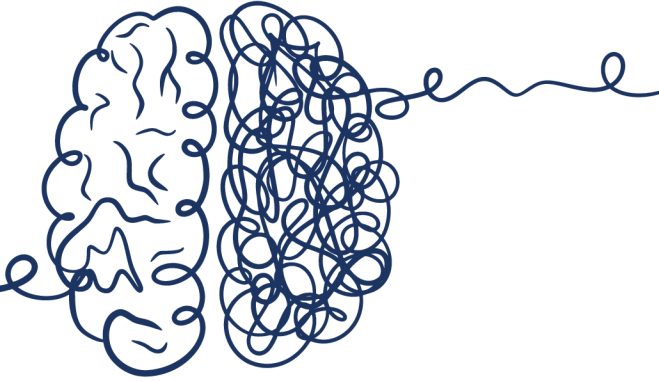
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# Why does **TRAUMA** *impact* **MEMORY**?




**TRAUMA** is a response to an intensely distressing experience that overwhelms a person's nervous system and ability to cope, leaving them feeling helpless, fearful, terrified and/or disconnected. It can affect thoughts, emotions and physical health and wellbeing.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

doesn't just affect the body.

It profoundly impacts how our brain forms, processes, stores and recalls traumatic experiences.

Memory and recall does not function like a tape recorder that can be played on command. Sexual trauma memories are encoded in the brain differently than everyday memories.



**THE HIPPOCAMPUS** is responsible for putting memories in chronological order and for forming new explicit (everyday) memories that can be consciously recalled and described.

**THE AMYGDALA** creates implicit (emotional) memories by processing emotional responses and assigning significance.

**TRAUMA** blocks explicit processing and heightens implicit processing.

\*less likely  
to remember

**WHO  
WHAT  
WHEN  
WHERE  
HOW**

**SMELL  
SOUND  
TASTE  
TOUCH  
FEELING**

← \*more likely  
to remember

\*not including other influences like drugs or alcohol which can also impact what is remembered



# ACT

*Your trauma is still*

**REAL**

*even if your memory is*

**MESSY**



Share a message: "I believe survivors even when memory is messy"

Let's flood the timeline so that survivors know they're not alone

Share using **#WeBelieveSurvivors**

# HEAL

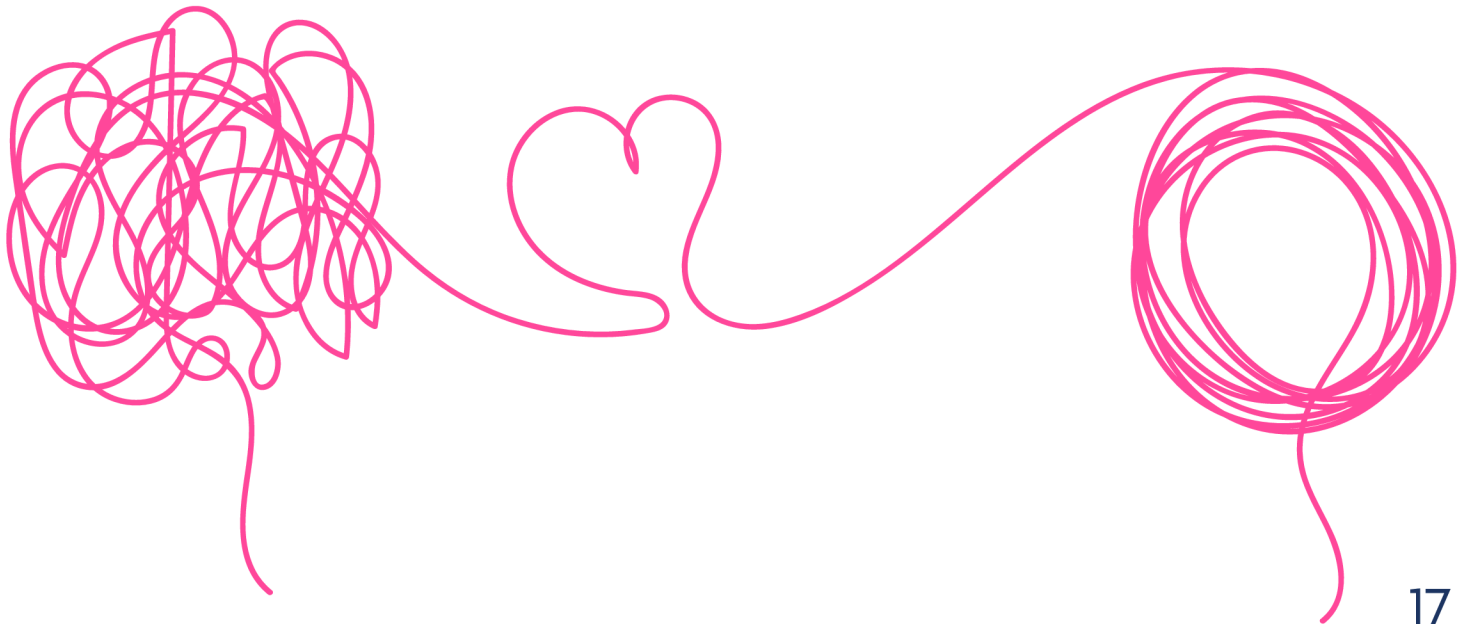
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## AFFIRMATION

*My mind protects me in the best way it can.*

## ACTIVITY

Drink a warm drink slowly while focusing on comfort.



# consent ~~RAPE~~ CULTURE IN SPORTS



Rape culture hurts athletes too. *Everyone* deserves to know that their body belongs to them, and that their worth is not determined by their performance.

---

Consent culture is not about punishing men or cancelling sports. It's about creating team environments that support bodily autonomy, healing, growth, and healthy competition.

Consent culture centres the humanity of us all: men, women, girls, boys, nonbinary, two spirit, and genderqueers of all varieties. We are all imperfect, messy, growing humans who deserve care, support, compassion, and respect.

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**ACCOUNTABILITY**  
= *Care*

Accountability is care work.

Holding a person or system accountable is a way of saying:

- You are important to me.
- This isn't working.
- I believe in your capacity to be better.
- Let's figure out how to repair.

# ACT

## ATHLETES

*deserve care too*



What does accountability look like for you?

What would it mean to have a consent culture in sports?



Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL

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## AFFIRMATION

*I deserve spaces free from harm.*

## ACTIVITY

Watch or read something joyful about women or queer athletes.

## *Our favourites*

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**Unrivaled** - An innovative 3v3 professional women's basketball league founded by two current U.S. Olympians, Napheesa Collier and Breanna Stewart.

**She Runs the World** - is the electrifying story of Allyson Felix, the most decorated Olympic track and field athlete in history, who risked everything to fight for what she knew was right.

**SEE HER BE HER** - is a new feature-length documentary about women's baseball around the globe. The film is directed and produced by acclaimed sports photographer Jean Fruth and produced by Jeff Idelson, former president of the National Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum.

**Athlete Is Agender** - True Stories of LGBTQ+ People in Sports

**Make It Count** - My Fight to Become the First Transgender Olympic Runner 21  
by Cece Tefler

What can I even say?

## How to Support a Disclosure

More Supportive

I believe you

That wasn't your fault

What do you need right now?  
How can I help?

I'm so sorry that happened to you

At least it wasn't  
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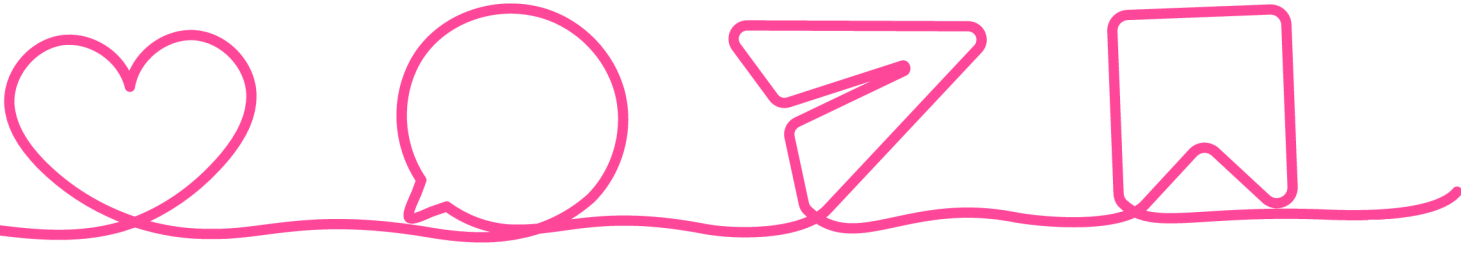
But they're so nice!

OMG I can't believe that!

Less Supportive

# ACT

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What responses do you find more or less supportive?

What do you wish someone said to you after you disclosed?

Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)



# HEAL



## AFFIRMATION

*It's okay to receive support. It's okay to receive care.*

## ACTIVITY

Text someone who makes you feel safe (or just write the message and save it).

*Dear Supporter,*



# Dear Survivors.



Your honesty is valued and we believe you

Reply



What happened to you was not your fault. You deserve to feel safe and supported, Always.

Reply



Joke's on them: you're powerful and capable. And you've got us believing you.

Reply



You are not alone. There is a community that sees you, believes you, & walks with you.

Reply



There are so many of you and your voices and stories are powerful.

Reply



The system might be built to silence you, but we hear you and we believe you.

Reply



It's not your fault. Doesn't matter the time, place, circumstance. It's not your fault

Reply



There are people out there who will support you!

Reply



*We believe you. You are not alone. You deserve safety, and comfort, and peace.  
Love. Your community*

# ACT

Share messages like these & tell us why you always believe survivors

Share using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL

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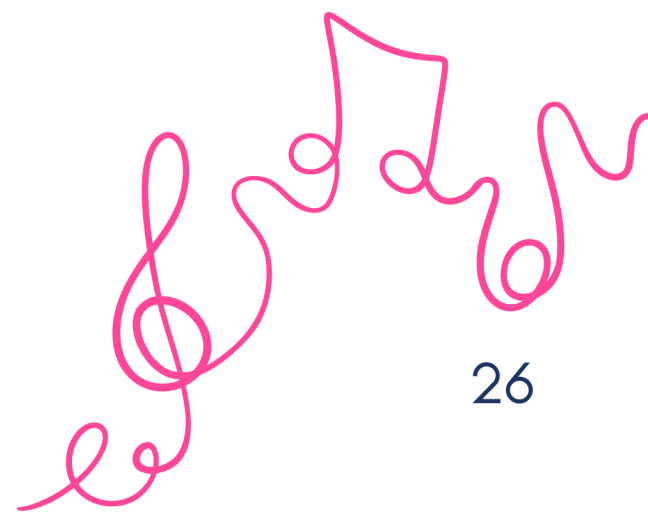
## AFFIRMATION

*I am not alone in this. Others walk beside me.*

## ACTIVITY

Make a playlist of music that reminds you of your strength.

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# Barriers to Police Reporting

1. Fear of not being believed
2. Not having any evidence except your word
3. Not wanting to be eviscerated by defense lawyers
4. Feeling ashamed, not wanting to talk about it with a total stranger
5. Knowing that you could go through all the trauma of a court case and the rapist still walks away free

It's not as simple as

*just reporting it*

and it is **NOT** a survivor's responsibility to

*"prevent it from happening to someone else"*

# Out of every **1000** Sexual Assaults:

**60** ARE REPORTED TO POLICE

**22** HAVE CHARGES LAID

**13** ARE PROSECUTED

**6** ARE FOUND GUILTY

**3** ARE SENTENCED TO JAIL

**997** RAPISTS WALK AWAY FREE

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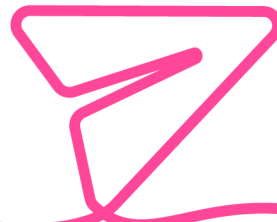
Source: Statistics Canada; Cotter, A., 2024, "Criminal justice outcomes of sexual assault in Canada, 2015 to 2019"

# ACT

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Share other reasons that survivors don't report



What do you want to see changed with the legal system?

Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL

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## A F F I R M A T I O N

*My reasons are real.  
My choices are valid.*

## A C T I V I T Y

Create a “No Explanation Needed” list of boundaries.

- ---
- ---
- ---

# Alcohol



Consent

## Consent is

being sober enough to understand what's going on AND actively saying yes WHILE feeling like you *could* safely say no if you wanted.

---

It's not that everyone involved has to be 100% sober, it's just that everyone needs to be sober *enough* to understand their options and make informed choices.

## Not Consent

- accepting a drink
- flirting while drunk
- saying yes before drinking, and then getting drunk
- buying someone a lot of drinks in the hopes they'll be easier once they've loosened up
- initiating when you're too drunk to know what's going on
- when you're both drunk

## *What about if we're both drunk?*

There's not always a clear cut answer, but just because alcohol is involved doesn't automatically make it sexual assault.

If you put two drunk people in a room and *neither* of them want to have sex, then sex won't happen.

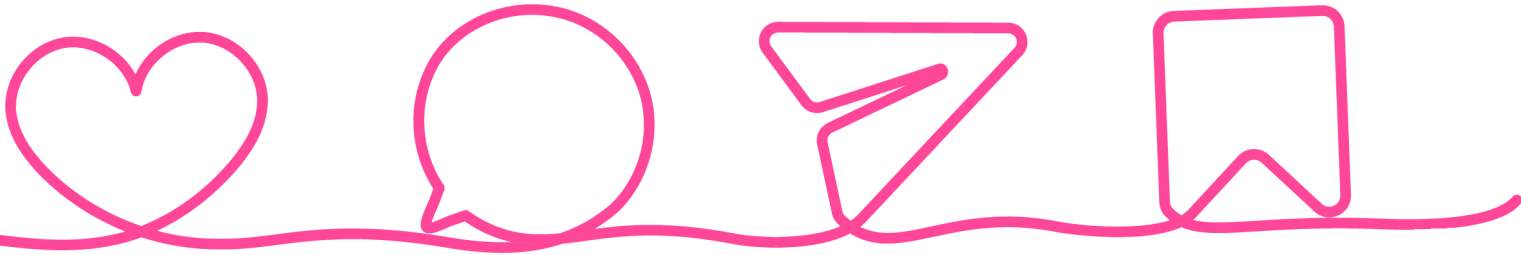
If they *both* want to have sex, it could be fine or it might not be-- and it's likely hard to tell in the moment. Different people respond to alcohol differently, and two people are rarely "equally" drunk. It's not that it's inherently nonconsensual, it's just that there's a much higher risk for harm.

## *Think of it this way...*

If there are two drunk people in a car and they get pulled over, the cop isn't going to let the driver off the hook just because the passenger is drunk too.

**Because being drunk**  
*isn't a crime.*  
**Rape is.**

# ACT



How do you know if someone is sober enough to consent?

Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)



# HEAL



## AFFIRMATION

*What happened was not my fault.*

## ACTIVITY

Take a walk (inside or outside) without a destination – just for you.



What *rape myths*  
did you used to believe?

and what do you *now*  
know to be true?



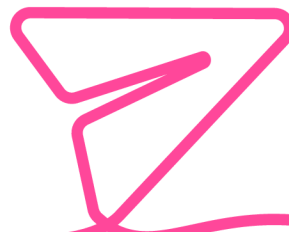
When you know better, you do better. What's something that you used to believe, that you know now isn't true? Let's help inspire each other to lean into the discomfort of examining what we've been taught and learning something new!

# ACT

Tell us what you've learned about  
rape myths

“ I used to believe...

“ Now I know...



Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL



## AFFIRMATION

*I'm still learning - and that's powerful.*

## ACTIVITY

Write a kind message to yourself in the mirror or journal.



One of the best ways to  
is to raise

# PREVENT RAPE CONSENT LITERATE KIDS



- ▶ **A LEADER**
- ▶ **A PROBLEM SOLVER**
- ▶ **SOMEONE WHO STANDS UP TO BULLIES**

Think about the kind of adult you want your child(ren) to grow into.

Now think about what kids who exhibit those traits are often called.

**BOSSY**  
**DISOBEDIENT**  
**RUDE**

*See the problem?*

Setting boundaries for yourself and receiving the boundaries of others are skills that not only need to be taught, but need to be experienced.

That means that we need to listen when kids say NO, and we need to hold space for them to feel their disappointment/sadness/anger when WE say no.

### **LISTENING WHEN A KID SAYS NO TEACHES THEM THAT:**

- their feelings matter
- their body belongs to them
- people are allowed to disagree
- your love for them is unconditional

### **HOLDING SPACE FOR BIG FEELINGS WHEN YOU SAY NO TEACHES THEM THAT:**

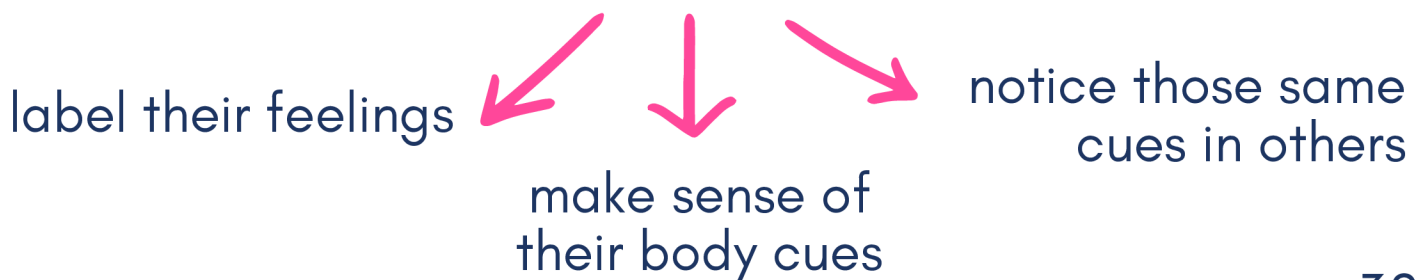
- their feelings still matter, and
- your body belongs to you
- people are allowed to disagree
- your love for them is unconditional



Consent literacy also involves nonverbal communication. One way to explicitly teach this is

### **“NOTICING OUT LOUD”**

### **WHAT A CHILD’S BODY LANGUAGE SEEMS TO BE COMMUNICATING HELPS THEM TO**



Ultimately, the goal is to raise kids who will turn into teenagers and eventually adults that know how to:

- trust their instincts
- communicate their boundaries
- recognize when their boundaries have been pushed or crossed
- respect the boundaries of others, and
- process their feelings in healthy ways after rejection

# ACT

What did you have to learn as an adult that you wish you had been taught?

Share with a parent or educator to share resources!



# HEAL

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## AFFIRMATION

*I can break the cycle. One conversation at a time.*

## ACTIVITY

Do a 5-minute creative activity (draw, doodle, build).

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# HEADLINES ARE NOT NEUTRAL

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On any given day of a trial, there is so much information for journalists to choose from in terms of what to highlight. The average person isn't following every single update, they're likely just seeing the headlines.

Those headlines can either challenge or recreate rape myths. They can perpetuate the narrative of the Crown (based on evidence) or the narrative of the defense (based on speculation). Either way,

**HEADLINES SHAPE PUBLIC PERCEPTION.**

# ACT

☰ TORONTO STAR SALE Only \$1 👤

CANADA

'Do you need a minute?'  
NHLer becomes emotional  
at Hockey Canada trial

**WHEN A WITNESS  
CRIED**



☰ TORONTO STAR SALE Only \$1 👤

NEWS

Hockey Canada  
complainant says she took  
on 'porn star persona'  
because 'it seemed like  
that's what they wanted to  
see'

**WHEN E.M.  
CRIED**



How would you like to  
rewrite these headlines?

Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL

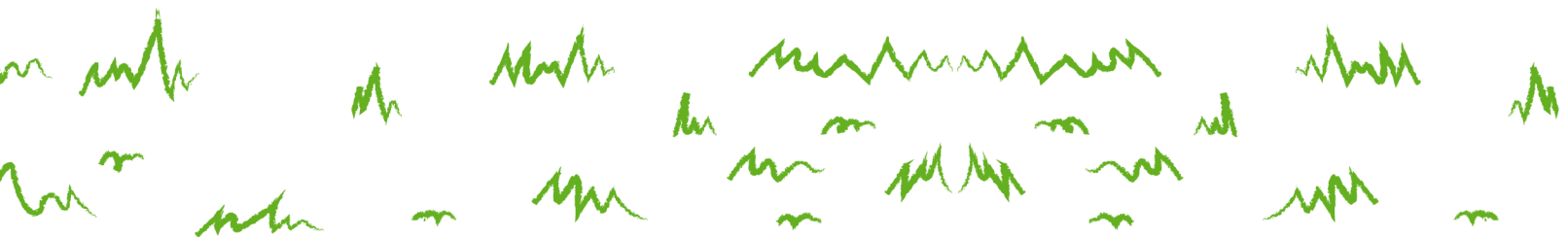
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## AFFIRMATION

*The media may not see me clearly,  
but I see myself clearly.*

## ACTIVITY

Unplug from the news for one hour and do something nourishing.



# WHAT DOES *Accountability* LOOK LIKE?

## **Accountability is a** *process*

It means acknowledging harm, sitting with the impact of that harm, and then working through a transformation of self and relationship that enables different, healthier behaviour in the future.

## **Accountability is** *Care*

Holding someone accountable is a way of saying "you matter to me and this isn't okay."

Holding yourself accountable means saying "I see the hurt I caused and I'm going to do the work so that I don't cause that hurt again."

# Accountability acknowledges

*the humanity of us all*

We all make mistakes. We are all capable of making terrible choices. We will hurt people in our lives.

*and*

We can learn how to make different choices in the future. We can sit in the pain we've caused and feel guilt and let that guilt move us to growth.

# Accountability can happen

*in the absence of who we've harmed*

You do not owe it to the people who have harmed you to stick around for their growth.

If you've caused harm and that person doesn't want you in their life anymore- you can still hold yourself accountable. You can grow for your own benefit, and for the benefit of your community.

# ACT

What are your thoughts on non-carceral justice?



What could justice look like if it's not rooted in punishment?



Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL



## AFFIRMATION

*Accountability is care,  
not punishment.*

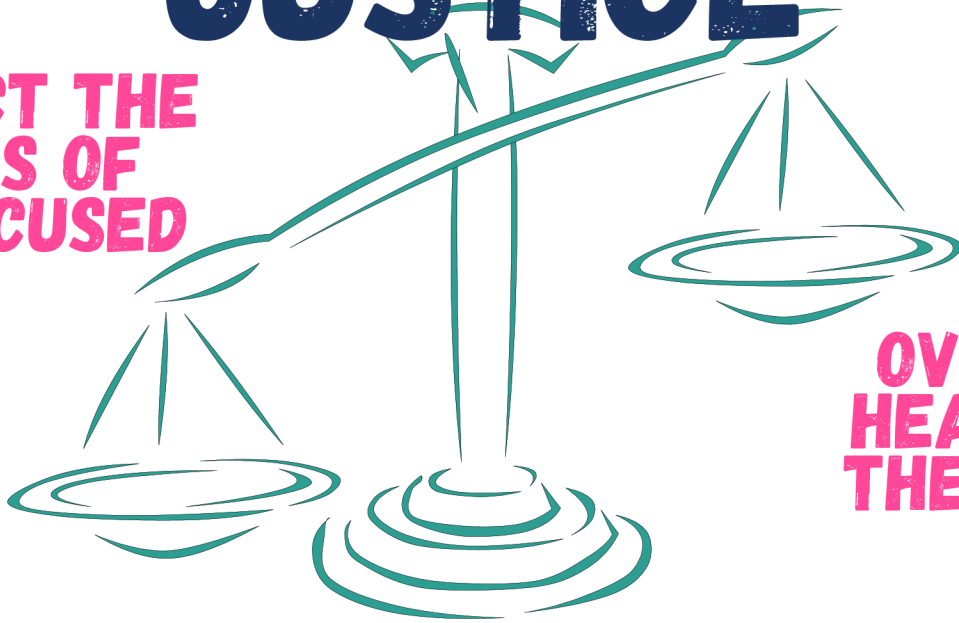
## ACTIVITY

Make a small comfort meal or snack  
and eat slowly, **without guilt.**



# THE SCALES OF “JUSTICE”

PROTECT THE  
RIGHTS OF  
THE ACCUSED



OVER THE  
HEALING OF  
THE VICTIM

DEFENDANTS ARE FOUND  
“NOT GUILTY”  
INSTEAD OF “INNOCENT”  
BECAUSE VERDICTS  
ARE NOT A JUDGEMENT  
OF WHAT HAPPENED,  
ONLY WHAT CAN BE  
PROVEN BEYOND  
A REASONABLE DOUBT.

# ACT



How do you take care when engaging in social justice?



What reminders do you want to share with others who may be struggling?



Share your answers using [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#)

# HEAL

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## AFFIRMATION

*No verdict defines my worth. I choose healing everyday.*

## ACTIVITY

Write a letter to yourself from your future self - with kindness

*Dear Me,*

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