

The Advocate

Renewal House, Spring 2019

Seeing the Whole Survivor: Why it's Necessary to Talk About Identity for Survivors as Individuals and in Groups

By Laura Palumbo, February 25, 2019, National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Inevitably when an article is shared that shines a light on one group of survivors – such as teen survivors, Native American survivors, or male survivors – some folks feel left out, confused, or even ignored. But why is that? And what value is there in looking at survivors from the perspective of their group identity?

Before we begin to discuss why it is necessary to talk about identity and how this impacts survivors as individuals and in groups, it is necessary to lay groundwork for this important conversation by acknowledging a few key points.

- Every survivor's experience is unique and valid. Although there are many ways survivors relate to one another in their experience of trauma and journey to healing – a survivor's experience is uniquely shaped by their personal history, identity, context, culture, and community.

- Acknowledging the realities of one survivor's story doesn't make another survivor's story less true or worthy. Sexual violence is always harmful and should always be taken seriously.

Survivors are never to blame for the harm inflicted on them by another person, and it will be necessary for us to reinforce this message as long as we live in a society that devalues the voices of survivors, normalizes violence and abuse, and does not hold those who cause harm accountable.

Starting with a shared understanding of identity

For the purpose of this discussion we will be using the term "identity" to encompass characteristics such as age, gender, sexual orientation, race, cultural background, disability, religion, and other factors. Our identities exist on an individual level, and they also connect us to group identities in many ways. For instance maybe you identify as a veteran, college student, single parent, or senior citizen. Or you could identify as gender non-conforming, single, working-class, bilingual, or even as a citizen of the city or town you live in or were raised in. Each of these identities shapes us as individuals and influences our experiences, and they also influence how we are seen and treated by others.

All of these parts of identity shape survivors' experiences, and we cannot truly see and serve survivors as a whole person without understanding their unique story and identities. In the same way, we cannot fully understand the complexity of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse without acknowledging the unique ways it impacts survivors with different identities. Just as it is important for us as individuals to cultivate awareness of how our lived experience and identities impacts our world view and our daily choices – it is also essential for us to understand how our experience is simultaneously shaped by our position in society and how that differs from others whose experiences and social position

are different than our own. For instance, two people could both identify as survivors, and yet all the other aspects of their identities could make their survivorship experiences look completely different. For this reason, we can never assume anyone is having the same experience as we are or that we know exactly what someone else is going through – every experience and path is different.

The challenges of talking about difference

Talking about difference is tricky. When we talk about ideas like "one size fits all approaches don't work" and the need for "different strokes for different folks", it sounds simple. Yet it can be difficult when we talk about difference in direct ways, such as talking about oppression. Oppression is when power is not equal and when individuals and groups are allowed to exercise power over others in ways that lead to bias, exclusion, and mistreatment. Oppression often shows up as inequality based on factors such as race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and level of ability. These forms of inequality have deep roots in our history and society, and for some it can feel challenging or even divisive to talk about. This is especially true when it comes to talking about the ways survivors may have different experiences or may be treated differently because of their identity.

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April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

In the United States, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities on how to prevent it.

This year, SAAM is celebrating its 18th anniversary with the theme "I Ask". We know that one month alone is not enough to solve the serious and widespread issue of sexual violence. However, the attention April generates is an opportunity to energize and expand prevention efforts throughout the year.

About the I Ask Campaign

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is about more than awareness—the ultimate goal is prevention. Since consent is a clear, concrete example of what it takes to end sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, it only made sense that this year's theme center on empowering all of us to put consent into practice.

The campaign will champion the power of asking—whether it be asking to hold someone's hand, for permission to share personal information with others, or if a partner is interested in sex. I Ask is the statement by which individuals will demonstrate that asking for consent is a healthy, normal, and necessary part of everyday interactions. I Ask is the statement by

which we will uplift the importance of consent and transform it from being prescriptive to empowering.

Goals

The goal of the campaign is to empower everyone to put consent into practice. As individuals share the message of the campaign throughout their communities and online, they'll demonstrate the importance of consent and set an example for their partners, friends, and loved ones.

Key Messages

Sexual Violence & Prevention

Sexual assault is a serious and widespread problem. Nearly one in five women in the US have experienced rape or attempted rape at some time in their lives, and one in 67 American men have experienced rape or attempted rape.

When we talk about prevention, we mean stopping sexual violence before it even has a chance to happen. This means changing the social norms that allow it to exist in the first place, from individual attitudes, values, and behaviors to laws, institutions, and widespread social norms.

Prevention is everyone's responsibility. All of us can create and promote a safe environment. We can intervene to stop concerning behaviors; promote and model

healthy attitudes and relationships; and believe survivors and assist them in finding resources.

Consent

Asking for consent is a healthy, normal, and necessary part of everyday interactions.

Consent is about always choosing to respect the personal and emotional boundaries of others.

It's important for individuals to think about how their actions might make others feel and ask questions if they don't know.

When an individual wants to get close to someone—whether it's someone they're hooking up with for the first time or a partner in a committed relationship—it's important to know how to ask for consent.

All of us can practice consent in our lives by asking permission before assuming and showing respect for others' choices.

When it comes to sex, it's important that everyone is on the same page, and the best way to do that is by being direct and asking.

Information tables will be on display at the County Courthouse, Dept. of Social Services and Community Bank in Canton during the month of April.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week - April 7—13, 2019

Taken from the 2019 NCVRW Resource Guide

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 7—13, 2019. This year's theme - Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future. - encourages us to reflect on the past achievements of the tireless and inspirational trailblazers who spearheaded the

crime victims movement. We commemorate, honor, and respect the advocates, allied professionals, and selfless volunteers who courageously work to give victims a voice in the criminal justice system and provide much-needed services to

survivors in need. Their legacy of commitment, passion, and hope propels us toward a future where meaningful crime victims' rights and justice are a reality. This April, as we are beckoned toward that future, we answer the call together.

National Volunteer Week - April 7—13, 2019

Thank you to all the volunteers who give their time to provide support to the organizations they choose to serve!

Denim Day is Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Join us as we celebrate Denim Day and the fact that clothing is NEVER AN EXCUSE for sexual assault.

Why denim? Whether a person's jeans are baggy, tight, skinny, full of holes, short, long, bootcut, jeggings, or leggings, there is NEVER AN EXCUSE for sexual assault.

The History of Denim Day

Denim Day grew out of a 1998 Italian Supreme Court decision that overturned a rape conviction because the victim wore tight jeans.

An 18-year old girl is picked up by her married, 45-year old driving instructor for her very first lesson. He takes her to an isolated road, pulls her out of the car, wrestles her out of one leg of her jeans, and forcefully rapes her. Threatened with death if she tells anyone, he makes her drive the car home.

Later that night she tells her parents, and they help and support her to press charges. The perpetrator gets arrested and is prosecuted. He is convicted of rape and sentenced to jail.

He appeals the sentence. The case makes it all the way to the Italian Supreme Court. Within a matter of days the case against the driving instructor is overturned, dismissed, and the perpetrator released. In a statement by the Chief Judge, he argued, "because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex."

Enraged by the verdict, within a matter of hours, the women in the Italian Parliament launched into immediate action and protested by wearing jeans to work. This

call to action motivated and emboldened the California Senate and Assembly to do the same. People all over the world were outraged, and wearing jeans became an international symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes and myths surrounding sexual assault.

Denim Day is a symbolic gesture of how a community can help change perceptions about violence against women, men and children.

We are asking community members, elected officials, business people and students to make a statement by wearing jeans on April 24th as a visible means of protest against misconceptions that surround sexual assault.

You may even consider charging your employees each \$5 to wear denim on Wednesday, April 24th as a donation to Renewal House to support victim services.

Music and Arts Festival - Sunday, June 9, 2019

This year's Music and Arts Festival will be held from Noon—6pm on Sunday, June 9th at Bella Brooke Vineyard, 2989 County Route 6, Hammond.

The cost is \$5 per person, 12 and under are free. This is a family

event, rain or shine. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy food, entertainment and the arts and crafts available for purchase.

Nick Rycroft, members of Uprooted! and Moura will be performing.

We have added an inflatable obstacle course, through Seaway Valley Jumpers, for children to enjoy.

Thank you to North Country Savings Bank for sponsoring our event this year! All proceeds will assist the victims/survivors we serve.

Wish List—items needed

Needs for Safe Dwelling:

Bath Towels, Wash Cloths
Dish Towels, Dish Cloths
Blankets (Twin)
Bedding (Twin)
Pillows
Crib Bedding – for 2 cribs
Food – nonperishable items
Household Supplies and Paper Products (including flashlights and batteries)

On-going items:

Paper Products (toilet paper, paper towels, etc.)
Toiletries (shampoo, lotion, soap, conditioner, etc.)
Baby Items (diapers, clothing, etc.)
Cleaning and Laundry Supplies (bathroom and kitchen cleaners,

brooms, and mops, detergent, dryer sheets, trash bags, etc.)

Additional Items (bedding all sizes, towels, dishes, cookware, utensils, light bulbs, trash bags, etc.)

Activities for Children: Crafts, Children's Books, School Supplies, Puzzles and Games for all ages

Over the counter medications (please be sure to check the expiration date)

Services Offered at Renewal House

Renewal House provides a variety of services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in St. Lawrence County.

All services are free and confidential. Services include:

24-hour Crisis Hotline: Staff and volunteers are available 24 hours a day by calling **315-379-9845**.

Regular office hours are 8 am - 5 pm, Monday through Friday. If it is not an emergency and you would like **to leave a message, call 315-379-9878**. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

Individual Counseling/Emotional Support: Short-term individual counseling in a non-judgmental atmosphere that acknowledges a person’s ability and right to make choices. Help is available to consider options and plan for safety. Home visits are provided if needed.

Support Group: A facilitated self-help group for victims and survivors of domestic violence providing mutual support and understanding from others who have been abused and who share something in common. It has helped many victims feel less isolated, get useful information,

and develop a safety plan. Transportation is provided if needed.

Children’s Program: Recreational/Support group to help children understand what abuse is and to give them a chance to talk about their feelings. Children are reassured that the abuse is not their fault. Individual counseling is also provided.

Safe Housing: 24-hour intake for emergency, temporary shelter for domestic violence victims.

Advocacy: Assistance in obtaining orders of protection, pressing criminal charges, and working with law enforcement. We also help in obtaining emergency assistance from Department of Social Services, Office of Victim Services and other community programs.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners: Specially trained medical professionals providing compassionate, knowledgeable assistance to a victim of a sexual assault.

Community Education and Outreach: Presentations are available for any public or private group, school, business, or agency.

Campus Advocacy

Our Campus Advocate provides direct service, trainings, and presentations for all colleges in St. Lawrence County. We are currently at four colleges that are generously sharing their space with us:

Clarkson University, Tuesdays, 8:30—4:30pm, Education Resource Center (ERC), Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC), Suite 1300

SUNY Potsdam, Wednesdays, 9—5pm, Van Housen Ext, Room 390

SUNY Canton, Thursdays, 9—5pm, Payson Hall, Room 207

St. Lawrence University, Fridays, 9—5pm, Bewkes Science Hall, Room 323

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Although we do not have a dedicated space, we are currently providing training to students, staff and faculty. All services are available upon request.

Attorney Services: Legal assistance for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

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Thank you for your support!

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Renewal House recognizes the businesses, organizations, and community members who generously support the adults and children who seek services at Renewal House by donating money, items or time. The names listed on this report are from donations received since our last newsletter.

The goal of talking about the different experiences of different groups of survivors is never to fuel comparison between the suffering or harm any person or group has experienced. Remember, we believe sexual violence is always harmful and should always be taken seriously. Still it is important for us to recognize the different needs, experiences, and vulnerabilities of survivors in different groups. A survivor's experience and journey may be impacted by mental health conditions, struggles with addiction, experiences of homelessness, living with a disability, being incarcerated, undocumented, or in the military. None of these experiences are mutually exclusive, and each impacts survivors individually and collectively. This is also true for survivors' identities based on race, age, gender identity, and sexual orientation – especially when we recognize the ways sexual violence is used by those who have more power in society to abuse and silence others. Whether you are a survivor, the loved one of a survivor, or in a role supporting survivors – it's important to remember the goal is not comparison. The goal of recognizing differences is to better understand the range of ways people are impacted by sexual harassment, assault and abuse and the ways sexual violence is used as a weapon of oppression against individuals and groups of survivors.

Real examples of looking at difference helps us support survivors

What does it look like in practice when we recognize some of the differences in survivors' experiences? This gives us the opportunity to see ways of expanding our work to be more inclusive and responsive. Here are some examples of what this can look like:

- **Survivors with Autism:** Although there is a significant

amount on research of high rates of sexual violence experienced by persons with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities – there is less information available looking at specific disabilities such as autism. To address this gap we recently developed a guide for sexual assault advocates and counselors on “Responding to survivors with autism spectrum disorders.” This guide talks about specific strategies for communication, the role of care givers and significant others, and how to make appropriate accommodations to better serve survivors with autism.

- **Teenage Survivors:** Teens who experience sexual assault and abuse have different needs than children, adults, and older adults who experience abuse. NSVRC recently created a manual for advocates working with teens that discusses complex topics like the way the developing teen brain is impacted by trauma and how to navigate confidentiality and mandatory reporting given the legal considerations facing survivors under the age of 18. One reason it is imperative to reach teens is because research suggests that teens who are survivors of sexual assault are at greater risk of future victimization. Research also helps us to understand how important it is to ensure outreach and prevention efforts are inclusive – because youth of color, homeless youth, teens with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth are even more likely to experience sexual violence.

- **Identity Specific Organizations:** The needs and experiences of survivors and communities are so varied it is unfortunately the case that even the best efforts to be comprehensive still leave too many out. National Sexual Violence

Resource Center (NSVRC) collaborates with many partner organizations that focus specifically on meeting the unique needs of specific communities and groups. Just a few of our partners who offer real examples of how understanding difference helps us better help survivors include:

- ⇒ *1in6* focuses on challenging the social stigma and silence around male sexual abuse by increasing awareness of the issue and facilitating spaces for male survivors to heal together.
- ⇒ *Casa de Esperanza* provides training and support to organizations across the country to enhance their work with Latin@ and Latinx survivors and communities. Their work helps programs understand the ways in which language barriers, immigration status, and cultural practices and beliefs can impact survivors of intimate partner violence in this community.
- ⇒ *Just Detention International* advocates for the safety and dignity of people in prisons, jail, and detention. They work to ensure that survivors in detention get the help they need as they work to change attitudes that minimize prison rape: No matter what crime someone may have committed, rape is not part of the penalty.
- ⇒ *Black Women's Blueprint* is focused on empowering black women and girls to address how historic abuses continue to have an ongoing impact – from the legacy of slavery to sexual and reproductive exploitation, and police violence. They also take on initiatives to

celebrate the experiences and contributions of individuals of African descent and redefine concepts of healing and justice from the perspectives of black survivors.

The role of difference when sexual violence is used as a weapon of domination

As this article has discussed, sexual violence can impact people of any age, gender, religion, ethnicity, and identity. Still, when looking at rates of sexual violence, there are communities and groups who face a disproportionate impact. Research on the prevalence of sexual violence helps us to understand how individuals who are members of groups that have historically been devalued continue to face higher rates of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse.

- People with intellectual disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate more than seven times higher than people with no disabilities.
- Nearly 50% of transgender people have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives. These rates are even higher for trans people of color and those who have done sex work, been homeless, or have (or had) a disability.
- Black non-Hispanic women (44%) and multiracial non-Hispanic women (54%) are significantly more likely to have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime, compared to White non-Hispanic women (35%).
- 1 of 3 Native American/Alaskan Indian (NA/AI) women will be raped or sexually assaulted in their lifetime, making the average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American

Indians 3.5 times higher than for all other races.

These statistics serve as a reminder that sexual violence is rooted in inequality and disparities of power. It also serves as a reminder for those who do not represent these groups that discrimination and oppression are ongoing and not issues of the past. For example, the ongoing racism and oppression faced by women of color puts them at greater risk for experiencing sexual assault. It's also important to recognize that individuals and groups have layers of identity and circumstances which can further increase the disproportionate impact of sexual violence.

Acknowledging difference and rising together

When it comes to expanding the inclusivity of sexual assault services and prevention education, it can be a very helpful exercise to think of whose stories are told the least and to identify ways to bring those stories and experiences to the forefront. Whenever we represent the experiences of survivors, it's vital to ask whose voices are still missing? How can we use the tools available to us to help uncover and present a wider range of experiences? This is important because representation and empowerment are ways we can combat how sexual violence is used as a weapon of oppression and the ongoing barriers of inequality.

By exploring the importance of recognizing and acknowledging difference in understanding the range of ways sexual violence impacts different identities, groups, and communities, we also want to share the hope of survivors rising and healing together. By understanding power disparities and abuses of power as a common thread even among a wide range of instances of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse – we can identify ways to move our work on

behalf of all survivors forward. It has been said that a rising tide lifts all the boats, and this holds true of every time we challenge the silence, stigma, and barriers facing any group of survivors. In the face of so much silence, we know there is always space for more voices, different stories, and new perspectives. By choosing to open ourselves up beyond our own experience to embrace the lived experiences and truths of others whose experiences are different than our own – we can rise together.

Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation Protecting Women's Reproductive Rights,

January 22, 2019, Governor's Website

Fulfills Promise to Sign Reproductive Health Act - A Central Part of Governor's 2019 Justice Agenda - Within First 30 Days of New Legislative Session

The Reproductive Health Act Ensures New Yorkers Can Make Personal Healthcare Decisions and Crucial Services Can Be Provided Without Fear of Criminal Penalty

Today, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has fulfilled his promise to sign into law the Reproductive Health Act, a key component of the 2019 Justice Agenda, within the first 30 days of the new legislative session. The Reproductive Health Act protects women's reproductive rights by ensuring that New Yorkers can make personal healthcare decisions and medical professionals can provide crucial services without fear of criminal penalty. The legislation codifies *Roe v. Wade* into New York State law.

"In the face of a federal government's intent on rolling back *Roe v. Wade* and women's reproductive rights, I promised

Women's Reproductive Rights

that we would pass this critical legislation within the first 30 days of the new session - and we got it done," Governor Cuomo said. "Today we are taking a giant step forward in the hard-fought battle to ensure a woman's right to make her own decisions about her own personal health, including the ability to access an abortion. With the signing of this bill, we are sending a clear message that whatever happens in Washington, women in New York will always have the fundamental right to control their own body."

"As keepers of the torch for women's rights that was first ignited in New York State back in 1848, we have a moral responsibility to continue this fight today," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. "Thanks to an election that saw record numbers of women elected to office, I presided over the State Senate and we finally enacted the Reproductive Health Act to protect the rights of women across our great state. We act today on the anniversary of the groundbreaking decision of *Roe v. Wade* and recognize the threat we face from a Supreme Court determined to overturn protections that have been in place for over four decades. Today is an historic day for women in New York, and I'm proud that we are working every day to ensure full equality and safety for women."

The Reproductive Health Act amends the public health law, decriminalizing women's access to abortions and protecting the doctors who perform them.

In the face of Washington's assault on women's rights, including access to all health care options and guaranteed coverage of emergency contraception and

other contraceptive drugs, the Governor has taken action to counter the federal government's reversals. In July 2018 the Governor signed an Executive Order directing the Department of Financial Services and Department of Health to administer regulations to insurance providers requiring them to cover over the counter emergency contraception, all other contraceptive drugs, devices or other products for women, and to provide 12 months of contraceptive at one time, all without co-insurance, co-pays or deductibles.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "New York once led the way on choice and women's rights. Unfortunately, for years, barriers to women's rights were put up, and our state has fallen behind. Today, we are tearing those barriers down and we are now leading the way again. I commend Governor Cuomo, my colleague Speaker Heastie, and both bill sponsors Senator Liz Krueger and Assemblywoman Deborah Glick for taking historic action and leading New York State forward in the fight for women's rights. It is time for New York to again serve as a progressive beacon to the nation."

Senator Liz Krueger said, "The decision about whether to have an abortion is deeply personal. It involves a complex weighing of a woman's unique circumstances, her medical needs, her private morality, and her own body. That is why it is a decision that must be made by a woman and her healthcare provider alone - not by the government. Our abortion laws, once groundbreaking, are now almost fifty years old. They do not meet the standard set by *Roe v. Wade*, and they do not

reflect modern medical practice. We will never know how many New York women have suffered and even died because our outdated laws prevented them from getting the care they desperately needed. Today we turn the page. By enacting the RHA, New York will once again lead the nation on women's reproductive healthcare, and help ensure that all New Yorkers have the freedom and opportunity to make their own decisions about their health and their families."

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said, "While the administration in Washington continues its assault on women's reproductive rights, the Assembly Majority remains dedicated to fighting for a woman's right to choose. The bills we passed today ensure New Yorkers can control their family planning decisions, have access to the reproductive healthcare they need and will not be discriminated against for their choices. With our new partners in the Senate we have finally seen this legislation pass both houses and signed into law on the anniversary of the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision."

Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick said, "New York women deserve to have their own healthcare decisions respected. Women, in consultation with healthcare professionals, and not legislators, should make decisions that affect their own health free of interference. After years of fighting for the passage of this essential protection for women, our moment has finally arrived. The New York State Assembly has kept the torch lit for years, and we are extremely excited to be able to pass the torch to a Senate dedicated to the respect of women and the protection of their basic right to make healthcare decisions. I am grateful for the Governor's support and his

eagerness to sign this bill at last."

Gloria Steinem said, "A woman's power to decide whether she will give birth or not is the single greatest determinant of whether she is healthy or not, educated or not, works outside the home or not, and how long she will live. This power has been taken away by patriarchy and racism, sometimes disguised as religion, yet it is our most basic democratic right. I'm thankful to Governor Cuomo and the New York State legislature for passing the Reproductive Health Act. It will codify *Roe v. Wade* in New York State law, guarantee women's right to make decisions about our own bodies, and help create a future in which every child has the right to be born loved and wanted."

Andrea Miller, President of the National Institute of Reproductive Health Action Fund, said, "Governor Cuomo has tirelessly advocated for a woman's access to quality reproductive health care, especially in the face of hostile attacks from the president, U.S. Congress and Supreme Court. Today, in signing the RHA, the CCCA, and the Boss Bill, he has cemented New York's role as a progressive stronghold that prioritizes access to abortion care and contraception."

Robin Chappelle Golston, President & CEO, Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts, said, "We are here today because we demanded the right to control our own bodies and the ability to access the reproductive health care we require. New Yorkers know that no one should ever have the power to turn back the clock on our health care or take away our rights. Together advocates and our legislative champions worked to secure our

reproductive freedom and rights. We thank Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins's leadership and Governor Andrew Cuomo for his vision and commitment to securing our reproductive rights."

New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) Executive Director Donna Lieberman said, "Today New York State took a historic vote to protect women's rights and autonomy. The Reproductive Health Act recognizes reproductive health care as a fundamental right. It takes abortion out of the criminal code and puts it where women's health belongs -- in the public health law. It recognizes the range of medical professionals that women can turn to, expanding access to early care. Together with the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act, this legislation will strengthen a woman's ability to decide what is right for her life, her body, and her family. As attacks on reproductive rights grow around the country, emboldened by the Trump administration's efforts to stack the courts against women, updating New York's abortion law to protect the rights guaranteed by *Roe v. Wade* is more critical than ever. While there is still more to do to ensure New York can be a safe haven for women all over the country, today is a day for long-overdue celebration."

Governor Cuomo Signs The Child Victims Act,

February 14, 2019, Governor's Website

Fulfills Promise to Sign Child Victims Act—A Central Part of Governor's 2019 Justice Agenda—Within First 100 Days of New Legislative Session

Legislation Ensures Child Abusers Are Held Accountable Criminally and Civilly

Today, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo fulfilled his promise to sign the Child Victims Act, a key component of his 2019 Justice Agenda, within the first 100 days of the new legislative session. The legislation ensures those who abuse children are held accountable criminally and civilly and that survivors of childhood sexual abuse have a path to justice. Governor Cuomo advocated for passage of the Child Victims Act last legislative session but Senate Republicans refused to bring it to the floor for a vote.

"We are here today because survivors who endured unimaginable pain came forward with great courage and sacrificed their own privacy to make change for others," Governor Cuomo said. "This bill brings justice to people who were abused, and rights the wrongs that went unacknowledged and unpunished for too long. By signing this bill, we are saying nobody is above the law, that the cloak of authority is not impenetrable, and that if you violate the law, we will find out and you will be punished and justice will be done."

"After years of unnecessary delay, the Child Victims Act is finally a reality and justice is coming for countless New Yorkers," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. "Survivors who fought so long and hard deserve our love and admiration. With this new law, we are empowering those who have suffered unspeakable abuse and holding sexual predators accountable."

This bill will provide necessary relief to child victims of sexual abuse by amending New York's antiquated laws to ensure that

perpetrators are held accountable for their actions, regardless of when the crime occurred. Under current law, child sexual abuse offenses cannot be prosecuted after five years from their occurrence and civil lawsuits for this conduct must be brought within three years from the victim's 18th birthday.

This legislation:

- Increases the amount of time during which perpetrators of these crimes may be held criminally accountable;
- Allows victims of these crimes to commence a civil lawsuit at any time before they reach 55 years of age;
- Provides victims whose claims have been time-barred a new opportunity for their day in court by opening a one-year window for them to commence their action;
- Eliminates the need to file a notice of claim for sexual offenses committed against a minor;
- Requires judicial training with respect to crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors;
- Authorizes the Office of Court Administration to promulgate rules and regulations for the timely adjudication of revived actions.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "When we took up this fight for the Child Victims Act, none of us thought it was going to be this tough or take this long. Government has a responsibility to stand up for the survivors of these heinous crimes. That is why the Senate Democratic Majority has been fighting alongside survivors and advocates for years to pass the Child Victims Acts and remove the barriers that have been protecting predators. I've been proud

to work with Senator Brad Hoylman, Speaker Heastie and Governor Cuomo to ensure that justice is finally being delivered."

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said, "For years, the Assembly Majority has fought to give survivors of childhood sexual abuse their day in court. These brave individuals have waited long enough. Today, they are one step closer to justice. I want to thank the bill sponsor, Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal for her tireless advocacy and commitment to survivors. I would also like to thank my Assembly Majority colleagues and the efforts of Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and her colleagues for helping to finally make this legislation the law of the land."

Senator Brad Hoylman said, "For years, survivors of child sexual abuse looked to Albany for justice and for years, their pleas went unanswered. No longer. With the Child Victims Act now signed into law by Governor Cuomo, survivors of child sexual abuse in New York State finally have the opportunity to seek justice against their abusers and the institutions who may have harbored them. I'm so proud to be in this fight alongside Governor Cuomo, who took the courageous and historic step in supporting this bill, Senate Leader and Prime Co-Sponsor Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who personally broke the decade-long logjam and moved this bill to the floor, along with the entire Senate Democratic Conference and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal. Mostly, however, the survivors of child sexual abuse deserve credit for baring their souls and sharing their personal stories. In the process, the survivors won the hearts and minds of the members of the State Legislature and thanks to them, New York is a safer place for our children."

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal said, "Today, after 13 long and hard years of fighting, we open a pathway to justice, and perhaps some modicum of healing, for survivors of childhood sexual assault. With the passage of the Child Victims Act into law, New York State sends the unequivocal and powerful message that we stand with survivors against predators, no matter how powerful. Today, we learn that not all heroes wear capes: the brave women and men who fought for years to see this bill become law have helped to make this state safer for everyone. I thank each of them for their courage and advocacy. And I thank Governor Cuomo and my colleagues in the Assembly and State Senate for their brave support of the Child Victims Act over the years."

Widespread Reproductive Coercion Costs DV Victims,

February 2019, National Bulletin on Domestic Violence Prevention

Forty percent of women in abusive relationships reported they faced reproductive coercion with many (84%) becoming pregnant. The 40% in the small study of 164 survivors in 11 states and DC reported they were stopped from using birth control, their partners tampered with condoms or other birth control, and/or their partners forbade birth control or abortion. Researchers went on to estimate that DV cost the survivors \$103,000 in lost earnings and economic damages and injuries. Reproductive coercion was a big part of the costs. Pregnancy discrimination is one of the most common forms of gender-based discrimination.

Renewal House prohibits the discrimination or harassment of any person based on race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, religion and national origin.

**Renewal House...Serving St. Lawrence County
2018 Stats**

	Domestic Violence	Sexual Assault	Grand Total
Total individuals served	705	321	1,026
Adult Females	542	177	719
Adult Males	50	28	78
Children/Youth	113	116	229
Safe Housing	55	Average length of stay was 23 days	
Safe Housing Denials	24	Safe dwelling was full, family size too large for bed space available, etc. Other placement options are offered as an alternative to the safe dwelling.	
Hotline Calls	4,990	4,504 during office hours, 486 after office hours.	
Type of Service	Individuals Served	# of times service was provided	
Emotional Support/Counseling	674	3,373	
Phone Counseling	726	4,504	
Personal Advocacy	626	3,694	
Criminal Justice Support	376	2,426	
Transportation	368	3,254	
Information	665	2,663	
Referral	385	908	
Child Care/Child Recreation	80	262	
Group	16		
Forensic Sexual Assault Exams provided by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner	43		
Presentations (school-based & community)	10,474	407	
Volunteers	Hours 2,464	Number of Volunteers 19	
Individuals Served by Area (per intake)			
Brasher Falls	31	Norfolk	30
Canton	82	North Lawrence	8
Chase Mills	11	Norwood	14
Colton	19	Ogdensburg	167
DeKalb Junction	8	Oswegatchie	2
Depeyster	2	Parishville	5
Edwards	6	Potsdam	106
Fine	3	Pyrites	1
Gouverneur	93	Raymondville	1
Hammond	6	Rensselear Falls	6
Hannawa Falls	1	Richville	5
Harrisville	3	Rossie	3
Hermon	18	Russell	4
Heuvelton	9	Star Lake	6
Hopkinton	2	Waddington	10
Lisbon	13	West Stockholm	2
Madrid	17	Winthrop	19
Massena	174		
Morristown	4	Out of County	37
Morley	1	Out of State	6
Newton Falls	1	Out of Country	3
Nicholville	4	Unknown	83

I ASK for Consent

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Address service requested

Renewal House funding sources:

NYS Office of Victim Services

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services

NYS Department of Health

NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault

St. Lawrence County Department of
Social Services

Legislative Award - Senator Ritchie

Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

United Way of Northern New York

FEMA

Stewart's Holiday Match

Donations and Fundraising

Spring 2019 Newsletter

I have enclosed my tax-deductible donation in support of the programs
and services offered at RENEWAL HOUSE.

\$250 _____ \$100 _____

\$75 _____ \$50 _____ Other Amount _____

I give permission for my name to be listed on the donor
appreciation report in the next newsletter.

I do **NOT** want my donation to be recognized.

NAME: _____

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Please make checks payable to RENEWAL HOUSE and mail to:

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Your support is greatly appreciated!

Visit our website at www.slvrenewalhouse.org to donate by Credit Card.