

The Advocate

Renewal House, Spring 2017

We Must Protect the Violence Against Women Act

Ms. Magazine, February 6, 2017, by Negar Katirai

There was a time when survivors of intimate partner violence were too ashamed and scared to tell anyone that their partner had physically or sexually assaulted them, or threatened and intimidated them. Thanks in large part to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), survivors are more supported when they come forward, and are thus more likely to come forward at all—but this law and the survivors it protects are now in jeopardy.

Our newly elected president has indicated he will cut funding for VAWA as part of his plan to eliminate government “waste.” Not only is this proposed cut bad policy, but it is indicative of a much more disturbing trend: the normalization of violence against women.

Of all the women murdered in the United States, one-third are killed by an intimate partner, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. 1,181 American women were murdered by their partners in 2005. That’s three women per day. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 232,960 U.S. women were raped or sexually assaulted in 2006. That averages out to about 600 a day.

In our law clinic at the University of Arizona, we represent intimate partner violence survivors to obtain protection orders against abusers. My students have witnessed firsthand how intimate partner violence manifests as a pattern of behavior to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Contrary to how intimate partner violence is

often depicted in films and television, survivors do not provoke the abuse and are not masochists.

Survivors often make repeated attempts to leave violent relationships, but their abuser prevents them from leaving through various control tactics, including increased violence. Other tactics include economic dependence, social isolation, and using children in common. Often, abusers gradually isolate their victims from their friends and family and then make their victim feel like she is the crazy one for questioning the abuse. In addition, survivors are most at risk when they do decide to leave, and thus we should defer to the survivor’s judgment as to when is the right time to take that risk.

My students have also seen how many are quick to dismiss the severity of the abuse, or to blame the victim for being “unreasonable” or “hysterical.”

We recently assisted a client in negotiating a system for exchanging custody of her daughter that would not require her to interact with her ex-husband. He raped her in her sleep throughout their marriage, and seeing him triggers her post-traumatic stress disorder such that she has nightmares and headaches. The husband’s lawyer peppered the negotiations with statements such as “I don’t know what all the drama is about.”

One in three women and one in four men have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.

Intimate partner violence is not an isolated incident or an anomaly that only touches a minority of our population. This is happening to our brothers and sisters, daughters and sons, and also our fathers and mothers. If we want incidents of intimate partner violence to decrease, we have to stop disregarding women’s rights and safety.

One important step is to challenge victim-blaming and attempts to normalize violence against women in your everyday life. When someone you know questions why a domestic violence survivor does not leave the relationship, or did not leave sooner, speak up—and speak up effectively. Try approaching him or her from a place of empathy.

Express some understanding for why they may view the situation that way, but then use the moment as an opportunity to increase their understanding of what domestic violence survivors go through. We may not achieve shift change in our social norms overnight, but if we chip away at this problem we can ensure that this much-needed shift happens one day. It will take many of these conversations, probably several conversations with each person, including ourselves.

We also must demand that our representatives take a stand against the normalization of violence against women. To be sure, there are those who may allege violence when none occurred, but just as we do not let such outliers deter us from investigating property theft, we

Continued on page 6

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) has announced Engaging New Voices as the theme for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in 2017. Preventing sexual violence, and related forms of violence, requires addressing root causes and shifting social norms. It also requires that diverse voices

are included in our prevention efforts.

The 2017 SAAM campaign will focus on reaching and including new voices, specifically calling on faith leaders, parents, coaches, and members of Greek Life to use their influence to promote healthy, equitable, and respectful relationships and communities.

Preventing sexual violence, or any form of violence, cannot be accomplished in one month, but SAAM is a great opportunity to highlight ongoing prevention efforts and engage new people in the movement to end sexual violence. With new voices comes new opportunities for action year-round.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week - April 2—8, 2017

Taken from the 2017 NCVRW Resource Guide

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 2 - 8, 2017. This year's theme—**Strength. Resilience. Justice**—emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary responses and building the capacity of individuals, service providers, and communities to respond to crime and support the ongoing healing of victims and survivors.

A central premise of our community is that it's open to everyone. We have the right to engage with our political structure, education system, public services, and other programs that facilitate and strengthen community life. However, individuals with disabilities often find they are cut off from these services, overlooked, or unable to access the help they need. Reaching people with disabilities is all the more important because of the scope of those affected. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that nearly 1 in 5

adults has a physical, mental, or cognitive disability, and they are three times as likely to experience a violent crime as individuals without disabilities.

People with disabilities are at higher risk of victimization because they may be dependent on another person to meet critical needs. Caregivers—such as relatives, significant others, neighbors, or professional aids—may control access to medication, transportation, finances, or more distant loved ones. Victims may be unable to report a crime without their caregiver's assistance or they may be anxious about who will care for them if they report their caregiver's maltreatment. If they do successfully reach out for services, they may face difficulty getting the accommodations they need due to a service provider's lack of understanding or funding.

There is good news. A recent increase in federal formula funding

for victim services providers, coupled with new provisions in federal regulations that govern this formula funding, encourages victim service providers to make their services more fully accessible to anyone with a disability.

The new funding regulations also cover the cost of forensic interviewing if the victim has a cognitive disability. Primarily used in child abuse or sexual assault cases, forensic interviewing methods are victim-centered, trauma-informed, and take into account varying levels of comprehension. When performed correctly, this type of interview limits re-traumatization and provides the emotional support necessary for a victim to move forward.

By using these funds to increase equitable access to critical and appropriate services for individuals with disabilities, we will build a stronger, more resilient community.

Disability Awareness Training - Monday, April 3rd

The SUNY Canton Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Renewal House, and the David Sullivan St. Lawrence County Law Enforcement Academy, is proud to present Niagara University's Law Enforcement Disability Awareness

Training. This is the nation's premier training program for first responders. Recognized by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services as the state's training for law enforcement in response to individuals with disabilities, the pro-

gram was recently added to the basic course for police officers. The ability to respond to individuals with autism and other disabilities has posed varying challenges to officers and campus faculty and staff, and community first responders across

the country. High-profile cases have exposed the need for more involved awareness and education. As the population increases and more individuals are active in the community, the need to ensure accurate and appropriate response is critical. Autism Spectrum Disorder is now present in 1 in 68 children. The characteristics, and how to recognize, identify and properly respond, are imperative.

If you are a campus faculty or staff member, social service provider, police officer, campus safety officer, school resource officer, or school security, and have a desire to respond properly to individuals with disabilities, we invite you to register for this training.

Monday, April 3rd
Response to Individuals with Disabilities

9:00am—12:00 pm
Campus Faculty & Staff, and Community

1:00pm—5:00pm
Law Enforcement

To register go to:
www.canton.edu/disability

National Volunteer Week - April 23—29th

Thank you to all the volunteers who give their time and talent to provide support to the organizations they choose to

serve. We could not begin to provide all of the services at Renewal House without the dedication and support of our

volunteers and interns. For information about how you can volunteer at Renewal House, call 315-379-9845 or visit our website.

Denim Day is Wednesday, April 26th

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.

In 1992, an 18 year old girl was sexually assaulted by her driving instructor in Italy. The driver was convicted, but the case eventually made its way to the Italian parliament and the sexual assault

case was overturned because, according to the Italian Supreme Court, the jeans the survivor was wearing were "very, very tight jeans" and she "would have had to help him remove them, which would be considered consensual sex, not rape." Women in the Italian parliament wore jeans to protest; California's state senate did the same. Now Denim Day is nationally recognized, and it's our turn.

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 26th 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 26th as a donation to Renewal House to support victim services.

Canton Goldenaires - June 10th

The Canton Goldenaires have chosen Renewal House as a

beneficiary of their June 10th, 7:00 pm performance at

Gulick Theater, St. Lawrence University. *More information will be coming.*

Music and Arts Festival - June 17th

This year's Music and Arts Festival will be held from Noon—6pm on June 17th 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.

Music provided by:

- * Andy Van Duyne
- * Megan Burke and Robby Castro
- * Kaitlyn LaShomb

And more....

If you are interested in being a part of this event, please contact us at renewalhouse@verizon.net.

To learn more about Bella-Brooke Vineyard, visit their website at www.bella-brookevineyard.com.

Save the date and watch for more information.

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.

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

What's NEW at Renewal House?

We have set a new record in 2016! It is the first year in which we have served over 1,000 individuals! This is an increase of 196 individuals served compared to 2015: 169 domestic violence and 27 sexual assault victims. It is also the most presentations that we have provided and the number of people we reached in our community, with 196 presentations reaching 5,448 individuals.

Our staff of 11, along with volunteers and interns, have done such an amazing job stretching themselves to the maximum in providing services and presentations to individuals in our county!

Perhaps it is a direct correlation between the information you learn to making referrals to Renewal House.

The More You Know!

Also in the works, the NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault, NYS Department of Corrections PREA Compliance Manager for our area, and Renewal House are currently discussing ways in which we can work together in providing services to incarcerated individuals under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alan Mulkin, *President*
Stephanie Gilbert, *Vice-President*
Natasha Hill, *Secretary*
Mary Coakley, *Treasurer*
Lee Scaggs
Marnie Salisbury
Kimberley Trombley

Ann Petroccione

JoAnn Rogers

Marina Smith

Executive Director

Ilene Burke

Program Director

Shari Fawcett

STAFF

Kelly

Valarie

Alison

Angelica

Kaylean

Katrina

Megan

Katie

Wendy

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE)

Coordinator, Darlene Lynch

Emmy Stevenson

Kelly LeCuyer

Volunteers/Interns

Donations

Donor Appreciation Report

A-1 Auto Detailing
 Acapella North Chorus
 Advanced Business Systems
 Agarawal, Ravinder and Barbara
 Alcoa Corporation
 Alpha Chi Omicron
 Ames, Cara
 Amelotte, Jane
 Ammicati, Camilla
 Asian Buffet
 Archer, Casey
 Arnold, Matt
 Begnoche, Samantha
 Bell, Sue
 Bellinger, Pam
 Benvenuto, Jean and Jim
 Besaw, Kurt
 Bessettes Bottles-N-Beverage
 Best Western/University Inn
 Beta Theta Phi
 Blissfully Yours
 Boyer, Lise
 Boysuk, Margaret
 Brown, Severn
 Busters
 Brownell, Janet and Sherry
 Canton Rotary Club
 Cascade Inn
 Clarkson University
 Clarkson Women's Engineering Club
 Clifton-Fine Senior Citizens
 CNY Community Foundation
 Coakley's Ace Hardware
 Coakley, Carol
 Coakley, Colleen
 Colton, Darren
 Colton-Pierrepont Central School
 Committee to Elect Addie Jenne Russell
 Community Bank, N.A.
 Community Health Center
 Converse, Shelby
 Crary, Miki
 Dailey, William and Lucia
 Dalton, Catherine
 Davis, Ivy
 Degroat, Judith
 Derouchie, Daniel
 Donnelly, Rebecca
 Downs, Karen
 Dunkin Donuts
 Duskas, Victoria
 Early Bird Bowling League
 Edwards, Cindy
 EKFelt, Lynn Niles
 Eric's Auto Repair
 First Presbyterian Church, Potsdam
 Fisher, Sandra
 Fitchette, Donna
 Foisy, Philip and Nancy
 Francey, Dr. Lisa
 Franz, Bonnie
 Frysinger, Char Mae
 Funkhouser, Sandra
 Fuston, Judy
 Galilee United Methodist Church
 Gauthier, Ed
 Gilbert, Barb
 Glow
 Goldberg, Rita
 Goodrow, Marcie and Adam
 Gouverneur Correctional Facility
 Grace United Methodist Women
 Graham, Robert and Betty

Greene, Ann
 Gregory, William and Dawn
 Griffin, Linda
 Goolden, Diana
 Hair Designs
 Hill, Kenneth and Lori
 Hill, Natasha
 Hill, Richard and Elizabeth
 Hill, Teresa
 Hilts, Nona
 Hot Tamale
 Hyde, Joan
 Isimball, Forrest
 Jenne, Tina
 Jenseth, Richar
 Johnston, Debbie
 Jones, David and Glenda
 Jones, Dennis and Nancy
 Jones, Lawrence and Judith
 Jordan, Nicola and David
 Joyce, Terri and Michael
 Kahn, Shanon
 Kappa Delta Chi
 Kelley, Patty
 King, Barbara
 King, Bernard and Lois
 Kirwan, Susan
 Kreneski, Irene and Mary
 Kreuzer, Ruth and Jerry
 Kuenzler, Julie and Brent
 Kuno, Stephen and Jacquelyn
 Kus, Karen
 Landis, Creigh
 Langley, Susan
 Larson, Matilda
 Larsen, Joan and Ronald
 Laurence, Cassie
 Lawrence, Thomas and Kathleen
 Leggue-Guyette, Terri
 Lehr, Valerie
 Lock, Patti and Robin
 Louisville Community Church
 Luna
 Lustyik, Kelly
 Macdonald, Lois
 Marsh, Joseph and Edna
 Martin, Shirley
 Massena Baptist Church
 Massena Rotary Club
 Masters, Kim
 McCarty, Linda
 McDonald, Joan
 McDonald, Lisa
 McElhearn, Laura
 McHugh, Gretchen
 McIntosh, Marion
 Maginn, Carol
 Merrill, Amie
 Mulkin, Kate and Al
 Newell, Allan
 Nolan Family
 Norman, Anne
 North Country Insurance Professionals
 North Country Savings Bank
 Norwood Kiwanis
 Oakley, Sarah
 Ogden, Jennifer and Andrew
 Ogdensburg Methodist Church
 O'Neil, June and Ron
 O'Neil, Meghan
 Owen, Mike
 Pasko, Margery
 Pazoga, Christina

Thank you for your support!

Pfotenhauer, Jason
 Pierce, Barbara and George
 Pinkerton, John and Jane
 Pinto, Mucenski Hooper & VanHouse
 Pizza Hut
 Pletcher, Galen
 Plimpton, Sandy
 Pomainville, Lily
 Potter, Donald and Nancy
 Potter's Industries
 Prody, Jessica
 Pynchon, Tom
 Raffel-Jenseth, Suzanne
 Renick, Wanda
 Reynolds Charitable Foundation
 Reynolds Johnson, Julia
 Rowley, Amanda
 Russell, Kathleen and Edmund
 Sauvie, Kim
 Silver, Julie and Friends
 Schaberg, Albert and Gail
 Schrader, Greta
 Schwartz, Alan and Ginny
 SEARS—Potsdam
 Shanlon, Christopher
 Sheppard, James
 Smit, David
 Snow, Penny
 Spooner, Clede and Shelly
 St. Lawrence Central Girls Swim Team
 St. Lawrence County CDP
 St. Lawrence County Clerk's Association
 St. Lawrence County Probation
 St. Lawrence Federal Credit Union
 St. Lawrence SEFA
 St. Lawrence University
 St. Lawrence University MAASV
 Street, Sarah
 SUNY Potsdam, Sociology of the Family Class
 Sullivan-Catlin, Heather and Daniel
 Summer, Val
 Tebo, James and Lisa
 Tessier, Rebecca
 Thatcher Family
 The Pear Tree
 Thomas, Brian
 Thornwood Cabinetry
 Tomalty, Sandra
 Trillium Center for Yoga & Health
 Trombley, Alicia
 Trombley, Kim
 Tuper, Elizabeth
 United Methodist Women, Heuvelton
 Van De Water, Elizabeth
 Wallace, Jim and Judy
 Wasserman, Michael
 Wells, Kevin
 Wells, Robert and Patricia
 Weitzmann, Margaret
 White, Carolyn
 White, James and Sharon
 White's Flowers
 Winged Camel Metalworks
 Witmer, Theresa
 Wyckoff, Katherine
 Yeddo, Sally
 Ye Olde Liquors
 Youmell, Paula
 Yurgartis, Pamela and Steven
 Zion Episcopal Church
 Zonta Club of Ogdensburg
 Zysik, Edmund

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.

Why you wouldn't believe

should not let it stop us from investigating and addressing intimate partner violence. Call or address your representative now about how defunding the violence against women act betrays half of our population.

3 Reasons You Wouldn't Believe My Ex Abused Me – And Why They All Mean You Should

Taken from: everydayfeminism.com, August 21, 2016 by [Anonymous](#)

Here's the truth: My ex-boyfriend abused me. He treated me worse than anyone outside of our relationship will ever know.

Some of you might believe me if I told you. But I've heard over and over again the common reasons for doubting survivors – and I can't even begin to count how many of them can apply to me.

Life can feel very lonely as a survivor of intimate partner violence. For me, there is perhaps no lonelier time than when I realize how many people would think I was lying if I told them the truth. I'm sure you don't personally harbor all of the attitudes that lead people to doubt survivors. But for every reason I can name for why someone might not believe me, there's somebody somewhere who would cite it as "proof" that my story is false. So I'm talking to any part of you that just might buy into some of the common myths about survivors and intimate partner violence. The part of you that thinks: "I'd believe a survivor if their story checks out, but why would anyone stay with someone who's abusing them?" Or: "Our legal system says everyone's innocent until proven guilty, so I'll believe it once the abuser is convicted." Or: "I know the person who's being accused of abuse, and I just don't think they would do something like that."

I sometimes find that when survivors say that society's not supporting us, people get defensive – because your support can fall short even when you're only doing what you think is best.

But what many people see as a sensible approach to intimate partner violence often includes victim-blaming, shame, and judgment against survivors. Too many people just don't know how abuse works – and trauma can show up in lots of ways that you wouldn't expect or can't understand. I've had experiences and reactions that I wouldn't have understood unless I went through it myself.

There are no easy answers to some of our questions about partner violence. But what I do know is that common misconceptions about what proves or disproves that someone was "really" abused add a heavy burden to survivors' pain.

These are some of the reasons someone wouldn't believe that intimate partner abuse happened to me.

1. My Abuser and I Don't Fit Your Idea of Abuser and Victim

You wouldn't believe me because you'd like my abuser if you met him. Everybody does. He'd make you laugh, and seem like a really easygoing guy – not the type of person to hurt someone. If you did happen to witness a flash of his anger, you'd think he was just having a bad day. You might pity him, even. His abuse wasn't always loud and obvious – it was also in the ways he could make someone else feel responsible for fixing him.

You wouldn't believe he abused me because he comes from a good family. They're wealthy and well respected, and his mom

gives amazing hugs, and his dad is the warmest person you'll ever meet, and you can't imagine what kind of person would want to ruin their lives by calling their son an abuser.

You wouldn't believe me because I used to be one of those people who'd say, "If a partner ever hits me, I'll leave." But I didn't leave. Not right when I realized he was violent, or for a long time after that.

You wouldn't believe me when I say he was abusive because I don't even remember the first time he hit me – and because the abuse had already started long before then. But you wouldn't recognize verbal violence as violence.

You wouldn't believe me because every time I tried to leave him, his threats felt closer and closer to an impending reality, and I didn't know which ones he'd follow through on if I really did leave. Because I knew I couldn't outrun him. Because I was too exhausted to try.

You wouldn't believe me because he's been telling people I'm "crazy." And if you had to choose between believing that a perfectly normal-seeming guy is abusive and believing that I'm "crazy," you've heard enough stories about "crazy ex-girlfriends" to go with his side of the story.

You wouldn't believe me because I'm a Black woman, and you know Black women – we're said to be angry and aggressive and have "attitude," even when we're calm. Said to be criminals, even when our "attitude" is an effort to keep ourselves alive.

I'm also bisexual, and you know bisexual women – we're said to

be unfaithful and incapable of having stable relationships.

So you wouldn't believe me because when he'd falsely accuse me of cheating and lose his temper, you'd understand why he was so insecure.

And you wouldn't believe that he raped me, because aren't bisexual women "always" up for sex?

You wouldn't believe me because I seemed like such a devoted girlfriend. And who would be so devoted to someone who mistreated them?

From the outside, terror and control looked a lot like love.

2. I Never Talked About Abuse Like a 'Perfect Victim' Would

You wouldn't believe me because I tried hard as hell to seem happy – and for the most part, I pulled it off.

You wouldn't believe that someone who shows up to work on time was going through such turmoil, and because the one time I broke down crying to my manager, she told me I could talk to her about it, but I never did.

You wouldn't believe me if you asked the people in my life if any of them knew what was going on at the time. And because I don't bruise easily. And because I covered up the scars he gave me with tattoos. And because I perfected that thing survivors have to do sometimes – canceling plans with friends, but telling them: "Everything's all right!" Cupping my hand to the phone so they wouldn't hear him yelling, and saying, "Everything's all right!" Rushing off the phone when they detect that something might be wrong, and saying, "All right, now! See you soon!"

You wouldn't believe it was abuse

because when he isolated me from my friends, he did it gradually. No locking me up and throwing away the key – the only thing in my way was my own shame.

You wouldn't believe me because I've kept quiet – but if I spoke up, you'd think I was just trying to get attention.

You wouldn't believe me because I'm writing this anonymously, and if I was telling the truth, you think I'd have no reason to hide. And because I have plenty of reason to hide, but I don't know how to put it into words – I can only explain it as a chill in my bones.

You wouldn't believe me because I don't remember all of the details of what he did to me. If I tried to piece them together, in the right order, and you were looking to poke holes in my story, you probably could.

Yes, my story changes. Years later, a certain smell or sound or phrase can still make me remember something I hadn't recalled before. Sometimes I bury the memory away so quickly that I wouldn't be able to recall it again.

You wouldn't believe me because he convinced me that many of my memories were wrong, and after all that gaslighting, I sometimes thought he was right.

You wouldn't believe me because the first time I told someone about the physical abuse, I laughed about it. I'd run out of excuses for why my body ached, and as the truth stumbled from my lips, it seemed like such an absurd thing to admit that I chuckled. You wouldn't expect a victim of violence to chuckle.

You wouldn't believe he abused me because I never filed a police report. Especially because I had several opportunities to do so – neighbors called the police many

times.

You wouldn't believe me because I didn't trust the police to protect me, so I told them I was okay and sent them away.

You wouldn't believe me because I didn't even have him arrested that time when I was the one who called the police. The time I felt like I had no other choice, because I was sure he was going to kill me.

You wouldn't believe me because when he threatened to kill himself rather than going to jail, and later, when the officers asked me, in front of him, if he'd physically attacked me, I thought about his loving family and our friends, and I thought I was about to ruin everyone's life, and I decided my safety wasn't worth it.

You wouldn't believe me because if you had asked me then if I was being abused, I would've said *no*.

You wouldn't believe me because his roommates were never the ones who called the police, even though they lived in the house where much of the abuse was happening. And because if you asked his best friend (the one who intervened in the violence once, *just the once*) if my ex-boyfriend was abusive, he'd tell you no. You know. Bro code.

You wouldn't believe me because I didn't usually fight back. Why wouldn't I fight back? A few times, I did fight back, so you wouldn't believe me because I wasn't always meek. You'd take that as proof that I was indeed crazy, so maybe I'm the only one who will ever know I was fighting for my life.

You wouldn't believe me because I took so long to leave him. Because I went back to him,

again and again. Because I loved him. Because I felt sorry for him. Because every news story of a woman being killed by her boyfriend reminded me that he could kill me, but I still stayed. And if told you about that, you'd think I only had myself to blame.

3. It's Over – But That Doesn't Mean What You Think It Means

I tried to warn the woman he dated after me about him. Maybe I shouldn't have done that, and maybe you wouldn't believe he was abusive because that just makes me look jealous.

After it was over, I smiled in photos. I went out with friends. I had lots of sex, and I don't regret it. You wouldn't believe me because you could've caught me looking like everything was fine. Because after it was over, I didn't seem like I was hiding out or terrified of going through such hell again. Because I danced seductively, and flirted, and dated, even fell hard for a girl before I realized I wasn't ready to fall hard for anyone, and then I broke her heart. I still feel bad about that, but you wouldn't believe I was traumatized, because I just looked ruthless.

You wouldn't believe he abused me because he did it years ago, but some of the trauma didn't catch up to me until now.

You wouldn't believe me because I can't be honest with just anyone who asked about it. Emotionally, it's hard to talk about – and there's also the fact that so many of you wouldn't believe me. It hurts like hell to be vulnerable and open about something so awful, just to have you call me a liar.

You wouldn't believe me because

I hardly ever talk about him anymore. If you talked to me regularly, you might think he's just a blink in my past, long forgotten. You wouldn't know how often he shows up in my nightmares.

You wouldn't believe me because if I ran into him in public now, I'd smile. You'd think if he really treated me so badly, I'd go screaming in the opposite direction. But I imagine my panic would stay within me. I'd be glancing around, looking for an escape. And I've learned that with him, it's best to plan my departure quietly.

You wouldn't believe that screaming in horror can be so quiet. You wouldn't believe me because I don't call him a monster. Because I see him as a human being, capable of terrible things that people among us of all personalities and backgrounds and genders and identities can be capable of.

You wouldn't believe me because some of the abusive things he did are common behaviors society encourages in men. Because you'd perceive him as impressively confident, strong, dominant – just like a man should be.

You wouldn't believe me because I get how people can call him a nice guy, a cool friend, a good son – in spite of what he is to me. You wouldn't believe me because I understand how other survivors can still love their abusers. Can tell you nice things about them. Can blame themselves for everything, when the world finds any number of reasons to blame them.

You wouldn't believe me because I don't tell other victims to "just leave." Even if I want them to flee from their abusive partner and

never look back, I understand just how hard that can be.

You wouldn't believe me because I'm not broken, in spite of all of this. Because sometimes, I can face the violence in my past, and sometimes, I can even do it without flinching.

You wouldn't believe me because I only flinch when you look away. But if I take the risk of telling you the truth, you should believe me. You really should.

Because you think you have plenty of reasons not to believe that he abused me – but all of them are wrong.

Revenge porn: How to make it stop

By Danny Cevallos, CNN Legal Analyst
Updated 7:34 PM ET, Thu March 9, 2017

When it comes to sex, the law has a lot to say. For something that is supposed to happen in the privacy of one's home, we're keenly interested in regulating what happens there.

Sometimes, in those private, consensual encounters, things go wrong. People can be victimized, and the effects can extend far beyond the room. They can even go viral.

With the proliferation of smartphones, there has been a significant increase in the number of images and videos created and distributed in the world. In fact, the relationship between law and emerging consumer tech follows a well-established formula:

First, a new gadget hits the scene. Shortly thereafter, people (usually male) adapt it for sexual purposes. Then some individuals figure out how to abuse the technology and ruin it for others. Finally, legislators

scramble to come up with laws to fix the problem. Since our legislatures are filled with septuagenarians and Luddites, they are often not the ideal demographic to assess the problem.

Revenge porn, or the nonconsensual posting of nude images of an individual online, usually by a now-ex-boyfriend, is one of those newest categories of crimes that didn't really exist until technology made every image available worldwide in an instant.

Those among us who lived in the pre-digital-photo era knew that having consensual, explicit photos developed at the Fotomat was fraught with risk. That pretty much left the Polaroid, and those were prohibitively expensive.

The challenge today is criminalizing this kind of conduct. And it's more challenging than other kinds of criminal law in this area. With most crimes, a victim has consented to no part of the conduct at any point. The challenge with revenge porn is often that the victim consented to some of the conduct, but not all of it.

The 'revenge porn' victory we need

For example, existing laws have always prohibited the peeping Tom who sets up a secret camera and captures images of nonconsenting, unknowing adults in their home or bathroom.

The law also prohibits hacking a computer and stealing images stored there.

But the situation where one adult female consents to an explicit photograph taken by another adult male, knowing he will keep the photograph? That's a trickier one to legislate. Usually the female's consent to the photograph is contingent upon the

male's agreement to not reveal it to anyone else. Morally it makes plenty of sense, but it might be harder to support legally as a "contract."

First of all, these contracts are not written -- can you imagine taking one to a notary? Second, there are potential free speech issues -- though protecting these defendants stretches the spirit of the First Amendment. Third, and most importantly, contract remedies really don't matter, because once a photo is posted, the harm is irreparable.

Still, criminal law has come a long way in developing penalties for these defendants. Prior to 2013, just three states prohibited the unauthorized disclosure of sexually explicit images of adults.

Now, well over 30 states and the District of Columbia outlaw it. Federal law is probably on the way too.

It's easy to draw a line where the victims' consent ends in these cases. They may have consented to the creation of the image. They may have consented to the continued possession and control of the image by another. If the victim sent it herself, she consented to "dissemination"—to one person.

The victim, however, did not consent to the dissemination of the photograph to everyone else in the universe. There is ultimately no consent to the invasion of privacy created by the distribution of the photos. And, as internet dissemination speeds increase exponentially, the often-analog legislatures have to try to keep pace.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Sunday, January 1, 2017, 5:00 AM, BYCARRIE GOLDBERG

In September, New York City lawmakers announced a new bill

criminalizing the nonconsensual disclosure of sexually graphic images -- popularly called revenge porn. New York State is one of 16 hold-out states refusing to criminalize an act that causes true devastation.

For three years, proposed revenge porn legislation has languished in Albany. Meanwhile, the number of victims grows. So it is a relief that city lawmakers are coming to the rescue.

As a civil litigator concentrating on online and offline sexual privacy and assault in New York, I receive as many as six calls a day from crying, inconsolable, sometimes suicidal victims whose nude body has been presented to the internet on a silver platter. A jealous ex, a malicious hacker, a horny frat bro, a pimp, a jealous friend or even a rapist can upload images to dedicated revenge porn websites, where instantly thousands of people can view and share it. Sometimes the images or links are posted onto social media pages, mainstream websites or sent directly to the victims friends, family, employers colleagues. All without consent.

The hundreds of victims I've seen are age 13 to 65. They are 90% women. None of them know what to do. Typically, they are in their early 20s starting a career, but if you Google their name, the first couple pages of results are dominated by pornography and hateful commentary about their genitals. With our search engine results so inseparable from our offline reputations these days, it is no surprise that victims cannot get a job, a date or even an apartment.

Worse, they are harassed by

the mobs of viewers who see their images and the personal identifying information posted alongside it as an invitation to harass and threaten them. The injury and danger to victims is real online and offline.

And it's not the victim's fault, even when that victim consensually shared an image with one person. That sharing does not constitute a waiver for the recipient to share the image with the entire internet, any more than buying shoes with a credit card authorizes the store clerk to purchase a Ferrari. We have laws for the latter, but not the former.

Our laws must reflect our society's morality. The conversations surrounding recent high-profile cases – Erin Andrews, Hulk Hogan, Jennifer Lawrence, Fifty Cent – demonstrate that we value sexual privacy. But most victims cannot pay for expensive law firms in civil cases. Plus, the offenders are usually judgment-proof. And no victim wants the publicity that a public court case would draw from a media always hunting for a salacious scoop. The burden must be on law enforcement – not the victims. Criminal laws will deter the behavior from happening in the first place.

The passage of a properly drafted revenge porn bill will illustrate that we prioritize sexual privacy. A strong bill must not discriminate based on the offender's motives. Offenders are motivated to send naked images of another person by all sorts of reasons — to injure or humiliate; out of boredom; to show off sexual conquests; for sexual gratification, money, competition, the joy of hacking; because he thinks the victim is hot (or not), or for no reason at all. The injury to the victim is massive.

A strong bill must contain exceptions — such as the reporting of a crime, in a medical context, or some other lawful public purpose. There must be precise definitions for nudity and other key terms. It must extend to sex acts. (An image of somebody performing oral sex may not show the victim's nudity, but the image is just as embarrassing.)

The NYC bill sponsored by Council members Rory Lancman and Daniel Garodnick is a step in the right direction. With a little elbow grease, we can shape the bill to protect the full range of victims — not just those victimized by offenders with particular motives. Ultimately the version drafted by Assemblyman Edward Braunstein, provides a good template. (Full disclosure: I co-drafted the civil arm of that law.)

New York cannot continue being a safe harbor for perverts and abusers to sexually humiliate innocent people. If our lawmakers care about sexual privacy, they will criminalize revenge porn.

Goldberg is an attorney in Brooklyn at C. A. Goldberg, PLLC and a founding member of the NYC Electronic Sexual Exploitation Task Force.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

This year's theme: Building Community, Building Hope.

Strong, nurturing communities that are supportive of families can get involved and play a role in preventing child abuse and neglect and promoting child and family well-being.

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

To prevent child sexual abuse, consider the following tips:

- Take an active role in your children's lives. Learn about their

activities and people with whom they are involved. Stay alert for possible problems.

- Watch for "grooming" behaviors in adults who spend time with your child. Warning signs may include; frequently finding ways to be alone with your child, ignoring your child's need for privacy (e.g., in the bathroom), or giving gifts or money for no particular occasion.

- Make sure your children know that they can talk to you about anything that bothers or confuses them.

- Teach children accurate names of private body parts and the difference between touches that are "okay" and "not okay."

- Teach children to take care of their own bodies (e.g., bathing or using the bathroom) so they do not have to rely on adults or older children for help.

- Educate children about the difference between good secrets (such as birthday surprises) and bad secrets (those that make the child feel unsafe or uncomfortable).

- Monitor children's use of technology, including cell phones, social networking sites, and messaging.

- Trust your instincts! If you feel uneasy about leaving your child with someone, don't do it.

- If your child tells you that he or she has been abused, stay calm, listen carefully, and never blame the child. Thank your child for telling you. Report the abuse right away.

Remember: You can help protect your children from sexual abuse by being active in their lives and teaching them safety skills.

Renewal House...Serving St. Lawrence County 2016 Stats

	Domestic Violence (DV)	Sexual Assault (SA)	Grand Total
Total individuals served	814	222	1,036
Adult Females	616	119	735
Adult Males	65	22	87
Children/Youth	133	81	214
Safe Housing	63	Average length of stay was 20 days	
Safe Housing Denials	19	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	4,485	3,919 during office hours, 566 after office hours.	
Type of Service	Individuals Served	# of times service was provided	
Emotional Support/Counseling	696	3,032	
Phone Counseling	657	3,277	
Group—Women (3 groups)	27	32	
Children	13	24	
Personal Advocacy	578	1,554	
Criminal Justice Support	285	1,067	
Transportation	299	1,030	
Information	667	709	
Referral	418	715	
Child Care/Child Recreation	65	299	
Forensic Sexual Assault Exams provided by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner	35		
Presentations (school-based & community)	5,448	196	
Volunteers	Hours 2,701	Number of Volunteers 19	
Individuals Served by Area (per intake)			
Brasher Falls	13	Newton Falls	3
Brier Hill	5	Nicholville	4
Canton	92	Norfolk	29
Chase Mills	4	North Lawrence	9
Colton	6	Norwood	26
DeKalb Junction	14	Ogdensburg	171
Depeyster	2	Oswegatchie	1
Edwards	6	Parishville	7
Fine	2	Piercefield	2
Gouverneur	77	Potsdam	115
Hailesboro	1	Raymondville	2
Hammond	18	Rensselear Falls	9
Hannawa Falls	2	Richville	4
Harrisville	5	Russell	8
Helena	1	South Colton	1
Hermon	17	Star Lake	9
Heuvelton	11	Waddington	17
Lisbon	18	Winthrop	12
Madrid	17	Out of County	41
Massena	174	Out of State	8
Morristown	10	Unknown	63

Engaging New Voices

Renewal House
3 Chapel Street
Canton, NY 13617
315-379-9845

renewalhouse@verizon.net
www.slvrenewalhouse.org

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 2017 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: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please make checks payable to RENEWAL HOUSE and mail to:

3 Chapel Street, Canton, NY 13617.

Your support is greatly appreciated!

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