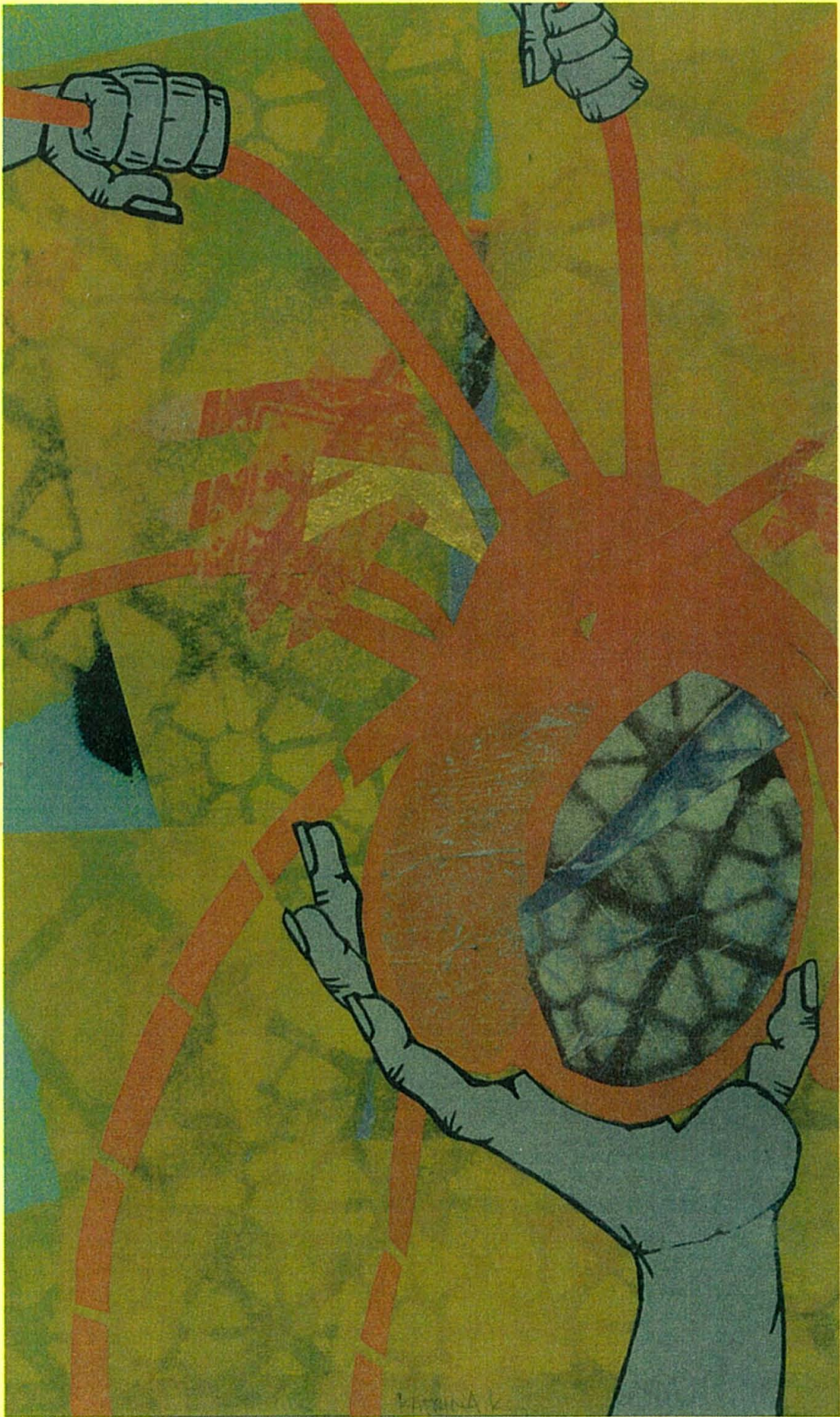


**FIGHT  
RAPE**

**DWOGS**

Dealing with OUR SHIT...







# Hello and Welcome!

Dealing With Our Shit is/was a male and male-identified anti-sexual assault group in Minneapolis. For the last 6+ years we taught each other, participated in workshops, organized other men, took training courses about sexual assault, networked and attended conferences, became rape crisis line volunteers and mentored perpetrators.

D.W.O.S. hopes that the following writings, thoughts, analysis' and interviews with our allies will provide you with ideas, critiques and action plans of your own. Please learn from our missteps and copy our successes.

Men and male-identified folks are all too rare of a sight when dealing with sexual assault in our communities. D.W.O.S. has been inspired by the hard work women have put in on this issue. We need more male role models (Men Can Stop Rape in D.C., A Call To Men in N.Y., Men's Anti-Violence Network in Duluth) who can help and inspire us to get involved in the struggle to end sexual violence.

It is not enough to know that rape is bad. We need to be pro-active and create an anti-rape culture that is pro-feminist, educational, understands the interlocking of oppressions, is committed and that builds trust. We, as men and male-identified people, need to take responsibility for a problem where over 90% of the perpetrators are MEN. Sooo, what are we waiting for? Start organizing!!

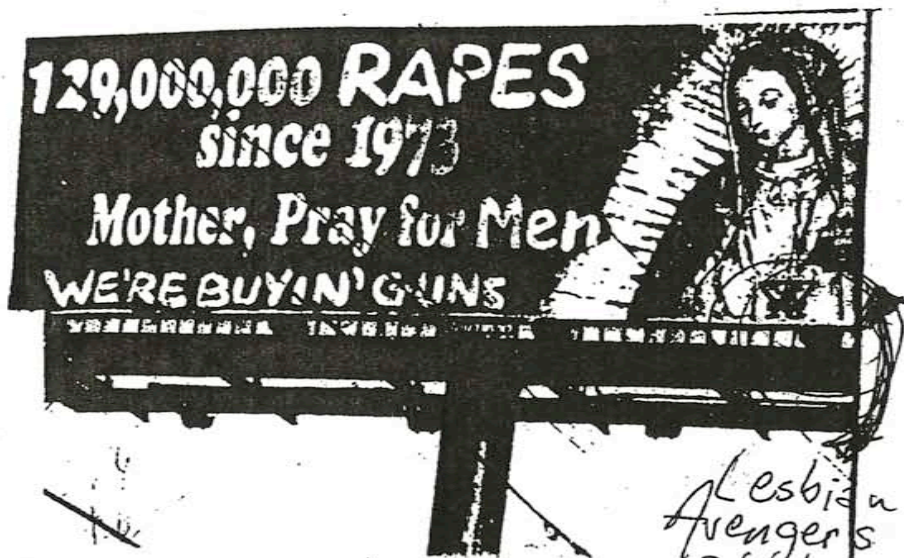




**B**

"WHAT IS A RAPE CULTURE? It is a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women *as the norm.*"

From Preamble of "Transforming a Rape Culture."



Super!

C



"When I hear about a rape close to me, I feel powerless and stunned. I wonder if I could have done anything to prevent it."

## DWOS

D.W.O.S. (Dealing With Our Shit/Sexism) is a male/male identified survivor centered group that strives to be anti-rape advocates, educators around issues of sexual assault and committed supporters of survivors and their allies. We promote positive sexuality, active consent and the challenging of oppressive behaviors. We're working on creating communities that demand accountability and empower survivors. D.W.O.S. is always seeking new members as well as other input from the community.

### FROM WHERE TO HERET

We formed, in April '02, in response to a series of sexual assaults in our community. We realized that most of us lacked education, understanding, awareness and that our responses to these assaults fell far short. We realized that sexual assault, community response and accountability were things that had been destroying various scenes for a long time. With that in mind we started having monthly topic meetings where we supported each other while learning and talking about such things as anger, porn, masculinity, homophobia and our roles in a rape culture. As we began to better understand the many dynamics involving sexual assault we also started reaching out as allies to anti-rape activists in our direct communities as well as professionals who shared their knowledge and guidance. This process went on for about a year and a half whereupon we started to think of the group focus moving from inward to outward. Ideas and projects such as information/resource sharing, workshops, community forums and working directly with perpetrators became higher priorities for D.W.O.S. Many of us have taken an intensive six week training through Sexual Offense Services to become rape crisis-line counselors. Community accountability and transparency have become important parts of our work as we strive to support survivors of sexual assault and make offender accountability open and real. We continue to struggle, educate, and challenge ourselves in working towards a world free from sexual assault.

#### Disclaimer

Confronting internalized issues of power and violence stemming from hegemonic masculinity is not a battle which can be outright won; members of this group are not cured, but must continue this work.



1

## Table of contents

Intro	1-3
Definitions	4-6
How and Why	7-23
Reaching Out	24-65
The Scene	66-93
Mentoring	94-118
Tool Box	119-132





"A friend of mine sexually assaulted someone, and I feel really betrayed- I mean, who can I trust?"

*core elements ...*

**Core elements of D.W.O.S.'s work:**

*Self Educate*

- Trainings/workshops
- Retreats
- Share resources

*Community Education*

- Presentations
- Dialogues

*Ally Building*

- Collaborating on events
- Engaging with professionals and community members that are working on issues of sexual violence

*Survivor Support*

- Confidentiality
- Reinforcement of the healing process
- Non-violence
- Listening to/respect survivors needs
- Taking action, within our boundaries to see that the needs of the survivor are met

*Accountability*

- Mentoring of perpetrators in a process of change
- Group accountability
- Accountability of mentors to each other

**What we have done already**

- DWOS assists accountability of perpetrators to the survivor's request, through regular mentoring meetings between perpetrators and group members.
- DWOS has facilitated, both independently and with other groups, educational workshops for the community.
- Many DWOS members have received training as sexual assault crisis-line advocates through SOS of Ramsey County; this both increases self-education and is a way for individuals to reach out to the larger community.

**Future Goals**

- create a zine for community education
- host more workshops and discussion nights with the community
- work at improving transparency and accountability of the group
- host a resource library in a public space

DWOS can be reached at:  
[dwoofightrape@gmail.com](mailto:dwoofightrape@gmail.com)





## GROUP AGREEMENTS

1. WE STRIVE TO BE ANTI-RAPE ADVOCATES, EDUCATORS AROUND SEXUAL ASSAULT ISSUES, AND COMMITTED SUPPORTERS OF SURVIVORS AND THEIR ALLIES. WE ARE COMMITTED TO PERSONAL EVALUATION, EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CREATING ALLIANCES.
2. RAPE IS AN ACT OF VIOLENCE AND POWER OVER ANOTHER THAT WE UNDERSTAND AS A CHOICE. AS AN ASPECT OF PATRIARCHAL SOCIAL CONTROL, SEXISM IS TOLERATED AND EVEN REWARDED BY SOCIETY. IT IS CLOSELY TIED TO OTHER SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION INCLUDING RACISM, CLASSISM, AND HETEROSEXISM.
3. SOCIETY DOES NOT EXPECT US AS MEN TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HURTFUL ACTIONS OF MEN. IT EXPECTS COMPLICITY AND SILENCE. WE DISAGREE. AS MEN, AND MALE-IDENTIFIED GENDERS WE HOLD EACH OTHER RESPONSIBLE - PERSONALLY AND COMMUNALLY - FOR OUR ACTIONS. IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES WE WANT TO BE PROACTIVE IN DEALING WITH SEXISM, MALE PRIVILEGE AND POWER DYNAMICS.
4. WE WANT TO SEE HEALTHY SEXUALITY AROUND US. WE SEEK WAYS TO MODEL NEW BEHAVIOR SUCH AS SPEAKING OUT AGAINST SEXIST ATTITUDES, CHALLENGING OPPRESSIVE BEHAVIORS, BEING HONEST EMOTIONALLY. WE CHALLENGE GENDER STEREOTYPES, HOMOPHOBIA, PREDATOR/PREY MENTALITY, AND MEDIA IMAGES OF BEAUTY.
5. WE ENCOURAGE PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE TO BE ACCOUNTABLE TO SURVIVORS, THEIR ALLIES, AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY. THIS MAY TAKE THE FORMS OF GROUP COUNSELING, MENTORING, AND THERAPY. WE CHALLENGE THE DESIRE OF MEN TO USE WORDS, POLITICAL THEORY, AND INTELLECTUAL PRIVILEGE TO AVOID DEALING WITH THE REAL DEVASTATING IMPACTS OF RAMPANT SEXUAL PREDATORY BEHAVIOR. WE COMMIT TO BEING IN DIALOGUE WITH ALLIES AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY IN MAKING OUR PROCESS OPEN AND REAL. WE TOO STRIVE TO BE ACCOUNTABLE. WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE LONG TERM PROCESS OF CHANGE AND EDUCATION INVOLVED IN DISMANTLING PATRIARCHY, BOTH INTERNALLY AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

## Why join?

-you want to join with others in our community in striving to raise awareness of sexual violence in ourselves and those around us.

-sexual assault has effected you or those close to you.

-confronting sexual assault is necessary for effective revolutionary action in communities:

-there is a vast prevalence of sexual violence in our culture:

- you see the statistics that Men commit 93-99% of all sexual assaults.
- There are more than 1 million rapes committed each year in the U.S.
- 80% of rape survivors know their attacker.
- Studies show that 10-20% of all males are sexually violated during their lives.



If you are interested in joining DWOS, email us or otherwise contact a member you know. The first step is a meeting between you and a couple members of the group. In this meeting, we will ask you about your interests in this topic and your experiences in dealing with sexual violence, both your own and of those around you.





# DEFINITIONS



## RAPE: DEFINING IT

Men Can Stop Rape believes in the importance of understanding both rape laws and alternative definitions of sexual violence.

### LEGAL DEFINITION

There are many different legal definitions of rape, often varying from state to state. Most legal systems define rape as some form of:

**Penetration (oral, anal, or vaginal) without consent and by force or threat of force.**

### FEMINIST DEFINITION

A more common definition of rape within the feminist community is:

**Unwanted sexual contact of any kind as defined by the survivor.**

### MCSR DEFINITION

Along with the feminist community, MCSR also emphasizes other crucial elements of rape. We define rape as:

- **sexualized violence (not simply rough, passionate sex)**
- **a way that men express anger**
- **a man's attempt to counter feelings of helplessness, shame and inferiority**
- **a weapon that men use to dominate and hurt women and other men**
- **a method used to maintain male power and privilege**
- **A MEN'S ISSUE**

"The dreadful rape epidemic of our times, which has become so widespread, that one out of every three women in this country can expect to be raped at some point during her life, directly reflects the deteriorating economic and social status of women today. Moreover this rising violence against women is related to domestic racial violence as well as to global imperialist aggression."

Angela Davis from "Violence Against Woman and the Ongoing Challenge of Racism." 1985



OPPOSE AND CONFRONT HOMOPHOBIA,  
TRANSPHOBIA AND GENDER OPPRESS-  
ION! THESE ATTITUDES FOSTER AN  
ENVIRONMENT THAT ALLOWS SEXUAL  
ASSAULT TO TAKE PLACE.

2

## pReNC 5.3 Sexual Assault Policy

### 1. Terms

*Consent:* Consent, sexual and otherwise, is necessary in the building of strong, healthy anti-authoritarian communities, and doing personal work to consistently seek consent and respect the times when it is not given helps to combat rape culture. The following do not qualify as consent: silence, passivity, and coerced acquiescence. Neither do body movements, non-verbal responses such as moans, or the appearance of physical arousal. Further, if someone is intoxicated, they may not be in a position to give you consent. Consent is required each and every time there is sexual activity, regardless of the parties' relationship, prior sexual history, or current activity.

"To us, consent is the continual process of explicit, verbal discussion, a dialogue, brief or extended, taken one step at a time, to an expressed "yes" by both parties and a shared acknowledgment that at this moment what we are doing together is safe and comfortable for each of us. Consent is what establishes that the interaction (including sex) is between equals in power. We feel safe enough to say anything we need to – without incapacitation of either party, coercion or threat, implied or actual – to protect ourselves from violation. Both parties are autonomous at each moment and can change their minds at any time. We share control of the situation with each other. Our responsibility is to be as sure as possible that what we are doing is not felt as violation."

From "Transforming a Rape Culture"





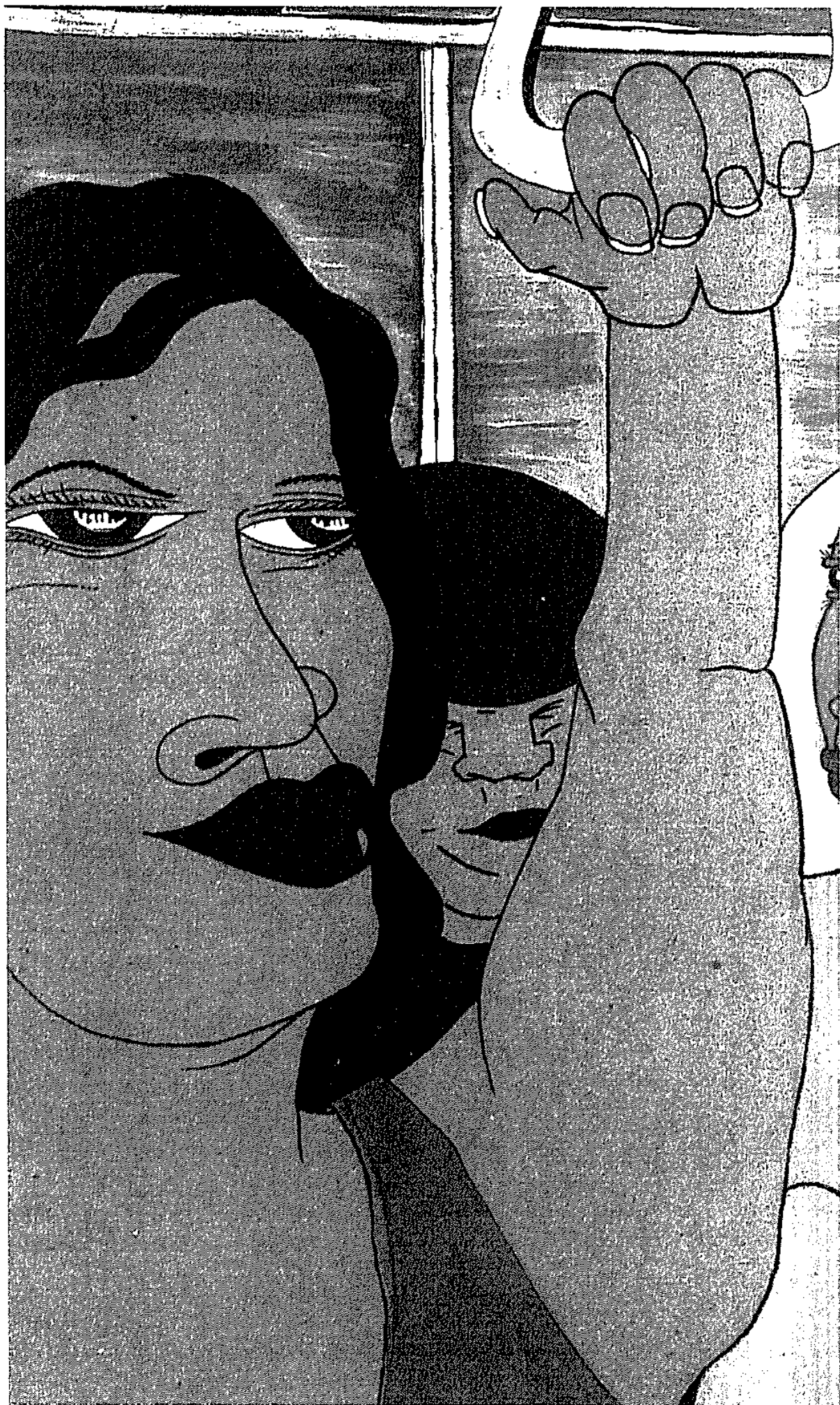
7

# HOW AND WHY

“ Even tonight and I need to take a walk and clear my head about this poem about why I can't go out without changing my clothes my shoes my body posture my gender identity my age my status as a woman alone in the evening/alone on the streets/alone not being the point/the point being that I can't do what I want to do with my own body because I am the wrong sex the wrong age the wrong skin and suppose it was not here in the city but down on the beach/or far into the woods and I wanted to go there by myself thinking about God/or thinking about children or thinking about the world/all of it disclosed by the stars and the silence:  
I could not go and I could not think and I could not stay there  
alone  
as I need to be  
alone because I can't do what I want to do with my own body and  
who in the hell set things up  
like this...”

excerpt from a poem by June Jordan entitled  
“Poem About My Rights”









Why would I want to do this?!

by Dang

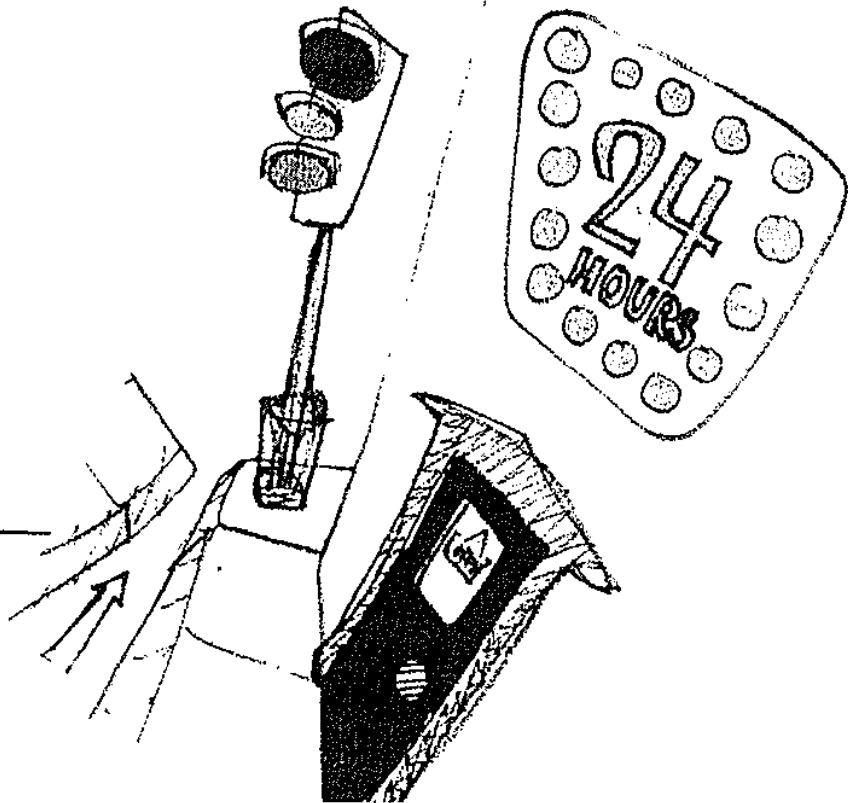
Over the first 10-12 to twelve years as an activist/organiser I grew to identify myself as a feminist, or at least a feminist ally. I had met many intelligent, powerful women who brought a lot to the different groups I was a part of. Honestly they inspired and intimidated me. My commitment to feminism was a lot of lip service though. I knew enough to say the right things but often didn't follow thru with actions. Basically I was half-steppin'. Once, a male activist asked me to join a group of men organising against rape. I had a strange and immediate sensation of my stomach knotting up and my face flushing red as I thought to myself "I've never raped anyone, what does it have to do with me?!"

Many years later I was part of a collective when word got out that one of the key men was accused of sexually assaulting a woman who was part of a bigger activist scene. Several of the men in the collective said things like "A good guy like him would never do a thing like that" or "What's a guy to do when a woman is lying naked in his bed?". Despite my half-steppin', I knew enough to know that those comments were seriously problematic. I had to look at my own complacency as



our collective struggled with the issue of sexual assault.

This particular assault was handled poorly by the activist scene. A "he said/she said" dynamic was prevalent and, in time, the guy who committed the assault left town. I was moved to initiate some conversations with other men I knew and respected. We agreed that rape and sexual assault occurred with some frequency and that the community usually responded poorly. After further discussion we decided to become more educated and involved. We realized that men and male-identified needed to come together and address the issues of rape, sexual assault, homophobia, male anger, pornography and other issues that affected us and our ability to be the allies we've always wanted to be. Dealing With Our Shit was born!



My Historical Involvement With DWOS...By Andrew

I became aware of the existence of DWOS after it had been a group for a year or so. The group was large in size, about a dozen or so men, and was meeting at the now-defunct Babylon Art Space on Lake Street. I had previously been apart of some anti-racist organizing with a couple of the group members, so it felt like a fluid transition to start meeting with men whom wanted to challenge the prevalence of sexual violence, as well as hopefully to work toward deconstructing the damaging effect that patriarchy has on all of us.

I specifically sought out DWOS in regards to a really traumatic sexual assault that took place in a community that I was close to. The perpetrator and the survivor were both close friends of mine, the survivor was an ex-partner of mine, and I was also there the in the vicinity the night that the assault took place. After finding out what had happened through a mutual friend, it was decided that three of us, those closest to the perpetrator, would confront him and hopefully deal appropriately with the situation. It's sadly ironic in hindsight, considering that to deal with the dynamics of sexual assault you need to have an idea of HOW to deal with it.

We met with him on two occasions. It was very much a confusing process, trying to hold a friend accountable and at the same time feeling a range of emotions- anger, betrayal, guilt, sadness, and more. It became clear after the two meetings that he wasn't going to admit what he did, therefore the process stalled. However, we didn't really have a process. We must've hoped that we could magically right all the wrongs. Unfortunately, both sides just parted ways indefinitely. Due to requests by the survivor, the perpetrator was never outed to the general community; this continues to be





the case some five or six years later I, personally, was left feeling a bit hopeless at the time and without direction as to what to do next. This is when I heard about the existence of DWOS; the three men closest to the perpetrator, myself included, started attending meetings soon thereafter.

Upon joining the group it became apparent to me that, besides sexual violence, patriarchy had and continues to have deep roots in not just our society, but also our so-called activist communities. Being a part of DWOS was something of a high learning curve, in that most of my ideology and consciousness around oppression was seen through a narrow lens. Or more poignantly, that oppression and rape culture pertains to all men no matter how seemingly socially aware we may be. This reframing of the debate, so to speak, was my jump-off point for five or so years of fairly continuous work and self-reflection within the men's group.

One of the most intense and necessary parts of doing anti-patriarchal work within the group was that of mentoring perpetrators. Usually at the request of survivors and an alternative to banishment from the community or physical violence, two tactics that are proven to NOT work, mentoring was viewed as a way to hold perpetrators accountable. It also was a process that kept the mentors accountable as well, because the awareness gleaned from mentoring was helpful in shedding light on the role that all men play within a rape culture. In other words, our involvement in the mentoring process was not that of righteousness, but rather humility in the face of our relationship to privilege and patriarchy. This is a continuing educational process that I foresee being a part of my whole life. The political is indeed personal.



(2)

(Martin Buber) "I-You, can only be spoken with one's whole being" (over)

Not



(From a paper on, males in the anti-violence, anti-rape movement.)

"Kelli D", grad student: Macalester College, interviewing V13

How I Got Involved in Doing Sexual Violence Prevention, and Helping To Organize D.W.O.S (Dealing With Our Shit / Sexism)

In my circle of friends, was a person who trained with S.O.S. - Sexual Offense Services of Ramsey County. She volunteered as a Rape Crisis Counselor, also she shared what she had learned, with victims and others affected by sexual violence - in political/social, "alternative" communities, in town. Sometimes in the form of Circles.\* Emily was the "go-to" person in these various circles that connected many of us anarchist, and anti-authoritarian, activists, Queers, or counter-cultural types. No one else was stepping up! ... she finally persuaded Dan G. (who contacted David M. and myself), and we three got organized and started addressing how to increase male/men's involvement, in supporting victims of assault, to learn prevention strategies, and share in the struggle to end sexual violence as brothers-in-allies, and co-creators, with our sisters.

We were feeling sick and angry about our friends and community members being violated and oppressed - too often, by males in "scenes", and inside of radical contexts, who (it seemed) "should have known better." We realized that we needed to, "put the money where the mouth is." So we put this call out to men: that since men commit ninety-plus percent of rapes, it has to be down to men (and anyone benefiting from male privilege), to step up and make it known, that men must challenge this culture of violence and coercion which all males benefit from even if most don't perpetrate. "Rape Culture" identified by feminists as, interlocking oppressions dependent on patriarchal or militant/male dominated, self-perpetuating, male (and white, Western) domination of all spheres of life - which manifests in the subjugation of, first, women - but essentially of all things "Female" ("Other"): cool of queers, children, transgender folks, non-western peoples, non-white communities. Rape culture is media, and biased school curriculum. It is indifference, ignorance, many things...

\* community circle - modeled after First Nations, Native practices. (see interview with Dave Matthews). Also: Restorative Practices. (Interview with "M" by V13).

13 Notes to while the opposite is true of, I-It,  
that it can never be spoken with one's  
whole being." (Derrick Jensen)

I need to dream of a world free of oppression. To envision  
it daily. And then to put this vision into practice. I myself  
am a survivor of sexual abuse in childhood. There was  
a time I needed hope, and support to heal - it was  
only natural to me that I should give, and hold a  
place of healing for others.

With D.W.O.S. emerging as a safe place and place  
for healing, we dudes (♂) made space to reciprocate  
this care and support. Being that we were,  
really, joined together by our sensitivity (and in des-  
peration of what to do), we prioritized a few key,  
mutually agreed upon steps or commitments. First,  
to create a "male-identified" group. It was willfully  
pro-Queer, and Trans-mal (and/or, Trans-person-iden-  
tifying-with-men, and benefiting in some way from  
gender supremacy). We minority participants had a  
voice(s) from the start. Were why D.W.O.S. was never just a

Our focus was/is on education and solidarity, lead-  
ing to more of us taking, and making, pro-liberation  
and affirming stances with the message: We Can  
Stop Rape. A "consciousness" which affirms males  
as, We Who Are versus, We Who Do, took root...

There is a lot more awareness - or, maybe I mean,  
less tolerance - of how predatory sexual behavior  
is normalized, in so many areas of life we (over-  
reachingly), term, Culture. Rape Culture is as  
much about, those with the 'license' to take, and  
to control, as it is about individual choices com-  
bined with systems of oppression...

We agreed that men & we agreed that some of us,  
Queer/gay, and Transgender, and gender-queer  
folks, have a responsibility to take our stances  
for peace, and against militant heterosexism  
and racism, being that our non-white allies have  
been bearing that weight: object of violence,  
and a key agent of change. "Men" educating men.  
Whites, educating whites...

Over the years we developed approaches which then  
framed liberation, and social justice, in the context of  
anti-rape, anti-violence culture. Cooperative culture.

© 2004 Planetree



1/24

### MEN'S GROUP DIALOGUE TRANSCRIPT

Dan Griffin  
WOST 5103  
12/11/02

For the past 4 months I've been involved in a men's dialogue group formed to address issues of sexism and sexual assault within anarchist and alternative communities in the Twin Cities. We meet one night a month to have facilitated discussions on topics chosen by the group, which so far have included Defining Sexual Assault, What Is Healthy Sexuality, and Homophobia & Masculinity. We haven't had a very clear model to follow since it seems that men getting together to discuss sexism and masculinity from a perspective that is both political and personal is somewhat rare.

Below is the transcript of this dialogue between myself and three other men's group participants which took place on December 8, 2002. I served as the facilitator and also took part in the discussion.

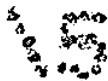
Dan: What is the men's group and where did it come from?

Vi: The men's group is a series of monthly combination workshop/discussion groups. We meet at a collective space called Babylon. It came from... it stemmed from really what felt like a lack of involvement on the part of males in really confronting incidents of sexual assault or misbehavior in certain underground communities and within collectives. Sort of on the one hand women wondering when guys were gonna step up and provide support and help, and then also y'know the kind of educational even confrontational stuff that needs to happen when there's a...y'know somebody—a male in this case—in a scene that's acting inappropriately towards...in this case actually, a woman. There were several incidents that were finally addressed, but not well. So when David approached me to let me know what was going on it was with the intention of looking at where the process—when folks tried to address it before—where it went wrong, where were the weak spots.

And building on strengths—for instance they'd use the talking circle—and so we looked at what worked and what didn't work. But this was really an effort to hold men accountable—and male-identified folks, 'cause we wanted to be inclusive of transgendered people and guys like me who don't identify as a man...y'know in between—how to be accountable and creative and do some problem solving together. So that's my take on it.

David: I think that one of the real strong reasons why it happened—other than responding to some really messed up situations of sexual assault and abuse within the scene—was definitely feeling like in the last 4 or 5 years, particularly since the Minehaha Free State here in town and the stuff that happened in Seattle and the whole anti-globalization movement, that there's a real springing up of a new wave of anarchism or whatever you want to call it. A lot of people identifying with anarchism, but kind of the fuck shit up purely anti-authoritarian anarchism, without looking at a lot of the traditions of anarchism that have to do with accountability through organization and having structures in which you hold yourself to certain standards of anti-oppression work—and each other—and its an ongoing educational process. But for me personally, having been here in Minneapolis for a while now and having been really influenced by a lot of folks—y'know, like the late 80's and early 90's—who in turn had been influenced by people before them. There was a real tradition of collectives and there was a real tradition of sort of broad anti-oppressive work, and it really felt like that was missing within the current scene and actually looked down at. Looked down on as sort of PC-ness and weak-mindedness and all this stuff. And I think it's tried to create and foster a culture in which, no this is actually the norm. This is what it means to be an anarchist is to have a series of





accountability within our own small circles and then between interdependent circles within our communities. And figuring out how to be allies, really, in this work and trying to build up a culture that really deals with trust, too. And that has to do with accountability and feeling like, okay people are not only giving lip service to these things and saying how, well we're really against patriarchy—or whatever it is—but actually having structures in which we are looking at the ways in which patriarchy replicates itself within radical movements, or within movements that are trying to be counter-cultural on any level. So to me the men's circle came out of trying to really deal with specifics and address some immediate situations.

Vi: The poster. You guys made up some posters when we were gonna kick it off and the posters said: "come, men deal with your shit," right? Or "our shit." "Men deal with our shit." And something like 18 guys—men and trannies and a male-identified biologically female person. Anyway they showed up in part because the poster was really... y'know, whatever, it just said: "deal with your shit."

Robert: I guess for me there's sort of two main reasons sort of that I got interested in the group and that it was important to me. And the first is—sort of tying into what you said—is that there's a specific certain type of militancy that was sort of around, that was tied into a particular form of masculinity that was not thought out at all. And I remember years before, both when I was at PSO and at the Emma Center that feminism was part of a day-to-day discourse and it had utterly disappeared. So I think that was one of the reasons that I was really interested in it is to get back to a type of activism where we recognize that we're gendered instead of unconsciously replicating that. The second is the way that I had been seeing sexual assault being dealt with, because we weren't even dealing with the horrible way people were treating each other on gender lines—men to women and men on men—was the fact that an incident of sexual assault would come up and everybody would sort of run around with their heads cut off and try to do something and it would calm down and then another one would come up. And I thought it was really good that we had something where this is something that we deal with all the time and its sort of like its always an issue, instead of dealing with it after the moment of crisis had passed. Also, I don't know... I was in a situation where I was trying to deal with it and I had no idea what to do and it was just good to sort of get some language and basic things like that. So those were sort of the reasons I think the group started.

Dan: For me I think this men's group was really... allowed me to reconnect with the anarchist scene here in Minneapolis because I feel like I had become pretty disillusioned and disconnected from it.

Vi: I wanted to say that another one of the reasons I felt like becoming involved in this effort was to try and build some queer-heterosexual male solidarity and I knew in order to do that its first necessary to really hear each other and see how people feel, where there at with their gender identity. Y'know, how comfortable are queer boys talking about gender

issues with hetero boys and vice versa. I remember back when I was in the Emma collective I would wear a skirts or dresses a lot and I was just like a lightning rod for community curiosity and also anger and rage because of my breaking down gender expectations. And at the time I didn't get much support from hetero guys, y'know? They were about fighting sexism, but they were very heterosexist in their attitudes about that. There was a men's group that got together and they were doing some... y'know it was good work for guys to get together and talk about sexism, but it was always with women in mind—or with each other in mind—and if they said, yeah we should look at y'know reaching out to gay men because they get harassed too because of all this stuff... but it was just lip service because, do you guy's have any gay friends? Any intimate gay friends? No. Why is that? Well, maybe its because you're into this macho fuck shit up approach and you're not going to find to many gay boys who are doing that. ♪





a... we didn't know. Guys get together, isn't somebody gonna accuse somebody and isn't there gonna be a fight, maybe? [laughs]

Robert: But people really—even in that first group—people really pushing themselves. It was hard but it was there, y'know? And it was also like people were saying like, "oh, I'll see you later," to people they never would talk to before and I thought that even in that one there was a sense of people being closer, even the people who haven't showed up again. So even there—I think there were problems I agree—but even there I felt like it was a lot better than most things of that sort I've been to.

David: Well... and for me one of the really interesting things too is that, —rather than having a purge oriented philosophy, or a better-than-thou philosophy, or that sort of thing of like we're gonna go beat up all the people who represent this whatever within us—it's more sort of that internal introspection thing about like okay wow... what is sexual assault? Maybe the ways that I've seen it are just out of one window of my own way of looking at it. And then we bring in all these other people and we see all the other impacts of sexual assault—or a lot of the other impacts—on y'know... on women and on men and things that really impact on like a deeper psychological level but then it's like this is the type of group where out of that comes a discussion of well y'know how does assumptions around being... y'know feeling as if people are entitled to sexual interactions or whatever tie into other forms of oppression, tie into homophobia, tie into racism, tie into all these other ways... and y'know not sort of just in this super heady way of "I understand that oppressions are interlinked," but "how is it that I feel about this?" y'know and feeling like that's something where we have real dialogues about our life stories, about y'know how its impacted us y'know in different ways.

And so to me its like different than a therapy group, but its sort of like taking the political to like a deeper level...

Vi: Exactly!

Vi: I think it speaks to our approach... We wanted to look at educating ourselves—what are the terms? What's the difference between... y'know when do we say something is a rape? Okay it involves penetration, blah blah blah. When do we say something's sexual assault? What all does that include? And what if it's not either of those? How do we deal with that? We don't have a language for it because we don't really understand what it's being called. And then there's legal terminology too that some of us didn't know. And I think we wanted to... kind of we had as a goal to imagine scenarios or recreate scenarios—the party, the collective meeting, the bus ride with the... y'know somebody being harassed. We wanted to imagine scenes from our daily lives, and we analyzed those in some of the workshops by going around with a scenario—"here's the scene, what do you see?" And by saying these basic questions—"what do you see? what's your perception? what are you allowing yourself to see? what have you been trained not to see?"—we went around and we really kind of opened each other's eyes to how things are... how it is that, women being assaulted for instance, can be so invisible because there's ways that we're really really trained—indoctrinated—to not see what's going on. And we don't see... I know from my own experience I don't see outside of my safe zone. If I feel like I can't deal with it, it's harder to see outside of that.



16

Y'know there's something in between, where if you don't have a dialogue and you don't sit down and talk about your intention and your needs and stuff, its not gonna happen./

David: Eternally there was this voice going on that was like, wow I feel pretty repulsed by a lot of aspects of the current scene, but then being like, okay what is my accountability to that scene, y'know. And to me it was almost like—not like payback—but recognizing how much the collectives and the work that people did in the late 80's and early 90's gave to me as far as tools and language and just a sense of the world. Like you were saying Robert too about how these things were like the foundations on which things grew, and that didn't mean we didn't have problems and sexism, homophobia—all these things came up—but there was this foundation of, okay we are going to be committed to at least trying to deal with this... this stuff.

Vi: Well, we said that space is confidential—what you hear here—and that was part of setting some... sort of some ground rules so that we all feel comfortable talking and y'know just being real and authentic and not just saying what's supposed to be said or what you think people want to hear. So we try to reinforce for each other that what's going on here is confidential—we need to respect each other in terms of listening and how we listen to each other, but also to challenge each other to open up and to risk going places in terms of our... y'know how does our behavior match with our... what we're saying and stuff like that. Y'know, challenge each other to move into... to take some risks where we might not have before because there's no... there's nothing to lose in this situation. Y'know what I'm saying?

David: Yeah. I think that one of the things that some of the core group that works with this men's group tried to do is to get people to think about assumptions, privilege, entitlements. I mean... but also just, like was said earlier y'know, we don't talk about the issue except in crisis mode. We don't talk about it except in reactionary mode y'know in which everyone's defenses are super high and people are trying to take sides and figure out what's going on and all that stuff. But like really trying to get into the depths of what is sexual assault? Y'know, what are the services out there already in the communities that we can avail ourselves of to educate ourselves? And recognize that even though we're against the system and we're against everything wrong y'know, out there in the world, that we have a lot to learn... I mean, I have a lot to learn about this stuff and I feel like this group has really been educational in that way for me. We brought in some women who work with sexual... y'know survivors of assault, who do education around these things with statistics and definitions and all these things which y'know are super important to understand. But then also—because I think this group is unique for me in the way that it also deals with like the politics of who we are, and all that is trying to get at y'know how is it that sexual assault is an act of violence and political violence and how does it like break down trust within our communities? How does it create... y'know just really tears us apart, y'know?... in a lot of ways, but also trying to get at things. A sexual assault is kind of one of those areas where you can put out there with big sign and say: "this is wrong. Okay this is something that we can agree on." But for me one of the best things about the men's group has been looking at ways that we've been socialized, ways in which there are other assumptions within the activist scene—there are certain ways of relating, there are certain norms—all these things that are based on y'know straight male privilege. And that really impacts our ability to be allies and to be real with each other and all that stuff.



I think that we still have a ways to go around figuring out how we're accountable to women within our scene with like the work that we're doing. And that's something that's been brought to my attention by different women like "okay, its great that you're doing this..."—and I'm hoping at some point once we've done more of our work figuring out the ways of... like bridging that, like you were saying, taking it out into the broader community and being like, okay this is the work we're doing y'know and offering it in some way that has more of an impact. But from a personal educational standpoint it's been really powerful.

Dan: Maybe we can move into how the approach towards sexual assault of the men's group has reflected these various issues and concerns that we've been bringing up...

Robert:

I think the matter of honesty has been the thing that has really amazed me. And it's a thing that going in I was really worried about and it was something that I tried to commit myself to. 'Cause I guess I've seen far too often... sort of the game of what is the right answer being played, and it hasn't happened.

Vi: Yeah. And it also hasn't—like outsiders who wonder about what's going on, what we're doing—it isn't a therapy group.

y'know its therapeutic in ways but I think the myths... some of the myths about what would a guys group do together... y'know I'm sure a little of that bears out.

Dan: For me a really critical part of our whole approach to sexual assault has been... I guess coming at it from a more positive and holistic way of... rather than seeing sexual assault as a problem of y'know apprehending and punishing specific sexual offenders, who are seen as y'know a bad apple or someone that needs to be removed from the scene, and that the scene is basically good, but we just need to remove these bad individuals from it in order to protect ourselves. And instead of that kind of approach we've really been looking at sexual assault as something that results from unequal power dynamics and from our inability to communicate with each other about our needs and emotions and we've really... I think we've really made it a space where, like you were saying Vi, we don't have anything to lose and its not a matter of... its not this dire situation of like y'know is this person going to be found guilty or not, y'know do we need to punish this person or not, but its more like we all need to... We all need to deal with things within ourselves that... in order to be able to have healthy relationships with each other and in order to have a healthy community and that... that there's no reason why we shouldn't start to engage in that process and bring these things out. And we've created a space where we can feel comfortable y'know expressing to each other various y'know embarrassing or y'know oppressive y'know thoughts or experiences we've had or participated in. Because we understand that we're moving towards trying to y'know heal ourselves and each other and build a new kind of community for ourselves and so its seen as y'know taking positive steps forward to address these things, rather than a negative y'know sort of dirty thing that we have to y'know clear out of the way. | Vi: its also not, "okay we talked for 5 minutes, let's go chop wood now. [laughs] Y'know its none of those things. So here's a group that's creating its own... kind of a... something for the dialogue... something on which the dialogue... in which it can occur and on which it can rest so that you don't have to start over again and go through all of that discomfort each time you get back together y'know? You can kind of pick up that thread without a whole lot of official or awkward y'know whatever. And nobody plays games. I think in the beginning some people were on edge and I think that comes from our fear of, "I'm gonna be the one that's held accountable for all these types of problems because—oh god I used to do that," or somebody y'know thinking that, "well they're gonna find out that I y'know sexually assaulted somebody once upon a time," and that kind of thing was a little bit there in the beginning, don't you think? I think it was much more of a kind of



nineteen

Next time I go to a benefit party where I probably won't know a bunch of people I might see some people that I know, even just from once or twice from one of these groups, and I think my comforts gonna be a little more there. Y'know being identified as "oh there's that queer guy," y'know "what's he doing here?" or whatever. I'm probably gonna feel like maybe someone will back me up if there's an incident involving some macho fuck who whatever or somebody... some guys are sitting around going "oh that is so gay! I can't believe it!" and I want to confront that... you know we have an agreement within the group that we're gonna... we haven't totally worked it out yet, but we certainly have the intention to have an agreement where we actively support each other in situations when we feel we want to challenge an oppressive dynamic and I think that's a really empowering thing. I think that's really tough and I like that.

Dan: So do we want to address the question of where we see this group going or how we see it fitting into some of these larger questions about accountability and organizing and y'know how the discussions we've been having fit into larger programs of action or education?

David: Well y'know I guess for myself there's certainly ways in which I think when we first were getting together y'know I sort of had... went into that mode of the ten year plan or like whatever it is, y'know? "About ten years from now..." And more and more its become sort of the month-to-month. Figuring out y'know like the real dialogue that

comes out and then out of that meeting we have some concept of like y'know we'd like to address homophobia, we'd like to address racism, we'd like to address a bunch of issues that really impact the community.

I feel like what this men's group is really doing for me is really challenging me as an organizer. And what I mean by that is because y'know it's like getting back to that foundation of y'know just trying to be... to form the accountability, to form the bonds, to do all that. But like recognizing how y'know there are certain circles in which y'know like there's sort of like a certain politics or there's a certain whatever whether its police brutality work, or its y'know immigrants' rights work, or it's whatever it is... This circle for me is like about building and living integrity.

How is it that everything that I'm taking in around gender dynamics, or around homophobia issues, and around racism issues—how is that informing how I try not only to challenge myself, but to challenge the situations that I'm in to try and build links between groups that maybe don't even work together at this point but could be allies.

Like I said earlier, definitely developing like broader more... like y'know accountability with each other and then eventually more accountability with like the broader scene or community or whatever that is.

But its been powerful just for me challenging me on the internal level, like okay, this is the world I want to see. This is the world I want to be in. And if that's the case it's actually sort of in a strange way like a support group for that...

And that's part of y'know going from your your anarchist individualists and friends comfort zones to going out into the communities and saying "I have some... I'm ready to do some work and I think I know what it is you're doing but I'd like to see where we can help each other and be allies towards... moving it towards this next step. 'Cause you wanted us to get involved but we didn't really have a base and now we do," or something.



Dan: I think a really important thing that we're building here is the idea that...that supporting ourselves as individuals trying to...trying to do work on ourselves and trying to address our own issues... that that is connected to political organizing and that being able to have men get together and talk about sexual assault and sexism is a necessary piece of being able to do organizing about police brutality. Or that y'know... that a men's group and a women's group being able to dialogue and exchange y'know thoughts, is part of necessary work towards y'know what either group is trying to do in a larger sense. And that it's not... y'know a lot of times we try and create all these divisions. "Oh you just talk and you don't take action," or "you just do therapy and you don't have an analysis," or... you know we try and like separate these things.

Vi: "You're an artist but you're not an activist so..."

Dan: And I feel like this group has been an example of trying to bring all those things together. Trying to bring together y'know reading theory with discussing personal experiences with sharing emotions with talking about y'know projects for organizing and issues of accountability and trying to relate all these things together as a whole without trying to break them apart into little pieces.

Robert: Yeah, I mean we can't be the truth and justice commission, but we can try with each other to become different people and by working with other people, have them become other people. I think that's ultimately... I think there's a number of ways that we could do that and doing outside projects will aid in that, but I think that's ultimately what we need to do.

Vi: And personally, my own intention is to... in whatever outside work we do—maybe it's going to a school and talking to boys... to boys and girls—is y'know I want to name it: it's anti-violence work. And I want to do whatever little bit I can to counter the objectification of girls and women and the militarization of boys and male solidarity only happening around conflict and crisis involving anger and violence. And I want for girls to understand that they can have the angers of emotion and y'know that boys can feel vulnerable and sad and cry. Y'know I think that's all like the kinds of... I'd just like to see guys take on some of the... some of what would be, in this culture, considered traditional women's work—mothers' work, nurses' work, teachers' work—and challenge that, y'know? I think that's one very basic thing that we can do.

Part of having a supportive environment and educating ourselves is so that we can just really be real and be authentic—so that for myself anyway—I can make a difference in a world that I want to recreate into a world of beauty where boys can appreciate beauty and balance—and that involves balance between the genders within ourselves—and joy. Y'know it's a world that's so full of despair and in trying to... in how we struggle against totalitarianism—against all these oppressions—we end up being manipulated into the position of always being against and being anti. Y'know I don't look at resistance as always being opposed to bad things. I look at my resistance as going underneath it if I have to or around it and creating alternatives to it. Creating beauty, creating communities, and dialogues within communities that don't use those old dichotomies of gay/straight, masculine/feminine, and all that stuff. We haven't talked yet about some of the things we talk about in the actual groups, like the feminization of victims and how men will keep silent about being victimized if they're assaulted and the cops come and they realize they're gonna have to like tell, they'll often times not do it and so on and so forth.





21

Robert: Day-to-day conversations...

Vi: Day-to-day stuff, exactly! Yeah, just being heard sometimes involves talking over somebody, interrupting. Y'know there's things that we do that we're just so conditioned to do. Who's gonna want to work with us if we haven't gotten some decent communication skills, y'know? And where is it in the schools where it's written that girls must learn to communicate and gay people must learn to communicate and anticipate in order to survive... but y'know why is it that one gender gets all this pressure to learn the nurturing and the communication and the peace-making and the bridge-building skills and the other gender is supposed to y'know...

David: Burn the bridge... [laughs]

Vi: Burn the bridges! Or manipulate the bridge-builders and have the clip board and tell them how to do it... I don't know... Yeah, yeah.

Robert: Yeah, I mean... I always think of this—I don't know I think it was an interview with dear old Michel Foucault and he's just talking about... with extreme sort of longing in a way that men don't have modes of loving each other and communicating with each other in the way that women do and this is something he... even reading it you could just feel the sort of loss... maybe it's my feeling that I'm putting upon him, but at the same time I think that's there. And I think that's one of the things I like about the group a lot, is that I'm involved in communications with men that aren't competitive. Where I'm not like trading impressive quotes about this or that, y'know? And it's sort of... I always feel a deep love for everyone after doing that. And honestly there's points in day-to-day conversation where I'd rather talk to women, because I feel like I'm a better person. This is one of the few situations with men where I feel that same thing. Anyway...

Vi: Well as one of the facilitators, I have to say that from the first to now I've seen a wonderful and marked dynamic shift, from a more compare and compete discussion—"okay, damn he said that and that was where I was really gonna have some authority in, y'know, talking about that one area and damn, he said it so well."

And one of the things that keeps coming back to me too is just that y'know—it's gonna sound really life stylist of me—but there's this process that we're in and that y'know it's not like anyone that I knew in the early 90's during that great mythic anarchist utopia that we all lived in in the Twin Cities really had their shit together, okay? But because there was a culture supporting, questioning the oppressions or whatever, for me in my personal development I feel like I made huge leaps and bounds and realized that in the last couple years y'know it's like being in this wasteland or being in this situation where there's this whole other culture that's sort of developing. And to me one of the interesting things is gonna be seeing how the translation and the dialogue happens between people who are maybe more resistant to a lot of these ideas. Or don't really see males bonding in this way. People have a very set... I mean this is very fun for me what we're doing right now. Y'know it's totally bonding and we're not sweating, we're not breaking a sweat or doing whatever it is we're supposed to do to bond. Like once again, that breaks down a lot of the myths. That gets into like y'know "guys don't do that, that's not fun," but it is, it's totally fun, and not only is it fun but it sparks things in you, y'know? And it's exciting... And scary and exciting all at the same time. But it's about challenging power.

David: And have fun doing it.  
Vi: Oof! Yeah. [laughs]

end



By Robert W

Taken from the perspective of its goals, the men's group was a failure, albeit an interesting one. The goals of the group were fairly ambitious, which were directed towards trying to deal with sexism and sexual violence within the activist community in both a comprehensive and sustained fashion. These goals were created in response to the crisis created in the anarchist community around questions of consent and sexual assault. Those responses were sporadic, unorganized, and were generally communicated through rumor and innuendo. We wanted to try to create a space that would deal seriously with the implicit questions about gender and sexuality brought up in the spate of conflicts that started with the Minnehaha free state and expanded with the brief renewal of activism around anti-globalization. This explosion in activity had brought a lot of new activists into the community, and those new faces had very little to no connection to feminism. We wanted to link those activists and ourselves to that tradition and to create structures that would allow for that critical consciousness to be reproduced.

The main mechanism that we used could probably be called consciousness raising, although I'm not sure that we ever used the word explicitly. Meetings would be organized around topics. Someone would make some introductory remarks and then the floor would be opened to allow for discussion. To be honest, I don't remember the topics that we discussed, and to a certain extent, the precise topics themselves weren't all that important, what was important was the process in which they were discussed. The meetings were meant to be a way of creating new forms for men to talk, listen, and critically engage with one another. This process of communication became a way to try to re-imagine what a community of men could be. It tried to undercut the modes of competition that influence so much of the unthought of our ways of interacting as men, and tried to create a communal space that emphasized cooperation and responsibility. Or to put it another way, it tried to take the anarchist concept of mutual aid seriously and return to a central place in the creation and continuity of a community.

To me, the precondition for this to exist was a certain type of vulnerability. Anti-globalization had returned a certain type of militancy, something that I still remember with some fondness, but that militancy had the negative effect of undermining the important social ties that were the precondition to that militancy. This militancy increasingly became a pose with a blank male face, as the links to queer and feminist organizing became muted. The blank face that we showed to the police increasingly became the face that we showed each other. We lost the possibilities that existed in showing each other our fear, our insecurities, our questions, and our misunderstandings. In short, a masked face became a stand in for the radical transformation of everyday life, and that destruction could be linked to both the acceptance of media interpretations of who we were, but more significantly, the way that so many men didn't recognize or refused to recognize the need to transform the way they engaged with the world as men in order to transform the world.

Within the group, this ethical obligation was linked to a feeling of anxiety and a sense of vertigo. I had felt that these questions had been dismissed in the past few years, not through outright rejection, but through empty ritual. Sexism, homophobia, etc. had become something that could be exorcised through a set of rote statements, the kind of laundry list that one finds at the beginning of any leftist group's founding statement. The kind of discomfort that comes from thinking about the ways that those modes of domination and exploitation operate in our lives and assumptions. My anxiety and confusion came from the productive attempt to try to re-establish this kind of critical engagement with these questions of my own life and genuinely engage with other folks as they tried to do the same thing. Just as importantly, I tried to break old habits of



communication, to listen without the anxiety about when I could speak and to engage with a conversation on its own terms, rather than my terms.

This engagement that we attempted is obviously one that has precedents, primarily within feminism. It's remarkable how quickly it has been forgotten, but there was a time in the early seventies when the kind of group we created could be found in every city, suburb, and even town in the United States and beyond through feminist consciousness raising. These groups were generally small, without immediate goals, and uncelebrated, however they were the precondition for the transformation of gender relations within the country that hasn't been completely undone, despite thirty years of backlash and counter-revolution. It's not that we should celebrate this movement uncritically. The movement had its own contradictions, problems, racisms, and moralisms, however it should remind us that the political is continually linked to the everyday. Our ability to recognize that and to create spaces in which we can experiment and create new forms of life may not be a revolutionary politics in itself, but it is the precondition to any genuine revolutionary politics.

To return to my introductory statement, the men's group was a failure in its stated goals. There is no sustainable project that continues today in its name. My suspicion is that the new anarchists of the Bush administration are probably as ignorant of feminist and anarchist traditions as the new anarchists of anti-globalization. Perhaps, it's a more damning sign that I simply have no idea one way or another. There are some serious questions that are outside the purview of this essay that need to be posed around the question of sustainability of anarchist organizing. To be honest, given the lack of resources and structure, those goals may have been an impossibility, but to the extent that the people left as different individuals gives some value to the experiment.

## THE D.W.O.S. FILES

A radical guide to  
transform rape culture  
for ordinary people, brothers  
and sisters, agitators and  
organizers, artists, healers,  
lovers & teachers



1/4

# REACHING OUT







vize, GLOSSARY of OUTREACH,  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING and DEVELOPMENT

(or as much as i can recall anyway!)

\*\*\*1\*\*\* IMPACTS OF INTIMATE VIOLENCE.  
Workshop for collectives and small communities.

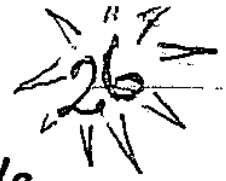
We wanted to learn, and then demonstrate consensus-building and awareness around making our public spaces, communal/cooperative households, and collectively held worker places Safer Space for survivors.

Roughly forty people attended. Held at Patrick's Cabaret, a Queer (and hetero-friendly) theater space in south Minneapolis. In an old fire station which once held the old Firehouse, radical Left experimental/hippie theater of the 1970's. (They used to stage naked theater and "encounters" says Martha Boesing- former member; and Co-Founder of At The Foot Of The Mountain/Women's Theater Project)

Afterwards I heard a bit of grumbling about some of the group excercises, and about one or two persons who evidently hogged attention, in the small-group breakouts. Alot of folks held heated and provocative dialogues in their circles, discussing a particular theme they had been assigned/chosen. DWOS guys ; and Emily floated from circle to circle as "vibes watchers," and time keepers.

Everyone I talked to later had been engrossed in one aspect or another- Emily's intro with her thorough analysis of interlocking oppressions; white privilege being the most talked-about. It acted as -or she was- a catalyst. Issues flowed.





CLIFFEST 2003(?) organizers: The Breast Brigade.  
♀ Punk activists. DWOS: Accountability, male allies.

Autonomy; feminism and Anarchy; moms and kids  
-and guys, too- of diy Punk, skills-shares; work-  
shops and discussions; massage; and more.  
With BANDS!

Held between Patrick's Cabaret, and Resource  
Center of The Americas (across the street).

\*\*\*3\*\*\* "S.O.S! + DWOS" for Women's History  
Month. Cabaret and all-genders celebration of  
wimmin. At a (Lesbian-owned) coffee shop in  
downtown Minneapolis, "Kilted Coffee" (where the  
barrista boy actually flirted while kilted and  
I got jilted). Vi/David, for DWOS, Samantha Smart  
for S.O.S. Smitten Kitten sponsored.

Performers included: River's Edge Playback  
Theater; spoken-word artist and African American  
and TransWoman and Community Organizer talent,  
Andrea Jenkins; Grace Darling- and more.  
All proceeds to the performers. (Note: S.O.S. = "Speak  
Out Sisters!" Smitten Kitten = wimmin-owned and oper-  
ated sex shop (toys etc) and web shop - mpls. Grace Darling =  
All-women folk/bluegrass band.

\*\*\*4\*\*\* Workshop on Men & Allies Smashing Rape,  
with others. Anti-Racist Action (ARA) annual  
gathering. (Rented) Walker Community Church in  
south Minneapolis. (Just the basement, please!)

Description: Facilitated discussion and comm-  
unity brainstorm on the theme of Building an  
Anti-rape movement on the ruins of Patriarchy...  
i made that last part up. With DWOS member demon-  
stration "scenarios"; conflict resolution (non-  
violent); consent "looks like" role plays. Comm-  
unity needs assessment & advice on What Worked/  
What Didn't. Free lit table and referrals.

\*\*\*5\*\*\* SEXY SPRING "Grrrl!" If you  
don't know about this annual sextravaganza,  
it's probably too late for you.

DWOS workshop: Mentoring male rape/assault  
perpetrators Emphasis (i imagine-i wasn't  
there) on anarchist, sex-affirming, diy and esp-  
ecially survivor-centric principles. DWOS  
mentors. Organizers: The Toolshed Collective.



FORNIA  
MOM AND BABY  
LEAGUE

### OTHER OUTREACH

\*\*\*1\*\*\* Organizational development "think sheet" (by vi) for the Tool Shed collective, Sexy Spring organizer.

\*\*\*2\*\*\* Second Foundation School, boys sexual health and Sexism 101 group.

\*\*\*3\*\*\* RAMBL/Revolutionary Mom and Baby League, guys do kid-care while mamas meet. At Resource Center of The Americas.

*I see their excellent zine, EMPOWER! A Young mamas Guide to Taking Control.*

\*\*\*4\*\*\* S.O.S/Sexual Offense Services of Ramsey\* Rape Crisis Line Counselor/Advocacy; facilitator, Support Group for non-offending parents of children/victims of sexual abuse.  
\* County (St. Paul, MN.)

\*\*\*5\*\*\* various panels; conferences; community consults around supporting survivors, calling-out perpetrators/predators.  
(DWOS and broader ♂ anti-rape movement)

\*\*\*6\*\*\* various articles; "billboard education"; benefit fundraiser for artist/activist-survivor; being a friend(s) who listens and who cares.  
(DWOS and/or members acting independent/y).



28

# MENTORING MENTORS: two interviews.

Accountability And Beyond  
a conversation with Dr. Dave Matthews,  
facilitated by Vi for DWOS.

(1 of 2)

\*\*\*TABLE OF CONTENTS\*\*\*

1. Dave resume	p.1
A. Leading figure	
2. Restorative "Justice"	
A. DIY	p.2-
B. Behavioral shift	3
C. Taking responsibility	
D. Powerlessness	
E. Socialization	p.3-
	4
3. Men's identity	
A. The three shared factors	
4. Mentoring with DWOS	p.4-
	10
A. Community	
B. Expectations	
C. True to you power	
D. Mentors arguing	
E. Don't Yes me	
F. Social isolation	
G. Healing	
H. Reunification	
I. Men/Allies in the movement	
J. Mediation/closure	
K. Philosophical (broken circle)	
L. End prison tolerance	







MENTORING THE MENTORS: DAP and DWOS★

Accountability And Beyond  
a conversation with Dr. Dave Matthews,  
facilitated by Vi for  
DWOS LOOKS BACK. 7/15/2008

(Afterward added)

I'm here with Dave Matthews, Director of  
Therapy at Domestic Abuse Project Mpls.  
You've been here how long Dave?

(Dave) About six years now.

(Vi) Can you tell me a bit about how you came  
to be at DAP.

(D) Sure...prior to DAP I worked at Casa de  
Esperanza...[as] Systems Change C oordinator/  
Manager of Systems Change. I focused on train-  
ing in cultural proficiency and Working with  
Latinos around domestic violence..  
Prior to that [at] Wilder Foundation in the  
domestic abuse- called Community Assistance  
Program, for thirteen years doing groups with  
men and with adolescents. Programming with groups  
of children and with women. I've been in private  
practice...and do therapy for a wide variety of  
people.

[Editor's note: Dave is a leading figure in the  
areas of violence prevention; Traditional and  
Restorative practices; conference organizing;  
speaking and training; consulting communities of  
color and for the Department of Corrections;  
as well as State initiatives on rape and sexual  
assault/domestic violence. I recommend Googling  
him. Or if you don't use computers, call him up,  
he is always open to sharing what he knows].



(M) Andrew was talking about prevention, treatment, and he spoke of how now, when a person comes into a treatment program it is more about, "this will be your process for change" and, it seems (I hope) it is...deep change. Different thoughts and strategies for that versus, I suppose, control: You did this therefore-

(D) -Blame and Shame.

(V) Yeah, so...Taking accountability a step further into Restorative Justice. Let me ask you, for a group such as ours which is all-volunteer and which functions outside of the judicial... the standard structures and systems- how to reinforce [agreements/accountability] and then to communicate that recovery work to others concerned? Presents alot of challenges.

(D) Right, I could see that.

(V) Also if you have input for us about how as a community, on a grass-roots level, we might more effectively educate around behavior and responsibility. Taking responsibility (men, for their choices) towards prevention strategies-

(D) For these particular guys or-

(V) Yeah, ourselves and also men who have violated, the peer approach: "partnering," sort of, with men who have perpetrated. We did find that talking about consent and to learn that language seemed to engender a subtle behavioral shift, on the part of one or two of the guys who had been called-out. I noticed this pattern, that they had been unwilling, or lacked the ability to say, what it was that they wanted. And not be aware of how they took power, by creating the conditions that would then enable them to take what they otherwise might have asked for. Often their partner/ friend who they were with, lacked the ability too. And if you don't want to ask, you probably don't want to listen either.

(D) Yeah where I go with that is, there's a base comfortability of how we express ourselves, and



so when we're hampered in ways of expressing ourselves it can add to the frustration...Some of it can be traced back to a sense of powerlessness, *from an early stage in their lives and then to* the present situation...to be able to prevent them from making these [violent] choices again.

You know, national stats show that eight out of ten men are not abusive.

(V) [Tries to suppress a giggle] Yeh? I'm dumb-founded.

(D) [Chuckles] It can feel like "Look at all these violent men out there!" There are...but not to the extent to which it may appear. Certainly there are gender concerns...anybody can experience powerlessness and choose how they express that. There are I think some very unique pieces about being a man.

(V) Tell me.

(D) An anthropologist, David Gilmore wrote about societies around the world and the men's socialization. In all but two of about fifty different communities, three factors were shared in terms of role, and function. A need/sense for protecting. A need/sense for providing. And a need of propagation-

(V) I was wondering what the last p-word would be-

(D) - because it's an alliteration. In his mind, propagation is really about the passing on of legacy...And so in group when I hear a guy telling his story of violence he's done, I see how one of those pieces is either missing or has been disrupted. Leonard Berndtro and Larry Yellow Medicine [wrote] about youth at-risk in South Dakota, using the Native American medicine wheel. [Their] Four Pieces about being, developing as a young man are, connectedness or belonging; mastery; independence; and generosity. [Like what]



Gilmore [talks about]. Mastery[is]also,being able to handle internal pieces about 'who I am.' Independence [is]'I feel good about belonging but I still know that I have a function and a meaning apart from everybody else. I have distinction...' in my therapy they look at, Is one of the pieces out-of-wack? Because it's going to affect the others. We're...looking for balance. That kind of model to me is of some help when we are looking at the prevention of violence...Is there a sense of inadequacy- the opposite of self-worth, uniqueness-which is kind of not having any sort of identity. Is there a sense of not being able to contribute- not being able to have some way to give back?

(V) Dave I wanted to share a bit about my community and about DWOS' mentoring. [Gives group history; demographic- almost all, white; etc]. Over the years a far greater degree of interest and attention has been paid our (almost incidental)mentoring effort than has been paid to the rest. While we have been aided and supported by activists and professionals, it's a different response from your average, woman-on-the-street folks...

The person receiving our support and encouragement is expected to be open about his 'perp' status. We practice confidentiality, just as we (apart from mentoring) do with DW#Os. [Doesn't guarantee it will be met]. Also in our working relationship is the expectation that we, all, should be critical; he should feel free to question me, to correct me if he wants to, or say, "no-because..." Question my leadership. If I am bringing my own shit into that space unrecognized by me, you can be sure that he will know it. That's in some way, being true to my power; by making sure that I am not depriving him of his agency.

If one of us, mentors, kind of got on a preach, the partner usually caught on and would redirect him. We would argue our points, too, and often disagree with each other. You want them (the mentees) to stand up for themselves. If after awhile, you see



that he will not you're either doing something fucked-up, (like playing Hero, or Dad,) or he is "yessing" -playing for time- and he's going to hurt himself, or someone else.

You know, the social isolation, the guilt-- this was his (pretty sure) first violation- and, of a woman he really cared for. [Referring to "J"]. Years of anger; shame; DENIAL: all together retards the growth of the person. Emotional maturation. That's the price, there are consequences and that's what you become when you've taken somebody's agency from him/her/them.

Perpetrators may close themselves up and hide the entrance. We can see that they're "lost." And I don't want to reach in and give him a hug. To be honest, there is a place of pain in me out of which I might want to hurt him. To punish him. And if the mentor isn't on point with that...

Then there is the community around his victim and they may want to hurt him- do want to. so... reinforcing survivors' requests and sometimes the needs of community. Where are those places he may not be in in accordance with her wishes; and those boundaries a community needs to have? What to do if his presence causes her/others to feel unsafe...and put in the position of having to avoid him.

As the mentee's change process continues in earnest, and his/her community and the people in the various "scenes" start to see or hear that he is abiding by her requests, then there is the possibility of reunification. And with it, healing.

[Ed. disclosure: I totally embellished my remarks, between Dave's last remarks, and my response. I did so, less out of vanity, or even for purposes of clarity, but because as I am transcribing the interview/conversation, I am re-experiencing the completed mentoring relationship and wished to speak some personal (and very subjective) truths to readers relating to identity, socialization, healing].

(D) That's Restorative Justice sort of practices.



Absolutely! If you go back into the history of Restorative Justice, this is really a coopted term that our society has used to basically go back to what Indigenous Peoples from around the world have done for generations! A Westernized idea to be able to describe those practices.

(V) Thank you it's important to know that.

(D) That's what you really discovered within the work of your group. It's really I think at our true core and what gives us so much meaning, to be able to know that there is justice. And that we are part of providing not just, justice but also, grace, and mercy in the process. There is a learning that comes from that and this is how young men in other cultures learn how to be men- is by having a circle of learning, from other men.

I see your group as having that, as being that opportunity that has been taken away in this culture under the guise of it being "more just" to go into the legal system. Well it might be more just for the offender in some ways. But in terms of being accountable to the victim, or to the rest of the community the justice system does not do that. And so then, Restorative Justice was developed to kind of fill in the holes.

(V) Do you see the Restorative Justice movement -and-I hope it is a movement, and (again hoping) the "men against rape movement," as being allies?

a9) Absolutely. And I try and stay with, Restorative Practices- and avoid the other term because [R.J] kind of brings it all under the umbrella of the whole "Corrections" thinking.

(V) That somehow you have to be punitive in order to really make the person see the error of their ways. Isn't that what people want though?





(D) Yes! Exactly what people want! you bet that's what they're after, some sort of: Just make sure you understand that what you did was so bad and so awful, and we want you to feel bad about it.

(V) Because we-what, think that's what facilitates change? You have to be ashamed enough to-

(D) -not to do that again,yeah. Punishment is really at the core of that. Trying to control YOU rather than - what Restorative Practices do is to place everyone in the same Circle to be able to share things without trying to control the other person. You can't control them,that's just an illusion anyway. Any sort of punishment leading to significant change- it just doesn' happen.

The statement that really caught my ear is this: No fundamental change ever comes out of the use of the sword,or out of the use of punishment. Fundamental change is not controllable. It comes out of transformation- out of that dialogue- it can't be forced. And so we need to understand,when working with the guys taht you work with, that transformation happens not because of anything I do,or that I make happen. It happens because of something that this person takes on and starts to apply, themselves.

So,transformation is what we're really after but so many people want to force it. And that's what punishment is about- is trying to force transformation.

(V) These are dangerous times. Dave, do you recall that first time we [myself;David;Dan,etc] came to see you- for a case consult Andrew called it- when our group was working to develop a male-male accountability process and sought your experience and you support? Three and-some years later, that first mentored-person completed offender treatment and finally mediation,with the survivor. Which was about the survivor being given the chance to have some closure. And also, some healing-=for both individuals.

In my private thoughts,it was a ritual closing



thirty-  
six

of a [broken] circle. Or- I'm not sure about this-  
osome kind of marking of passage. I can't say, for  
the survivor; maybe this feeling goes back to the  
ideas you shared, of the male-male bonds, and of a  
gesture [of the survivor] like mercy. because in  
my memory there was a boy, of twenty-three yearw who  
came to a male-male circle seeking belonging and  
guidance. After that mediation I talked with  
David about this lightning-bolt of recognition, or  
this shock I received. I do think, that whatever his  
condition once, his undoing (by his own decision  
to be hurtful), had made him into a kind of ghost.  
A state of Unbeing. Then, he said "I am sorry."  
I am sorry for what I did to you- for how I caused  
your undoing by my actions.

So that he became (a man. Person.) He could be  
whole again. She got to have closure. The mediator  
got paid. And Carey should be rewarded, she really  
manifested a magickal circle, (with homage to the  
Four Directions and the healer's power. And, man, I  
was there. And all the parties were satisfied. So,  
healing did happen. People could move on.

(D) Absolutely, that is right.

(V) Now to be honest. Of five-six- mentoring-  
type relationships DWOS had this was the one  
where the process came to a recognizable fruition,  
some reconciliation. Nowhere else was there closure  
So I want to be careful and not say, "here is a  
model" to strive for. These were two remarkable  
individuals! And yet it may point to a possibil-  
ity which, well I am white and I don't know that  
my people had a Circle tradition ever in the  
past- they colonized, and tried to destroy it-  
this possibility which I think most people don't  
see. [And which I wouldn't have, if I hadn't been  
in the Presence of it]. A kind of whole-  
community, healing process, right?

(D) You know it's-Right. It's interesting that  
you are making this point... [Relates a telephone  
call from a former associate "yesterday"] Kate  
Pranis... running Circles. She would have amazing  
stories for you. And at DAP we're doing



"family group conferencing." Families being in charge of making their own plans for dealing with where the child will live after child abuse is reported. It happened; and it really is about who has and who owns the- or takes on the power to run their own lives. I think that's one of the elements that promotes transformation, as well. Empowers people. That, I might be scared, and have all these feelings but I'm making the decision for myself. A lot of times we'll see guys here- whether they are batterers, or abusers [sexual abusers] and they'll complain, "I have no control over my life. I'm being told to be here." Or "my wife says she's going to leave me if I don't-" and "yada yada." But truly, when they start taking it apart and examining it, they realize that they do have choices. And that empowers them. That is what I believe is a key to the work of transformation: people come to the realization that they do have choices.

(V) What you are doing is pretty radical don't you think? One of the ways it could be revolutionary, is we could be seeing prisons no longer tolerated-

(D) -  
-the ultimate the ultimate.

(V) For some domestic violence; drug offenses and with people who aren't maybe, "patterned" rapists and other violent crimes. Not going into prison but instead, a different process than the Courts.

(D) [Recommends Don Miguel Ruiz' The Four Agreements]. One more thing, with the work you do as a mentor and advocate. I'm working with [a Homeless Youth organization] to open a trauma center. Youth are encumbered by so much trauma that they experience and they don't have a lot of places they can go to, that are understanding of that, so they are acting out-



(V) I'd like to know more about that, Dave, but right now I have a ride waiting. I really can't thank you enough for talking with me for my zine!

(D) Well I hope we'll talk more, and thank you, Vi.

(End interview).

#### AFTERWARD

I decided to title the conversations with Andrew John and with Dave Matthew "mentoring the mentors" for reasons that are probably obvious.

It's not only invaluable to be receiving their knowledge, and their wisdom; I find I experience feelings with them that are strange. I can't say I know just where these come from, but I do know that they arise from being listened to and heard by these two men. And feeling that I may be onto "something/osomeplace" and that Dave and Andrew are just ahead, showing me- showing at least the few of us- a path.

It looks like it will be a good climb.

Vi, for Mike Haldeman. August 2008



# Violence Against Women: It's a Men's Issue

Excerpts from the new book *The Macho Paradox*

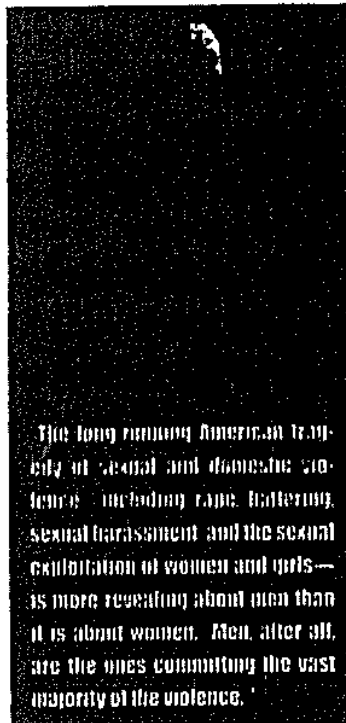
BY JACKSON KATZ

**M**ost people think violence against women is a women's issue. And why wouldn't they? Just about every woman in this society thinks about it every day. If they're not getting harassed on the street, living in an abusive relationship, recovering from a rape, or in therapy to deal with the sexual abuse they suffered as children, they're ordering their daily lives around the threat of men's violence.

But it's a mistake to call men's violence a women's issue. Take the subject of rape. Many people reflexively consider rape to be a women's issue. But let's take a closer look. What percentage of rape is committed by women? Is it 10 percent, 5 percent? No. Less than 1 percent of rape is committed by women. Let's state this another way: over 99 percent of rape is perpetrated by men. Whether the victims are female or male, men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators. But we call it a women's issue?

A major premise of this article (and my new book, *The Macho Paradox*) is that the long-running American tragedy of sexual and domestic violence—including rape, battering, sexual harassment, and the sexual exploitation of women and girls—is more revealing about men than it is about women. Men, after all, are the ones committing the vast majority of the violence. Men are the ones doing most of the battering and almost all of the raping. Men are the ones paying the prostitutes (and killing them in video games), going to strip clubs, renting sexually degrading pornography, writing and performing misogynistic music.

When men's role in gender violence is discussed—in newspaper articles, sensational TV news coverage, or everyday conversation—the focus is typically on men



The long-running American tragedy of sexual and domestic violence—including rape, battering, sexual harassment, and the sexual exploitation of women and girls—is more revealing about men than it is about women. Men, after all, are the ones committing the vast majority of the violence.

as perpetrators, or potential perpetrators. These days, you don't have to look far to see evidence of the pain and suffering these men cause. But it's rare to find any in-depth discussion about the culture that's producing these violent men. It's almost as if the perpetrators were aliens who landed here from another planet. It's rarer still to hear thoughtful discussions about the ways our culture defines "manhood," and how that definition might be linked to the endless string of stories about husbands killing wives, or groups of young men raping girls (and sometimes videotaping the rape) that we hear about on a regular basis.

Why isn't there more conversation about the underlying social factors that contribute to the pandemic of violence against women? Why aren't men's attitudes and behaviors toward women the focus of more critical scrutiny and coordinated action? In the early 21st century, the 24/7 news cycle brings us a steady stream of gender violence tragedies: serial killers on the loose, men abducting young girls, domestic violence homicides, sexual abuse scandals in powerful institutions like the Catholic Church and the Air Force Academy. You can barely turn on the news these days without coming across another gruesome sex crime—whether it's a group of boys gang-raping a girl in a middle school bathroom, or a young pregnant mother who turns up missing and a few days later her husband emerges as the primary suspect.

Isn't it about time we had a national conversation about the male causes of this violence, instead of endlessly lingering on its consequences in the lives of women? Thanks to the U.S. battered women's and rape crisis movements, it is no longer taboo to discuss women's experience of sexual and domestic violence. This is a significant achievement. To an unprecedented extent, American women today expect to be supported—not condemned—when they disclose what men have done to them (unless the man is popular, wealthy, or well-connected, in which case all bets are off).

This is all to the good. Victims of violence and abuse—whether they're women or men—should be heard and respected. Their needs come first. But let's not confuse concern for victims with the political will to change the conditions that led to their victimization in the first place. On talk shows, in brutally honest memoirs, at Take Back the Night rallies, and even in



11/10

## How Many Women Are Survivors of Men's Violence? Way Too Many. Chances Are, You Know One or More of Them

*"My father was a violent man. His physical and verbal abuse terrorized my mother and all five of his kids. I was in my fifties before I truly realized how much this experience has impacted my personality and relationships. But the cycle can be broken."*

—New York Yankees manager Joe Torre

Several years ago I was in a theater watching a movie with a girlfriend when she abruptly got up out of her seat and, without saying a word, ran out the door. I didn't know what to do. Follow her out into the lobby? Keep watching the movie and wait for her to come back? I was not sure how to react because I did not know why she had left. Was it something she had eaten? Was it something I had done? I shifted anxiously in my seat. Was she angry at me?

Later, when we discussed what had happened, I was both relieved to find out I was not responsible and amazed at my own lack of awareness. Her response had been triggered by a scene of violence. She was a rape survivor, and something about that scene brought back intense fear and pain; she had to flee. I knew about the rape, which had happened when she was a teenager. At that point we had not discussed the details of her assault, or the trauma symptoms she still experienced. I spent some time agonizing over how I could have anticipated and prevented the entire incident. But she picked out the movie—didn't she know it would have violent scenes? Eventually, as I moved through some initial—and reflexive—defensiveness, I realized there probably wasn't anything I could have done. This was not about me, after all; it was about her.

This incident was not the first time that violence against women became personal for me—and it was hardly the last. I would have a hard time counting all the women I know who are survivors of some kind of men's violence, abuse, or mistreatment. There are way too many. And it is not just me: Every single man I know has at least one or two women in his life who have been emotionally, physically, or sexually abused by men. Some of us have many more.

Consider this curious sequence of events that happened a few

years ago. I was in a bank in Boston on a sunny, cold winter morning, completing a transaction with a teller with whom I had done business for a couple of years. She was a dark-haired Italian-American woman in her forties, with a thick Boston accent and a smoker's raspy laugh. We had always exchanged polite chatter but never a really substantive conversation. I was anxious about time; I told her I had to get to the airport. She asked me where I was going. When I told her Montana, she probed me about why I would be going all the way out there. "To give a speech tonight," I said.

"About what?" she inquired.

"Violence against women," I hesitatingly answered.

She leaned forward with theatrical flair, and then across the teller's window confided in me with a smirk of mock secretiveness. "Let me tell you about violence against women," she said calmly. "I had a boyfriend who beat me so bad he left me in a coma. He's dead now, but I'd kill him if he wasn't."

Later that day, I was in the Salt Lake City airport, trying to figure out how I would get to Montana after my flight—the last flight of the day—had been cancelled. At the airline customer service desk I told the empathetic agent—a 30-something white woman—that if I could not figure out a way to get to Missoula, I would have to go back to Boston, because I was scheduled to give a speech that night. Getting to Montana a day late would be pointless. "What's your speech about?" she inquired. She lit up when I told her. "I could give your speech,"

she exclaimed. "A former airline employee has been stalking me for months," she said. "The case was just in the paper, since I filed a suit against him. Did you hear about it? I don't know what's going to happen."

As I headed back through the terminal, I wondered something that I ponder to this day: How many of the women walking by me have similar stories to tell? Were these two women a statistical aberration? Are these types of experiences so common in the lives of women in our era that they are closer to the norm than the exception? Are stories like these just beneath the surface everywhere?



celebrity interviews, our society now grants many women the platform to discuss the sexual abuse and mistreatment that have sadly been a part of women's lives here and around the world for millennia. But when was the last time you heard someone in public or private life talk about violence against women in a way that went beyond the standard victim fixation and put a sustained spotlight on men—either as perpetrators or as bystanders? It is one thing

to focus on the "against women" part of the phrase. But someone's responsible for doing it, and (almost) everyone knows that it's overwhelmingly men. Why aren't people talking about this? Is it realistic to talk about preventing violence against women if no one even wants to say out loud who's responsible for it?

For the past two decades I've been part of a growing movement of men, in North America and around the world, whose

aim is to reduce violence against women by focusing on those aspects of male culture—especially male peer culture—that provide active or tacit support for some men's abusive behavior. This movement is racially and ethnically diverse, and it brings together men from both privileged and poor communities, and everyone in between. This is challenging work on many levels, and no one should expect

*Continued on page 10*





41

Violence Against Women *continued from page 3*

rapid results. For example, there is no way to gloss over some of the race, class, and sexual orientation divisions between and among the men ourselves. It is also true that it takes time to change social norms that are so deeply rooted in structures of gender and power. Even so, there is room for optimism. We've had our successes: There are arguably more men today who are actively confronting violence against women than at any time in human history.

Make no mistake. Women blazed the trail that we are riding down. Men are in the position to do this work precisely because of the great leadership of women. The battered women's and rape crisis movements and their allies in local, state, and federal government have accomplished a phenomenal amount over the past generation. Public awareness about violence against women is at an all-time high. The level of services available today for female victims and survivors of men's violence is—while not yet adequate—nonetheless, historically unprecedented.

But one area where our society still has a very long way to go is in preventing perpetration. We continue to produce in the United States hundreds of thousands of physically and emotionally abusive—and sexually dangerous—boys and men each year. Millions more men participate in sexist behaviors on a continuum that ranges from mildly objectifying women to literally enslaving them in human trafficking syndicates. We can provide services to the female victims of these men until the cows come home. We can toughen enforcement of rape, domestic violence, and stalking laws, arrest and incarcerate even more men than we do currently. But this is all reactive and after the fact. It is essentially an admission of failure.

What I am proposing is that we adopt a much more ambitious approach. If we are going to bring down the rates of violence against women dramatically—not just at the margins—we will need a far-reaching cultural revolution. At its heart this revolution must be about changing the sexist social norms in male culture, from the elementary school playground to the common room in retirement communities—and every locker room, pool hall,

and boardroom in between. For us to have any hope of achieving historic reductions in incidents of violence against women, at a minimum we will need to dream big and act boldly. It almost goes without saying that we will need the help of a lot more men—at all levels of power and influence—than are currently involved. Obviously we have our work cut out for us. As a measure of just how far we have to go, consider that in spite of the misogyny and sexist brutality all around us, millions of nonviolent men today fail to see gender violence as their issue. "I'm a good guy," they say. "This isn't my problem."

For years, women of every conceivable ethnic, racial, and religious background have been trying to get men

**We can provide services to the female victims of violence until the cows come home. We can toughen enforcement of rape, domestic violence, and stalking laws, arrest and incarcerate even more men than we do currently. But this is all reactive and after the fact. It is essentially an admission of failure.**

around them—and men in power—to do more about violence against women. They have asked nicely, and they have demanded angrily. Some women have done this on a one-to-one basis with boyfriends and husbands, fathers and sons. They have patiently explained to men they care about how much they—and all women—have been harmed by men's violence. Others have gone public with their grievances. They have written songs and slam poetry. They have produced brilliant academic research. They have made connections between racism and sexism. They have organized speakouts on college campuses, and in communities large and small. They have marched. They have advocated for legal and political reform at the state and national level. On both a micro and a macro level, women in this era have successfully broken through their historical silence about violence against women and found their

voice—here in the United States and around the world.

Yet even with all of these achievements, women continue to face an uphill struggle in trying to make meaningful inroads in male culture. Their goal has not been simply to get men to listen to women's stories and truly hear them—although that is a critical first step. The truly vexing challenge has been getting men to actually get out and do something about the problem in the form of educating and organizing other men in numbers great enough to prompt a real cultural shift. Some activist women—even those who have had great faith in men as allies—have been beating their heads against the wall for a long time, and are frantically hurried put on the effort. I know this because I have been working with many of these women for a long time. They are my colleagues and friends.

My work is dedicated to getting more men to take on the issue of violence against women, and thus to build on what women have achieved. The area that I focus on is not law enforcement or offender treatment, but the prevention of sexual and domestic violence and all their related social pathologies—including violence against children. To do this, I and other men here and around the world have been trying to get our fellow men to see that this problem is not just personal for a small number of men who happen to have been touched by the issue. We try to show them that it is personal for them, too. For all of us. We talk about men not only as perpetrators, but as victims. We try to show them that violence by men against each other—from simple assaults to gay-bashing—is linked to the same structures of gender and power that produce so much men's violence against women.

But there is no point in being naive about why women have had such a difficult time convincing men to make violence against women a men's issue. In spite of significant social change in recent decades, men continue to grow up with, and are socialized into, a deeply misogynous, male-dominated culture, where violence against women—from the subtle to the homicidal—is disturbingly common. It's normal. And precisely because the mistreatment of women is such a pervasive characteristic of our patriarchal culture, most men, in a







KATRINA K.

greater or lesser extent, have played a role in its perpetuation. This gives us a strong incentive to avert our eyes.

Women, of course, have also been socialized into this misogynous culture. Some of them resist and fight back. In fact, women's ongoing resistance to their subordinate status is one of the most momentous developments in human civilization over the past two centuries. Just the same, plenty of women show little appetite for delving deeply into the cultural roots of sexist violence. It's much less daunting simply to blame "sick" individuals for the problem. You hear women all the time explaining away men's bad behavior as the result of individual pathology. "Oh, he just had a bad childhood" or "He's an angry drunk. The booze gets to him. He's never been able to handle it."

But regardless of how difficult it can be to show some women that violence against women is a social problem that runs deeper than the abusive behavior of individual men, it is still much easier to convince women—of all races, ethnicities, and religious beliefs—that dramatic change is in their best interest than it is to convince men. In fact, many people would argue that, since men are the dominant sex-class, and violence serves to reinforce this dominance, it is not in men's best interests to reduce violence against women, and that the very attempt to enlist a critical mass of men in this effort amounts to a fool's errand.

For those of us who reject this line of reasoning, the big question, then, is how do we reach men? We know we're not going to transform, overnight or over many decades, certain structures of male power and privilege that have developed over thousands of years. Nevertheless, how are we going to bring more men—many more men—into a conversation about sexism and violence against women? And how are we going to do this without turning them off, without berating them, without blaming them for centuries of sexist oppression? Moreover, how are we going to move beyond talk and get substantial numbers of men to partner with women in reducing men's violence, instead of working against them in some sort of fruitless and counter-productive gender struggle?

That is the \$64,000 dollar question.

Esta Soler, executive director of the Family Violence Prevention Fund and an influential leader in the domestic violence movement, says that activating men is "the next frontier" in the women-led movement. "In the end," she says, "we cannot change society unless we put more men at the table, amplify men's voices in the debate, enlist men to help change social norms on the issue, and convince men to teach their children that violence against women is always wrong."

Call me a starry-eyed optimist, but I have long been convinced that there are millions of men in our society who are ready to respond well to a positive message (about this subject). If you go to a group of men with your finger pointed ("Stop treat-

**If we are going to bring down the rates of violence against women dramatically we will need a far-reaching cultural revolution. We will need the help of a lot more men.**

ing women so badly!") you'll often get a defensive response. But if you approach the same group of men by appealing in Abraham Lincoln's famous words to "the better angels of their nature," surprising numbers of them will rise to the occasion.

For me, this is not just an article of faith. Our society has made real progress in confronting the long-standing problem of men's violence against women in my lifetime. Take the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). It is the most far-reaching piece of legislation ever on the subject. Federal funds have enabled all sorts of new initiatives, including prevention efforts that target men and boys. There have been many other encouraging developments on both the institutional and the individual levels. Not the least of these positive developments is the fact that so many young men today "get" the concept of gender equality and are actively working against men's violence.

There are a number of studies in the past several years that demonstrate that significant numbers of men are uncomfortable with the way some of their male peers

talk about and treat women. But since few men in our society have dared to talk publicly about such matters, many men think they are the only ones who feel uncomfortable. Because they feel isolated and alone in their discomfort, they do not say anything. Their silence, in turn, simply reinforces the false perception that few men are uncomfortable with sexist attitudes and behaviors. It is a vicious cycle that keeps a lot of capable men silent.

I meet men all the time who thank me—or my fellow activists and colleagues—for publicly taking on the subject of men's violence. I frequently meet men who are receptive to the paradigm-shifting idea that men's violence against women has to be understood as a men's issue. Their issue. These men come from every demographic and geographic category. They include thousands of men who would not fit neatly into simplistic stereotypes about the kind of man who would be involved in that touchy-feely stuff.

Still, it is an uphill fight. Truly lasting change is only going to happen as new generations of women come of age and demand equal treatment with men in every realm, and new generations of men work with them to reject the sexist attitudes and behaviors of their predecessors. This will take decades, and the outcome is hardly predetermined. But along with tens of thousands of activist women and men who continue to fight the good fight, I believe that it is possible to achieve something much closer to gender equality, and a dramatic reduction in the level of men's violence against women, both here and around the world. And there is a lot at stake. If sexism and violence against women do not subside considerably in the 21st century, it will not just be bad news for women, it will also say something truly ugly and tragic about the future of our species. *VM*

Jackson Katz is one of the nation's leading advocates in gender violence education and a co-founder of Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). He is co-author of the video *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity*. Excerpts are from *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hunt Women and How All Men Can Help* (Sourcebooks, Inc., 2006). Used by permission of the author. (Pub. Sourcebooks)

*"We recommend using 'Tough Guise' to spark discussion & crit. thinkin!"*  
-ed's



43

"(We Call Him) Mr.Accountability "  
a conversation with  
Dr.Andrew John conducted by vi  
for DWOS.

(2 of 2)

\*\*\* TABLE OF CONTENTS \*\*\*

1. Seeking Critique	p.1
A. What are we?DWOS	.
B. What we were doing	p.2-
C. Not a place for perps	3
2. Partnering vs. Marginalizing	
A. My personal commitment.	
B. Ground rules	
C. Survivor first	
D. Safe for mentee	
3. Roles and approaches	p.3-
	4
A. Discovery	
B. Blasts the System	
4. The Conversation	p.4-
	10

We came for your help. Outside the System. Sec-  
rets. Confidentiality. Mixed results. "It is  
what it is". Survivor's wishes. Balancing sur-  
vivor and violator change. Refusing to admit.  
Coercion. DWOS training. Mistakes we made.  
Keeping a focus on community impacts too. "It  
takes a village". Are you effective? Looking  
for help outside the Scene. Next: Consent.

5.Special Feature: Original minutes from a  
meeting of DWOS.



MENTORING THE MENTORS: DAP and DWOS ★

"There's a vulnerability in holding oneself accountable that seems to cause existential crisis".

-David Miller

" (We Call Him) Mr.Accountability " a conversation with Dr.Andrew John conducted by vi. for DWOS

In July of This year i met with Andrew John of DomesticAbuseProject (DAP)in Minneapolis. Andrew works with men and with children as a therapist and also supervises the Internship Program.

I initially planned to interview Andrew to get his impressions and any critique he might want to offer of the viability, and work of a community effort i helped organize. The group/effort, called DWOS (DealingWithOurShit/Sexism) was originally conceived as a, "men & male-identified" folks' anti-rape, proactive effort which would be primarily concerned with prevention and consciousness-raising to be directed by & for ~~ops~~, and with supporting survivors of rape and sexual assault.

Problem was he didn't remember much about us except that we were carefully, methodically gathering advice and any training





opportunities for our initiative to mentor male perpetrators into and through, a program of accountability and recovery.

While it's gratifying to me that Andrew recalls our careful consideration I don't suppose he knew that my fellow "mentor" and I had not given our decision (to "take on" this "case") careful consideration; he came to us, this frightened perpetrator from the margins of some scene we barely knew. We (DWOS) were divided about what to do. We weren't prepared to have a known perp anywhere in our orbit of activity but didn't want to just throw him out. (Did the professionals at DAP detect our grandiosity I wonder!)

To be honest (see attached group "crisis meeting" notes,) the appearance of this brother in need was met with fear and even consternation by most members- the more so as two members felt that we should welcome him as a peer into the Support/Education group. A "working group" within DWOS to deal with the threat/opportunity got together to act as support for DM and myself and to help us be accountable to the larger group- the transparency piece. (DM=my partner in mentoring).

I believed that DM had qualities and experience I would want to see in our role as accountability partners for the perpetrator, (hereafter referred to by the initial J). We knew we would need to trust each other deeply so that we could question and critique ourselves and each other always and also, treat each other to heaps of love and support.

For my part, (and especially because of my anti-rapist emotions getting triggered, due to my pain as a survivor of sexual abuse,) I had to make a commitment to myself and to DM to approach the relationship with love, and I don't like the word mercy but, something akin to it.

We knew we would need to base our expectations of "J" in our grounding and our (rape crisis counselor/advocate) training as victim/survivor advocates, to always keep our commitment to his change process in line with, and subordinate to our promises to the woman he victimized and to her safety and well-being.

There would be "ground rules" and these had to

43

be created with "J" since the mentor-mentee relationship/space must be safe for "J" and feel like a place where all of us could develop some trust for each other. (Some rules: confidentiality- except if imminent harm threatend or suspected; non-judgmental; no "he said-she said" or shit talk, neither will he permit his friends to shit-talk the Survivor; listen; no "yessing" the mentors, no shaming or blaming; and, do the work you say you're going to do).

One thing i learned from Andrew John is that by being clear from the start about our intentions and expectations while consistently reinforcing these, a man who admits he raped, can then be admitted into a process of accountability and even transformation. His risk-taking and gentle, strong emphatic encouragement from counselors and teachers can aid him in discovering his own integrity. Our empathy and reason can be like a gift to one who was lacking in either or both- that's how men in our culture learn and develop these qualities: by watching and copying elders, teachers, trusted men, peers. However what we should have learned as children and didn't, (or did and it was ground and wrung out of us by sexist gender conformism and the competitive survival prerogatives,) these attributes - if they are not already encoded, buried under the layers- are not I believe available to us. Most men i believe can be/become non-violent. The problem confronting everyone is- Will They? This is the point that it turns on, men and their allies in the stuggle to transform Rape Culture.

I brought to my meeting with Andrew my criticism of conventional, law-and-order punishment oriented treatment and therapeutic approaches to "offender" rehabilitation. Even in the current, and more behavioral (vs. pathological) approaches i sense a very hierarchical and classically Patriarchal dynamic: You Are Changed/I Lead You. Of course since treatment and prison are this societies' present options and are dependent on cops, and Courts (and often a good lawyer,) these dynamics are ingrained and are institutionalized.



I questioned Andrew and his colleagues about mainstream attitudes and approaches; i made it clear that ours was an all-volunteer organizing effort and would not write grants, or seek accreditation or hire anybody- which obviously restricts us in certain ways but also frees us, in others. The men of DAP expressed admiration, mixed with envy for the space we were creating being unencumbered by Mainstream regulations and values, and for our being (at least theoretically,) Community-based and answerable to the community. At the same time there was concern expressed- that without institutionalization, could we hold up to public scrutiny? Maintain checks-and-balances? Most importantly are we able to guarantee Survivors' safety and (my concern) give them confidence that attainable outcomes could be realized?

I ask men and allies like myself who struggle with them, to help us/help each other create strategies could go deeper into change potential, to explore how transformation could/should look. All without simply duplicating an oppressive and horrible system of male-over-male supremacy the piece about Patriarchy which all men surely know about intimately because do we really want to risk reindoctrinating men when they are especially vulnerable and in a place where they could discover a radical new kind of agency, or being/ness!  
 Let's not be about exchanging "new" Masters, for old.

## the conversation

(Vi) Hello. my first question- Could you characterize what you saw in us guys? As you may remember, you came to one of our groups' "topic nights" because I had asked you to, to tell us or help us with how to think about accountability. Your colleague calls you, Mr.Accountability! Again, we are an all-volunteer, community effort to fight rape and work toward transforming "rape culture". Did you see a potential for harm?

(AJ) My impression was: "How can we be effective" and, "we want to learn what we can do to be help-



ful". And "provide what we need to through our group, to our community". And to metabolize the information as a group. One of the things, you really wanted to cover every base and be as careful as possible. I did understand- given what I think many in your community might experience of mat-treatment from people not of your community- that it feels imperative to want to work within that.

You said, "extra-legal": It's kind of-

(Vi) Oh! It's-kind of a scary one?

(AJ) Yeah, yeah it's-

(Vi) I don't know where that came from-

(AJ) quite pejorative, there.

(Vi) Like, bodies on the side of the road huh.

(AJ) Yes. But because the issue around domestic violence especially, when you work with children, is how secret it is. Even for peoples' protection, the way that abuse flourishes in a place of secrecy, that dynamic could pose a serious risk towards really trying to eradicate what you are looking to eradicate. Since domestic violence is perpetuated by so many different dynamics you might not be able to do it in a contained way.

(Vi) You mentioned secrecy. We were called upon to intervene in situations involving a victim who felt the need to have her identity protected. The women who approached us were friends of the victim or were aware of a perpetrator having assaulted women before but hadn't heard it named as such, until now. The victim or her supporters wanted to have accountability on the part of the violator (all have been males).

There is a real difference, in how one may advocate in a situation of assau when anonymity is paramount. These interventions were complicated, (not that it isn't always hard). How might this type of thing, with its impacts, be more effectively done? The results were less successful than other ones where a survivor herself had called-out



the rapist.

(AJ) I don't know that I can say much more than you said, and pretty eloquently there. The situation you describe it- and I loathe and occasionally use the phrase- "It is what it is". The thing you said that I felt most drawn to was that you were abiding by the survivor's wishes. When there is an assault, a domestic or a sexual assault you're most basic, fundamental rights, human rights, are removed from you by someone else. To be able then to give somebody the chance to have their voice back- and to say "what you asked me to do and that you could express (what he did to you), I can respect that and I will try to do it! I think that's such a healing piece, I really hear your intervention and the way you set up your intervention, as coming from that.

And the thing that "is what it is" is that as you know, someone who doesn't want to be exposed, for protection and safety, they may not get the kind of intervention they might seek. One of the things that have been the hardest lesson for me to learn here, is that if a man doesn't want to take responsibility for what he did, then you can't do anything. Unless he is willing to say, "I did that. I wish I hadn't and I want to do something to take responsibility for it" well if you don't hear that, there's really nothing that you can do. As far as what you might feel the victim/survivor is entitled to seek'. That is such a frustrating place to be!

Now, to say "We can't tell you who has called you out," that's a hard place to get somebody to motivate. You know, they will feel like they are in a Kafka story. And they might be open, but they're more likely to become defensive. That has been my experience.

There might have been ways that you engendered interventions that were successful and that's great but I can see it being difficult. Then part of your role would have to be saying, to the survivor "we want to do what you're looking for and we want you to know the results might be mixed, or limited, but we will do the best that we can to advocate for you and support you however you need



to be. That's all you can say. And then you can just do your best. Is that getting to it?

(Vi) Yes. You raised something that I want you to say more about: men who, ultimately, do not want to take responsibility. Aren't most men who come in the door here, not really aware of their responsibility? And isn't part of what you do, helping move them towards that? The education and support you offer; the circles, men with peers and such- how many, finally, take responsibility for their violence once the information has been presented, and the men speak...

(AJ) The ones who take no responsibility, at the point where the moment is forced to its crisis- they will leave the program through some kind of attrition. They want to "do the time". They self-select [out] before they start really getting confronted.

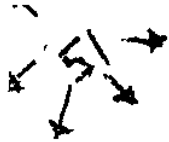
I would say maybe...eight percent of the guys won't take responsibility just because they believe that what they did was justified. "I did that because she was cheating on me! I mean I came home and she had been using and she was around our kids and so I slapped her twice, and said 'don't you ever do that again'. And if I had the chance to do it again I'd do it all over". They'll say the police report's a lie. And, "I did that but it's okay..." The "Justifier". They are the hardest to work with. This is less in places of sexual assault, more in domestic.

I like the way you said it, Vi. Some guys come here in complete denial, and we move them farther away from that, they are sorry they did that. And we try to move them beyond that. My biggest lament, is that we can move a guy away from his abusive and violent behavior but it's much harder to stop their controlling, manipulative behavior.

(Vi) There was a member [of DWOS] who [matches what you say] who later on after being called-out on that stuff, wanted our help. But he refused to be labeled an abuser, [He had in fact manipulated the group. Folks were very angry with him].







(AJ) I think there is an under-reporting of sexual assault with the men who come in here since most of the women who come in here [for victim/survivor therapy or family therapy and support] on their "abuse inventory," will talk about having been sexually coerced or sexually assaulted by their partners. I did some work in Stillwater[State Prison]...after coming back [to DAP] I saw again the manipulation. It's the control. And the belief that YOUR needs supercede someone else's, either all the time, or at least in certain times. I do believe it is under reported. We do some training around what sexual coercion looks like.

(Vi) I could see it[getting training]. I spent alot of time looking for therapists, making calls and talking to people and I have a very short list of names, of people in practice [who have expertise with sexual assault perpetrators]. You know, some of us trained through Sexual Offense Services of Ramsey County, as rape crisis counselors and victim advocates. We got their very good training, to support survivors; but there just isn't training to support...to walk with a perpetrator through a process of accountability. We just could draw on our experiences.

And we were kind of playing it by ear. We made mistakes. One thing we're hearing is that our follow-through, as far as communicating to people what the process was with perpetrators after the mentoring began...[our consideration of] the impacts on survivors; community- we weren't as good as we might have been and it sucked, actually, in the words of one woman whose opinion I trust. She is herself a survivor.

People just knew that members of DWOS were "mentoring" him through a process... "Well" [someone might say] "we see him at the cafe. Okay... maybe he's okay now because these guys are working with him but...I wonder, is this safe? Will he be predatory again?"

I feel we need to reach far, compile as many resources as we can while keeping the frame around communities, scenes where we concentrated our



52

energies. I'm talking too much.

(AJ) Well I have a lot of thoughts, from what you were saying. What your group does—and from my clinical experience [I see the work as] the best antidote to re-perpetrating. To have this community and this mentoring and this support. Many interventions...with perpetrators are behavioral. "When you have an urge to do this you need to do something else in order to deal with this urge" For people who have not been assaultive before ...the behavioral intervention would need to be: What can you do differently. Some of what the literature shows, is that programs that make men be "accountable" and programs that don't make men account for their behavior...there isn't a big change in whether or not they are successful in their outcome. [Expresses surprise]. I see some of my clients so we need to-

(Vi) Okay.

(AJ) How could that be...it's such a staple of the domestic violence work we do here! Instead: "If you put yourself in this tempting or trigger situation, what are you gonna do in the alternative?" And getting a lot of followup on that, and working a plan. Having aftercare; having Probation Officers, and aftercare therapists...Have a community and have support so when you are struggling you are able to talk to a mentor, talk to people who aren't going to say "How horrible you are! Having those thoughts...those needs, those desires and those fantasies." Instead it's, "hey how great that you called rather than act on that, how can we be supportive to you right now?"

You know...there's a lot of training that goes into...Even if [DWOS] does it brilliantly, and does it well there could be a worry of, But are you doing it effectively? Because for people who might have a propensity towards acting out sexually, or acting in a sexually assaultive way and not just in a single, focused situation, (which would be bad enough) b/c that's part of how they engage in sexual activity...you want to be really



careful  
 about what you do...you want to keep it within these narrow parameters. It's too big a danger. And so balancing safety...community; and respecting anonymity, versus your own safety and the potential victims you might create...We might look at, "We might need to get you some more general, outside-the-community help".

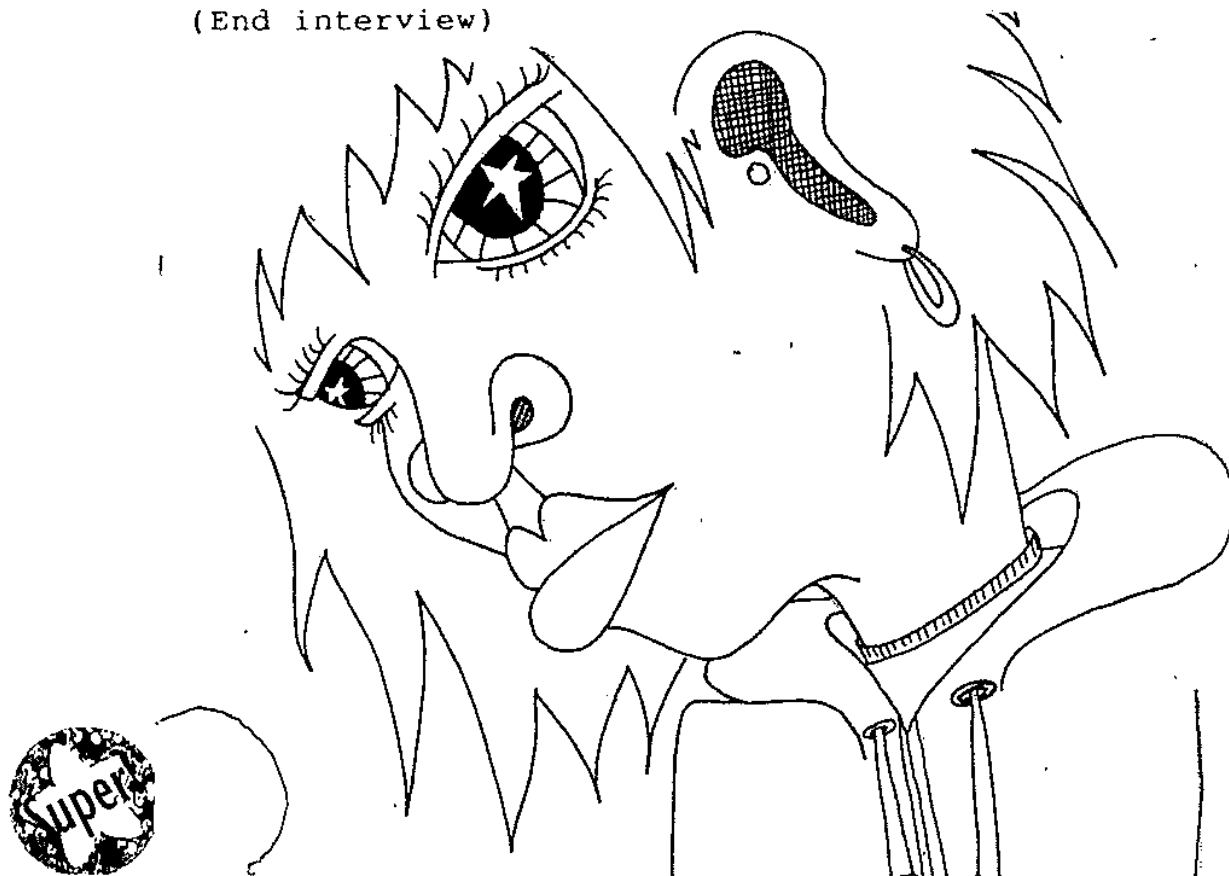
[AJ excuses himself to go and meet his clients-a woman, and her two young daughters].

I'm really excited about this and I want to be able to follow-up.

(Vi) Yeah there is more. About consent, and the language to say what it is you want [from a partner or date]. It's where we in our support group are working from. Right up there with accountability. So yeah thank you very much.

(AJ) You're entirely welcome. [Colleague enters for my next conversation, To colleague]: I warmed him up for you.

(End interview)



**NOTES FROM MEETINGS CONSIDERING  
QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF INCLUDING  
FOLKS WHO HAVE BEEN "CALLED OUT".**

(DWOS MINUTES taken by "V")

[ Editors note: The original Minutes edited to preserve confidentiality. The intention here is to share a rare look at the groups' process. Reference is made throughout the zine, to DWOS members being unprepared for known abusers' participation; it should be stated that there was a general assumption inside the group that we were "not a place for perps". This was not explicitly stated to the larger community however. ]

Present : R; D(1); D(2); D(3); M; V; S; A.  
"R" facilitating, "D(1)" vibes watcher.

"D(3)" reviewed big sheet notes of last meeting...

- "mentoring" should be part of positive masculinity...don't skip the hard stuff...the "wild man" thing dzn't get at the fucked-up stuff...ACCOUNTABILITY.
- to transform ourselves and society=both self affirmation AND owning impacts of our [males/htose with masculine privilege] actions and power/privilege...statistics on numbers of victims of rape and assault don't show how many, and which, men are doing it...
- educate about consent which society/patriarchy dzn't do.

Re. mentoring:

- TRUST; emotional honesty; realistic intentions+plan+agreements...The behaviors we flag as bad are also painfully typical (and thus normalized in patriarchy).

A guy is called-out. Identity crisis. We say, "there is a place for you at this table" AND "we have these expectations for what and how you will (won't) do (be)" re. possibilities for change.

"D(1)": Mainstream says give it to the professionals; look away...In brief: role of DWOS in mentoring/supporting perpetrator asking for our



55 help? How to process and reach agreement? No consensus thus far...Issue: "hero" habit in larger accountability context.

### Checking-in go 'round.

Tonight's agenda now to Q&A discussion with "D(1)", "V" reporting back.

For group: Questions and concerns about participation of person in process of accountability [perp] after assaulting. Group desire yea? Nay? Everyone: tricky [still no consensus].

"V": Feel protective of group. When guy showed up at meeting, "whoa!" Some guys thought it was cool. I felt we weren't prepared for it, could pull the rug out from under everything...we had worked up agreements. Since DWOS an "open" group men+Trans and a support group, I think we are in kind of a bind.

"Accountability..." important but hard to put a finger on it...don't really have the tools to help someone in their process of accountability....[we should be] beyond Us/Them [still] opening the group to perps could be too much for us. Likes idea of "working group" to explore further, report back; do some writing re. concerns or interest...

Would this guy talk about his process, experience? He is really interested in our process...concerns for his safety as well...need for help and support from outside the group...what role would working group have exactly?

"D(2)": If "X" were to come...each of us write out two-three concerns and thoughts about his participation. How best to give him feedback with helping him towards his recovery. For "X" to participate would have to be open to any viewpoint and critique.

"R": "X" to be introduced after/while in therapy process; introduced by a group member...Doesn't address long-term concerns; working group to take this up.

"A": What is "X"'s intention. "X"'s mentor brings this question to "X" then back to the group along with mentor's vibe assessment on his readiness to participate. Group assesses. Back to "X"... feels important that this all happens outside of regular group space...concerns about who/how to judge his seriousness, sincerity, commitment...trusts someone he knows more than someone he doesn't know.

"D(1)": Our condition was for verifiable concrete responsibility for his actions IF treatment program. "V" researched options out there.

"A": Followup: overall protocol okay but tricky to do blanket protocol given each situation and person is unique. Want for us to take risks yet I have priorities- not at top of list. Been a good learning experience; not looking for a job!

"D(2)": Need answers...gonna take work...without risk we don't move forward, but risking without a plan could crush our process. Interested in & have questions about a working group. [Idea for] transition period, third way. (56)

"D(1)": Ditto middle ground. Open to a working group sharing "X" process. Learned and learning a lot from working with "X".

"V": reach out for support from [community] allies and especially from DWOS general membership.

"D(1)": Personal trust is one thing...would encourage bringing our concerns to someone who does this work on a daily basis. Interested in someone coming to us. Give them our list, ask for response and direction.

Facilitator: One- there's a proposal re. mentoring. Two- another for developing guidelines and working group. Three- Proposal to continue conversation to next meeting.

"A": Combine one and two.

"D(1)": Yes, working group to consider how "X" could be involved in some way in our effort. Not necessarily attending the group. To happen between now and next meeting.

PROPOSAL. "D(1)" and "V" working group; they meet in the next month to record members' concerns, questions. They find a professional [in offender treatment] to attend next meeting [to respond to our needs] and also to call DWOS list. Also reach out to new people.

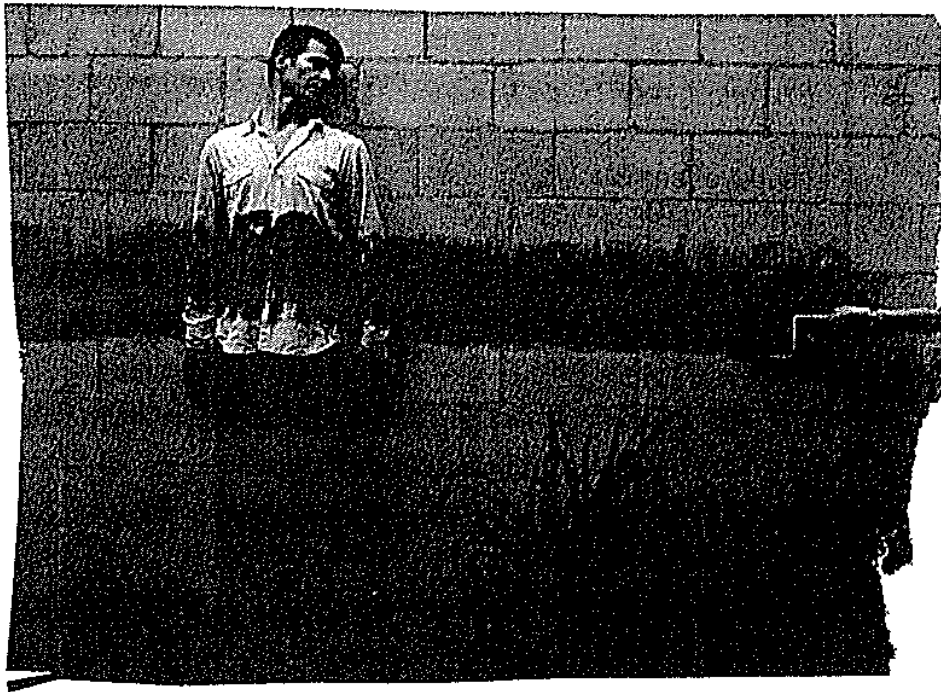
## (BREAK) BRAINSTORMING SESSION.

*Line between mentorship and therapy, accusation/acceptance...INTENT and IMPACT discussions! What if perp completes course, etc...what if they see DWOS as vehicle back into community...a place for all men&male-identified people to work on our shit...reluctant only if mentors have doubts... manipulation... mentors and counselors act as "gatekeepers" for group... "Hero" model (fix it) vs. transformative process... actions speak, can never really know. Long term: "perpetrator-in-process", what access should they have? Level of involvement? Agreements? "Would I be willing to sponsor (a perpetrator)" and "if I sponsor you here are the agreements", re. attendance; safety; accountability... Come up with standards and balance with support... Old habits and building self-esteem... Process, once admitted? Assessment... peoples' interaction in/outside of group space... Confidentiality: how*

57

to discuss where he is at, opportunity for him to respond... Consensus on anything that affects and impacts the group... [two guys] would like to consider being mentors... If accepted, conversation about "X" should include "X"... Concerns about secretive [working group] meetings, wants openness... Checking-in regularly... Bring issues to "X" direct/open... "X" goes into counseling with serious commitment... Desire for hard consensus, 'if you block you block'. Wimmen ally concerns [all]... work with, but don't acknowledge in public... "Work stays work" (professionalism)... Mentoring in non-group setting could be awkward... How will we be seen in community... Creating ripples... CLEAR RELATIONSHIP [parameters]... If someone has an abusive past we'll need to be conscious of this; how to assess/get information? Could create a whole set of problems. SAFETY OF SURVIVORS.

---





"Certainly, the most insidious myth about rape is that it is most likely to be committed by a Black man. As a direct consequence of rampant racism, white women are socialized to harbor far more fear that they will be raped by a Black man than by a white man...in actuality, many more rapes are committed by white men than by Black men."

Angela Davis

# ANTI-RAPE & ANALYSIS

~~RR~~      ~~RR~~      ~~RR~~

I recommend, if you haven't read it, Davis' chapbook on the inter-dependence of racism and rape: Called, Racism And Rape... i believe

(small publisher/press. May have to look "on-line.")

- This book opened my eyes! when I was young, if you'd asked me to draw connections between these oppressions I'd have been clueless... Vi





## RAPE: MYTHS AND REALITY

**MYTH:** Rapists are mostly "strangers in the bushes" who carry weapons.

**Reality:** About 80% of rapists know the person they attack, and most do not use weapons.

**MYTH:** Women often lie about being raped out of guilt over having sex or to get revenge.

**Reality:** False charges of rape are the exception, not the rule, and occur at about the same rate as false charges for other major crimes (about 2-5% of reports). Rape, in fact, is the most under-reported of all crimes: an estimated 90% of assaults are never reported to police.

**MYTH:** Men are never raped.

**Reality:** 10-20% of men are sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. Fear of being labeled gay or being seen as "less than a man," however, often keeps men from reporting an assault and contributes to the perception that only women are raped.

**MYTH:** During a sexual assault, the victim never experiences orgasm or physical pleasure.

**Reality:** Sexual arousal and even orgasm can occur during an attack, leaving the survivor feeling both ashamed and confused. Male victims, in fact, are often forced by the perpetrator to ejaculate to increase the survivor's feelings of shame and decrease the likelihood that he will report the assault. Child sexual abuse victims are also often touched in gentle and "pleasurable" ways to increase their confusion and make it less likely that they will tell an adult what happened.

**MYTH:** A woman who wears revealing clothes or gets drunk at a party is asking to be raped.

**Reality:** No one ever asks or deserves to be raped. That is as ridiculous as blaming a person for getting mugged because she or he wears an expensive watch.

**MYTH:** Black men are more likely to rape than white men and generally seek out white women as their targets.

**Reality:** There is no evidence to support the claim that Black men are more sexually violent than white men. Studies do show, however, that about 90% of rapes are intra-racial: white men rape white women, Black men rape Black women, and so on.

**MYTH:** Rapists are sick and crazy.

**Reality:** Most convicted rapists are not psychologically different from the "normal" male. The rate of mental illness among convicted rapists is no different from the rate of mental illness among "normal" males.





**MYTH:** Survivors of rape are always visibly upset immediately after the attack.

**Reality:** Each survivor's reaction is unique. Many survivors have a "controlled," rather than "expressed," reaction, meaning that they feel numb, go into shock, or withdraw. This myth often causes others to disbelieve a survivor who appears calm and in control after being assaulted.

**MYTH:** To help a survivor recover, family and friends should express sympathy, try to protect and take care of her/him, and distract the survivor from dwelling on the attack.

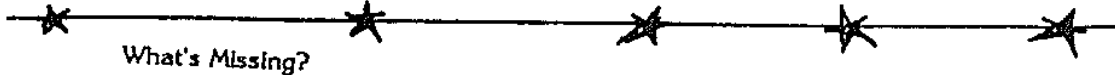
**Reality:** Recovery must happen at its own pace. The survivor needs support in making her/his own decisions and reclaiming control of her/his life. By trying to control the survivor's recovery, people intending to be supportive actually risk making it more difficult for a survivor to heal.

**MYTH:** Men rape because they need sex and are not getting it.

**Reality:** Men rape in order to humiliate and dominate people. 75% of convicted rapists report being married or having other sexual partners at the time of the assault.

**MYTH:** As long as I don't rape and am careful not to put myself at risk of being raped, it's not my problem.

**Reality:** Rape touches all our lives. It can happen to anyone, no matter how careful you are. And even if you are never assaulted, with more than one million rapes each year, it is virtually certain that someone you know and care about will be assaulted and will come to you for support. How you respond will play a crucial part in that person's recovery.



What's Missing?

How is "reality" distorted when one fails to look at the correlation of racial demographics with Social Health? To me, the distortion is profound. If a society is organized in such a way that the majority population has a high level of Social Health, but certain segments of the population are living at a far lower level, then is that society really "healthy?" I think not, since there is a moral failing here. In a (literal) democracy, it is entirely possible for the majority to oppress the minority, simply by voting in their own selfish "interests." The Social Health of any minority thus depends, at least in part, on some moral action by the majority.

There's another disparity in Minnesota's national rankings, one that doesn't even appear in the S-Report, but I find too striking to leave out: Criminal justice. Relative to other states, Minnesota sends fewer people to prison than any other state, over. At the same time, our justice system is one of the most racist in the country, judging by the number. Nationally, as I reported in Nygaard Notes #68, African-American man is almost 8 times more likely to be in prison or jail than a "white" man. That's shameful enough, but in Minnesota it's even worse. The ratio here is 25 to 1, three times as bad!

(from NYGAARD NOTES, MPLS, MN. and on-line)

↑  
racial demographics and social health.

ed: using the prevalence of violence, (sexual and otherwise), in our culture as a measure, ask your white activist, friends & others to rate your communities' social health.

P.S. Excellent report by an Institute on social health, measuring the U.S. on multiple factors. ✓ it out.

Sixty-one

STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE

STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE



Graphic: Come!Unity Press

**NO MORE SHIT**

STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE STOP RAPE

# (GAY)MEN AND RAPE

From the  
**1980'S**

Self-Published by some  
Radical Fairies from

NOLA: LOUISIANA SISSIES IN STRUGGLE -  
OR - L.A.S.I.S. (r.i.p, sstevy) ♡



62

"Ultimately, it is the job of men to wake other men up. But if social change is a goal of rape crisis centers and shelters, is it not in the best interest of these groups to challenge, support, and educate men to do this work - men who, in turn, challenge, support, and educate other men to do the work?"

Richard Orton from "Transforming a Rape Culture"

# THOUGHTS ★ ON ★ RAPE

Rape is a crime of violence, not an act of passion or sex. Rape is the forceful violent attack by a man on an object of "otherness," whether that object/person be an 80-year-old woman, an 8-day-old child, a queer man, or a strong dyke. It is viewed as sexual only by those who imagine that rape could be enjoyable.

In addressing the issue of rape, gay men must examine the nature of male sexuality--our sexuality. No male, queer or straight, escapes the pressures to perform sexually and play the "masculine/feminine" roles put on us by our society. What is the nature of male sexuality beyond cultural pressures? Is it inherently violent and dominance prone? Is aggressive male sexuality characteristic of a sexually repressive, woman/"other" hating culture? Where do gay men fit into this pattern? And how can we change it?

As a first step toward answering these questions we have been forced to examine our attitudes and assumptions about the mythology of rape. Central to this mythology is the statement "All women want to be raped." Four hundred rape-murders a year in this country alone expose the cruel lie in this myth. Both ancient and recent history bear out that gang rape and war go hand-in-hand--from the sack of Troy and the famous Rape of the Sabine Women to the carnage wreaked on the women of Dacca and My Lai during the wars for independence in Bangla Desh and Viet Nam. Women's bodies have always been part of the booty for victorious soldiers.

The myth that no woman can be raped against her will is exemplified in such jokes as "Women can run faster with their skirts up than men with their pants down." Statements like these are meant to discourage women from doing battle against an aggressor. This myth fosters the idea that there is no such thing as forcible rape, that it is the will of the woman to be "ravished."

Even though rape is the least reported crime, statistics show that over one-half of rape victims are threatened with a weapon and one-fourth are physically harmed or brutally beaten. The primary reaction of women to rape is fear for their lives.

The mythology of rape even claims to have a sense of humor. The lighthearted suggestion that "if you're going to be raped, you might as well relax and enjoy it" implies that a violent physical encounter not of your choosing can be fun if you play along and suspend all feelings. The myth here is based on the assumption that the man is doing what comes naturally and that because he's enjoying himself you should too. This is a classic example of how men define women's sexuality.

An excerpt from the zine **(GAY) MEN AND RAPE** from 1980 out of New Orleans.





Feminist writers have illustrated over and over again how our cultural mythology--fairy tales, fiction, drama, movies, advertising, television--perpetuate the image of Woman as Victim. Red Riding Hood is punished for going alone into the woods and has to be saved from her folly by a "strong" man. Sleeping Beauty and Snow White are (literally) brought to life by "fearless" men. Even Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz is forced to admit that she never should have gone outside her backyard in search of the rainbow. Any woman who steps out of her role expectations is "asking for it." "It" being rape.

Rape is more than physical assault and sexual terrorism. Rape is a violent energy that does not always play itself out in physical attacks. Rape is treating another person as an object, loudly and publically commenting on their body, invading their personal space. Rape is verbal, emotional, psychic, and physical.

The concept of a man being "raped" by a woman is another myth that must be examined. (A precedent was recently established in Utah which amended its rape laws to legalize this myth. Utah is anti-ERA, anti-abortion, and homophobic.) As men we know for a fact that maintaining an erection is as much psychological as physical. Women cannot penetrate men's bodies with their sexual organs. If the level of physical violence and terror were the same for the male "victim" as it most certainly is for women, then maintaining an erection during a sexually oriented attack (rape) would be impossible.

Rape is verbal, emotional, psychic,  
and physical.

On a physical level, sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is nonreciprocal, since "pleasure" for the woman and "pleasure" for the man are profoundly different. The energy exchanged for achieving pleasure differs. Men achieve orgasm within a matter of minutes, sometimes seconds, and have a tendency to lose consciousness afterward. Women achieve orgasm thru clitoral stimulation, not vaginal penetration, and are capable of multiple orgasms. It is our view that heterosexuality is not consensual, but coercive. In this culture men are conditioned to choose and women to oblige.

It is our contention that all men desire to be penetrated. As males we know that it is pleasurable for the prostate gland to be massaged, and we know that this produces an "orgasm" that is not necessarily ejaculatory or genitally focused. The only way for men to massage the prostate is thru anal penetration by either a phallus or another man's erect cock. It is our theory that men want to be fucked. In a woman/"other" hating society this desire is projected onto all "others." Rape, then, is the forcing of male sexuality onto all "other"-defined beings.



The writers of these "Thoughts" are all white males living in the South. It is urgent, therefore, that we address the racism in the mythology of rape. In the past forty years, 455 men have been executed for rape in this country. 408 of these men were black (90%). And yet 75% of all reported rapes are committed by white men. In the majority of all rapes, white men rape white women and black men rape black women. Rape laws were never intended to protect women, but instead to determine the damage done to a man's property. The oldest definition of the word rape (c. 1400) is the taking of property by force. In America, the first instance of rape as a capital offense is found in the slave codes prior to the Civil War. A slave accused of raping a white woman was given a mandatory death sentence. There was no penalty for a white man raping a slave woman--a common and legal practice.

A further myth that must be questioned is that of "homosexual" rape. We encounter this myth most often in written accounts of prisons, the military, boys' schools, etc. Even if we use the medical definition of the word "homosexual"--one who enjoys sex with another person of the same gender--we discover that it is the homosexual who is the victim of rape, not the perpetrator. Rape is an overwhelmingly heterosexual phenomenon. Gay men are raped by straight men.

We do not want to gloss over the very rare occurrences, which always get wide media coverage, when so-called "homosexual" men do rape and/or murder. Yet an examination of such events shows that these are men who lead or attempt to lead heterosexual--that is, straight-identified--lives. In a society that cherishes all forms of human sexuality, rape, we believe, would vanish.

\*



\*

What, then, is the reality in male sexuality for gay men? When males engage in sexuality with each other, because of the dynamics of our conditioning as men, there is a tendency for one man to take on the "role" of passivity, reception, voidness, while the other man adopts the "role" of dominance, fullness, aggression. Too often heterosexual conditioning leads gay men to get stuck in relationships that keep the sexual dynamic static.

This sad mockery of the worst aspects of heterosexuality plays itself out in gaymale rape fantasies. The desire to be fucked by a big cock forcefully, by a strong male-identified man---Is this rape? Is there here the fear of violence, pregnancy, mistreatment by police and hospital officials? Or is it a consensual dominance-submission fantasy?

...heterosexuality is not consensual, but coercive.



SIXTY-  
FIVE

Conscious voluntary submission is not rape. To call it so is to trivialize the importance of rape to women and prevents us from allying with them. Rape is a crime of violence, not a sexual act. Gay men, especially effeminate men, face similar violence on the streets. The differences between queerbashing and rape is the absence of the possibility of pregnancy, abortion, or forced motherhood with a lifetime reminder of a violent act. Let's call our "rape" fantasies "dominance-submission" fantasies. And let's call queerbashing queerbashing and rape rape. The issues get confused and clouded by using the same word for different experiences. At the end of a gaymale "rape" fantasy there are only memories, no scars. This is not what rape is about.

Gay men are in a unique position to explore the culturally conditioned patterns of dominance and submission that seem to be inherent in the nature of male sexuality. Why is the man getting fucked usually on bottom? How can anal sexuality be a mutually supportive act, with the man being entered empowered to stop or to continue? How about fucking with dildoes instead of penises? Why fucking? How about mutual masturbation, rubbing, or sucking? Why cum? Why must our sexuality be tied to the heterosexual myth of The Big Orgasm? Why must we repeat the oppressive patterns of heterosexuality? How much shit have we learned, internalized, and unconsciously act out in our male-male relations? Gay men can lead the way in exorcising the violence that appears to be at the center of male sexuality.

Stopping rape is an issue that is vital to Gay Liberation. Gay men, no matter how masculine our appearance, are seen as "other" by the dominant heterosexual culture. As long as straight (white) men continue to dominate the world, just so long will continue the rape of women, the queerbashing of gay-identified men, and the destruction of our Mother the Earth. We must unite to

## STOP RAPE



### SOURCES

Susan Brownmiller:	<u>Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape</u>
Phyllis Chesler:	<u>About Men</u>
Mary Daly:	<u>Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism</u>
Andrea Dworkin:	<u>Woman Hating</u>
Calvin Herndon:	<u>Sex and Racism in America</u>
Kate Millett:	<u>Sexual Politics</u>
Prairie Fire Organizing Committee:	<u>"Rape and Racism"</u>
Evelyn Reed:	<u>Woman's Evolution</u>
Adrienne Rich:	<u>Of Woman Born</u>

This booklet cost us 25c each. To receive free copies please send what you can to help pay for cost and postage. X Write: Box 51012, New Orleans, La. 70151. X Tell us how many you want. Permission to reprint granted.





# REWARD

A reward of \$5,000 is offered for information that will empower women against the system of sexual violence that deprives them of freedom and self-determination.

The men below are responsible for the majority of sexual assaults against women in the United States. They are much more of a threat than the demonized "Black rapist."

Armed with positions of power and rights of access, the terror that these men inflict is pervasive and tremendously destructive.

These men are most likely to be found in your place of employment, in classrooms, on a date, or in your home. If you think you know one of them, take action! Call a local sexual assault hotline. Take a self-defense course. Form a support network. Educate yourself about the realities of sexual violence.



# 1 suspect described as:

- White male
- All ages
- All heights
- All weights



# 2 suspect described as:

- White male with hat
- All ages
- All heights
- All weights

**CAUTION:** The odds are extremely high that these men will never be brought to "justice" through the U.S. legal system. They define what is just and unjust. Women must empower themselves against this systematic violence through self-education and self-defense.

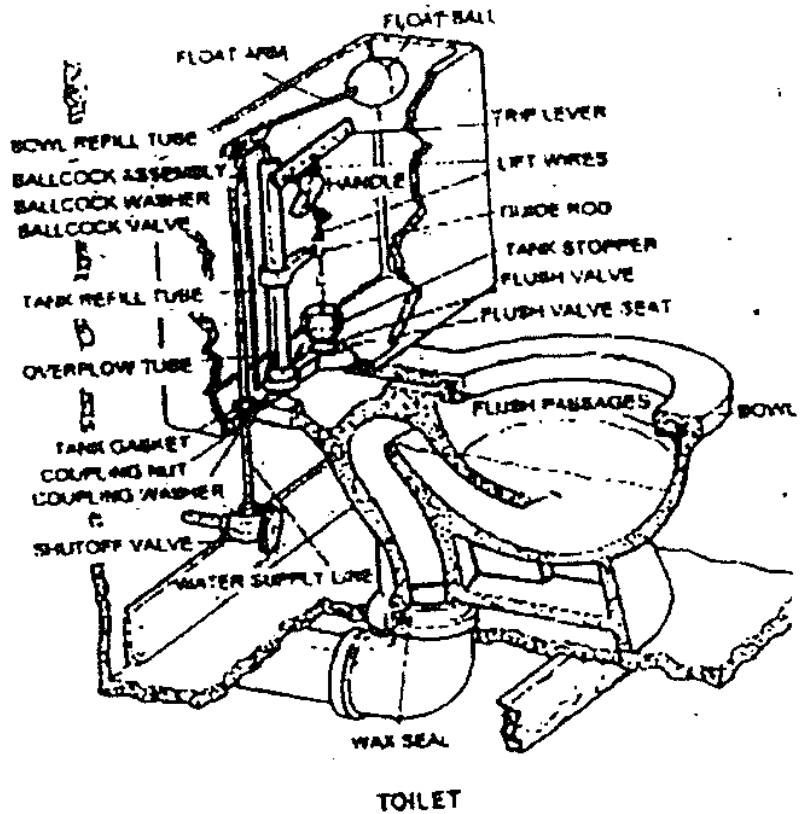




cc

66

# THE SCENE



Thank, Alex xox

ali sauer. (from) sexual assault in activist communities.  
a special issue of the peak. volume 36-1 reprint feb. 2003

Hey you  
"sensitive" "feminist" activist boy  
get your fucking hands out of my shirt  
off my ass  
as you spew  
your empty, practiced rhetoric  
designed to get you  
activist pussy



Just because you saw  
"The Biblical Slut" on my shelf  
does not mean you get  
to fuck me without asking  
my promiscuity  
does NOT erase  
my agency

you said it's confusing  
with you  
you're so cuddly  
you're polyamorous



You are scrambling to  
make excuses for unwanted  
hands travelling over flesh  
for valed pressure and  
persuasion

But something about  
your ambiguity  
your practiced location  
somewhere between sensitive  
and amarmy  
rendered me timid  
silent  
second-guessing myself  
unsure

But watching you now  
repeating this predatory game  
endlessly  
with each new  
cute young activist girl  
makes me know  
makes me sure  
makes me SICK  
So watch out  
you line-pushing  
boundary-crossing  
wolf-in-sensitive-activist-boy  
clothing  
people talk  
people share  
and we are not  
taking it  
any more!



68

RADICAL FROM THE CRIB : A CONVERSATION WITH  
KIM CHRISTOFFEL (AND VIOLETTA)

"Consent is a process and not an event."  
--Kim Christoffel

Kim is a long-time activist, Anarchist, Feminist, community organizer living in Minneapolis. She has worked- and also has been an invaluable resource for others- in the areas of labor rights; mental health "consumer" rights/wellness/advocacy as a "consumer" and survivor; organizer and member, The Icarus Project; collectives and community building; mental health "systems change"; Rape Culture-smashing, and radical survivor-support. Kim is a student, a writer; and can be seen at her favorite worker-owned café having great conversations over tea, (cigarettes optional).

"Violetta" (commonly called, Vi) is a Queer/Transitional person of many compartments on the junk train of living/life. Vi considers himself to be a para-professional in creative co-collaboration; was a DWOS member and the real reason it was not "officially" a "Men's-" effort, but "men and male-identified"; and is co-editing this publication.

[A note to clarify: In this interview all perpetrators we refer to were/are (to our knowledge: biological and self-identified) men. The identity of their victims is presumed to be "woman," due to their disclosures and to the best reckoning of Kim and Vi. Within in this text/context, the reader may assume that "rapist" or references to someone perpetrating sexual violence is referring to a man/men, and that "victim" or "survivor" refers to a female person who a man has (men have) raped or sexually assaulted. While we know that the vast majority of sexual violence is perpetrated by men and/or males (including boys), and that much of this violence is against women, we also know that **anyone may commit such acts against people of any gender or age.** The Editor begs your understanding, if it seems that this clarification is a "Gender 101." It is meant to honor peoples' identity, their self-given names; and to be accurate/truthful/sincere. Ed.]

(V) Tell me about yourself , Kim.

(K) I grew up in Chicago in a very radical household...progressive. Jewish. My parents met while occupying a building, protesting the Vietnam war. A household...where there was conversation about Capitalist oppression. Politics came into my vocabulary very early on.

(V) You mean you didn't discover politics in college???



69

(K) I was talking with someone the other day about "moments", you know, situations that radicalize a person; mine was a process. In college I was active in campus politics. Sweatshop labor, labor organizing. I discovered the Punk scene, which was revelatory for me...in its lifestyle rejection of mainstream politics and culture...I'm trying to figure out what an Anarchist social worker might look like. I do believe that I can bridge activism and social work in the field in a way that is explicitly anti-oppression, revolutionary.

(V) Looking back on you years, your experiences in the punk scene and living in punk, communal households—were there connections to DWOS and if so, what were they? And did you have any cohorts who you knew to be either involved in DWOS, or other survivor support or anti-rape activism—and what was the [punk community] awareness at that time and in that place?

(K) No. [DWOS] didn't come out of the punk scene...people with definite connections. Concentric circles.

(V) Sooo- the scene didn't embrace DWOS? I'm still a punk I guess so, "no hard feelings!"

(K) I was deeply immersed in punk...mostly because of people I had relationships with. There is such a focus on lifestyle politics and style; not on political activism or engagement. Discussions could happen during, so-called "crisis" periods, or...an event.

(V) Would you talk about a crisis or an event that involved sexual assault, or a person being called-out [as a perpetrator]?

(K) Often in the punk scene, the voices of people who want [conscious-] process—who are trying to respond, and want ongoing dialogue—are drowned out by others, men especially, who generalize issues in a way that isolates survivors and discourages community responses. And you see this paralleled in white, anti-racist work which is often about self-affirmation, and assuagement of guilt, like, "I'm talking about it, therefore I'm doing something about it, therefore I can't be perpetuating it." In effect, all you end up doing is talking about yourself, and, like you said, leaving the survivor out of it. These conversations become circular. It's all about men and how they have been affected as well, or attacked.

(V) In this time you're speaking of, DWOS was formed. I think the organizing principle was that this should be a place where awareness and consciousness would be raised and that men would bring this into their households, communities, scenes, and especially their relationships, and be engaged in a process of questioning how we act around sexuality, intimacy, and choices we make to be in positions of power, to remain in control. I'd be interested to know if you have male friends or whatever, who were involved in it (DWOS), impacted by it, or if you saw it's influence in your circles, aka in Mala/Bat Annex, punk households, and theater/show spaces?



(K) First I want to clarify that what I said earlier, criticisms that I voiced, I think groups like yours are incredibly important. And yet you have to ask, what does it produce? And does it have an impact outside of the support group like you said, or does it kind of back-handedly reinforce behaviors that are going on outside the group? Not a lot of guys in my punk scene were involved. Guys I know did get a lot out of it. I know that several of them were putting that education and soul-searching into their personal relationships and also were trying to take it to the broader community, reproducing it on those levels. So I feel like, for the people I knew who were in DWOS, it was productive and it was useful. But I guess I would say that the people that needed it the most didn't go to the meetings.

(V) Where would they go?

(K) I don't think that they were interested... in challenging that within themselves. A lot of these folks would say something like, "my politics are cool," without actually doing the work. You know, being on food stamps and drinking 40's is inherently radical. (laughs) There's this attitude of "Fuck the state! We're going to build our own community."

Obviously building community can be amazing and revolutionary, but when it remains insular... I saw DWOS present an opportunity that most people I knew didn't take.

(V) An anecdote. I was asked by punks, some friends in the scene, to lend my 'expertise' around how to deal with perpetrators. Two local punks, while in Philly for a punk festival, raped (at least) two women, who were also at the festival.

There was a complex process. There was a group of women who were supporting the survivors, communicating via email from Philly to a local group led, it seems, by Profane Existence people and their supporters. They worked together to try to decide what to do about these guys, and what it would mean for folks in Minneapolis to see these guys at shows. They came up with a plan to confront these two men and to try to make them accountable. The consequences were, possible prosecution if the survivors pushed for it, and kicking them out of the scene. Some ("under-") groundwork was laid out. It involved dozens of people. Women at that first circle, the one I went to, took and held the initiative, forcing the men to hear them. They had already organized the women in the punk community.

Six months later, my friends who had asked me to get involved (they didn't know any other guys in the scene with my level of activism) didn't know of any outcomes on the Minneapolis side of things. I knew of the perpetrators, and how one of the dudes' family had hired a big lawyer, so that when someone from the Minneapolis crisis group called the kid's house, his mom said that the police would be contacted, and that she would have people charged for harassment, and this guy retreated to the gated communities of the suburbs, where he could hide from the results of his actions. I don't know how the Profane Existence folks went about supporting the survivors. They did complain, about a month or so into it, that there were technical and interpersonal communications' challenges between the two scenes.

Some of the prominent older punks, the folks who booked hands and produced the bands on the Profane Existence label, were designated, or stepped up and planned to



11  
1  
5  
8

notify bands and to make announcements about sexual assaults at their shows, as to the follow through, I don't know. However, I do know that a lot of energy goes into scene "cohesion." To be critical here, this term seems to be significantly about recruiting more clueless boys and young men and grooming them to be new consumers and producers, all this in a scene where a lot of alcohol, 'teen spirit,' and money flows. Sexism and sexual dysfunction is reinforced and reproduced within the scene, at parties. The Philly rapes made a lot of people sit up and take notice.

Do you think that when men take the initiative in a perceived crisis and respond immediately and without much thought, that this generally leads to them dropping the ball, leaving the remaining work for women and the survivors, who have to carry the most of the burden?

(K) In my experience, there is a lot of unnamed, even accepted misogyny—for a variety of reasons not the least of which is that the scene has always been male dominated. This is true for even the pockets where women number in the majority. There's this feeling that, "oh, well. What can you do? That's men." It's actually a very mainstream, that's 'men's biology.' Also, it's a matter of women not wanting to rock the boat

(V) It's a very established sub-culture, with its norms, so disrupting those norms is controversial. You lived in a household, and a man was living there who sexually assaulted a woman there. Can you talk about what was going on? How DWOS was involved and maybe others, that is people in the scene were involved in helping out? You were supporting the survivor, while also trying to deal with the guy who raped her.

(K) Yes. We had a reasonably new roommate who had lived there a couple months in a large attic space. He got the okay to have a woman he knew move in and stay with him. They had a friendship with a close physical aspect with it, although they weren't dating. It was basically a date-rape situation. She said, no, stop, and he didn't.

It was interesting to me and speaks to how we think about supporting survivors. The survivor immediately left town. I didn't know her very well and I didn't feel at all in a space to try to contact her. And so I talked to the perpetrator a lot. He was open to talking and wanting to process. In that process, he disclosed that it had happened in the past—that this was a pattern for him in other relationships. At a point, I just... lost it and kicked him out of the house, because it was all very triggering for me as an assault survivor.

The wishes of the survivor were that DWOS be involved with the perpetrator, and she did not want to have the justice system involved. This left me torn as far as being committed to survivor support. And what do you do when the wishes of the survivor don't make sense to you? If you recognize that sexual assault has primary parties, as well as being part of a broader community, you struggle with that tension.

But within that situation, I had needs that were not met. [Ed.: While Kim recognizes that the survivor's needs are primary, it is also important to recognize that allies also have needs within those relationships of support.]



72

(V) So you met with DWOS members and they proposed a mentor/accountability relationship with the perpetrator?

(K) Yes, but there was no follow up. There wasn't any contact after that. I wasn't sure how I should feel about that. I was seeing the perpetrator in the community without knowing what his status was. It affected me a lot, impacting me very negatively.

(V) DWOS mentors could have been better at communicating to you what was going on. There's been some criticism....

(K) No I definitely share that criticism. You know, I was affected—as I was meeting with these 'mentors', I had, like, a total breakdown on the porch at my house, just crying and sobbing... and so there was very real communication about this situation and it affected me profoundly. Like I was saying, it affects the community as a whole and that should be a factor in mentorship. It wasn't until months later that I talked to one of the people who was a mentor. He basically said that the guy hadn't followed through with it. I don't know what happened after that, and I know that he's still in the scene. I see him at all the punk spaces.

(V) I wonder if during the time when you were trying to assess the situation, trying to juggle your intervention with the perpetrator and help the survivor at the same time, if you were dealing with some isolation yourself?

(K) Purely from a self-interested point, I definitely could have gotten more support from people who were trying to deal with the situation. I heard the survivor is back in town and that she and the perpetrator have struck up a friendship again. This person I was talking to, didn't know the details and wondered how serious it was, in that way that rejects and de-values the survivor's experience. But obviously that is complicated and then the survivor decided to resume a relationship with the perpetrator; not a romantic one, but...All these things are complicated by the insularity of the punk scene and the sometimes complex needs of the survivor. Because this situation was, basically, "date rape," I think that it was taken less seriously...He had a history of {sexually assaulting women in this way}. He disclosed to me he had done this in other relationships, admitting (quote) "I don't know why I do it." "I can't seem to stop."

(V) So, about "secondary impacts" which refers to those close to the situation. There are so many people – basically I tell people to think about U.S. bombing in the Middle East and to think of the outward impacts of a rape as like collateral damage. There can be incredible destruction around the primary target. I no longer like the metaphor...we sometimes do nothing because we may feel like to support one or another of the parties would be like taking sides. We may be unsure of "who to believe." When believing the survivor, may mean giving up comfort—or losing a friendship with the person being called-out. I agree that these seem to be complicated situations. On the other hand, with DWOS many of us strove to become agents for creating a culture, (focus on men/masculinity.) of strong and unconditional support for survivors of men's violence.





And to view (when it is appropriate) accountability and change of a perpetrator, as potentially being part of the same circle of healing/repair.

(K) Calling someone out takes a lot of strength. It will mean having a spotlight on you. It is agreeing to "testify" before people [Ed.: some of whom are your own friends], you are testifying your experience. You have to be assertive and being assertive is hard for many women. What would it look like to support a survivor, and, hold a perpetrator accountable in a way that allows the survivor to be like, "This is what happened. I want them to be held accountable, and-then-I-want-to-hide."

I want to add to that when it isn't the survivor who does the calling-out, but the stereotypical male perp/female survivor where her support system of women are the ones who do the calling out, it still lands on women to "out" men. That's what is exciting to me about DWOS, is that it's men saying that that's not an okay situation. That it shouldn't be women's responsibility—survivor, ally, or support—always to be the ones. Because that just continues the framing of Women-as-Victims.

It perpetuates sexism in that it's women and too often not men who will stand with a female victim. And the men around him usually won't hold him accountable. And I think, (like you mentioned,) men trying to address racism and do anti-racism work, that this can echo white folk depending on people of color to either, educate them about racism, or be the ones who call it out—name it.

[discussion about "Born in Flames" conference, gathering about radical community responses to sexual assault]

There were two members of DWOS who travelled to Portland to give a workshop about it which made me happy to get this mentorship concept and the support group concept to other communities. Except in Philly, there weren't similar efforts in other cities in the U.S. anywhere that they knew of. It was exciting for people to hear about it. So people were [exposed to it] and I think it was controversial and that was impressive to me.

And then the [DWOS member-supported] R.A.M.B.L. (Revolutionary Artist Mom And Baby League) childcare was also just super incredible because like we were talking about earlier, it was men [and this Ed.] taking responsibility for a role that's traditionally and unquestionably filled by women. It fulfilled a great need for that child [and mom] care and there's not really anything like that now and it's always an issue and so women thought that that was very significant.

(V) Some people might not automatically see a link and yet... if/when more men step up or even find pleasure in prioritizing being involved in their women friends and intimates and associates and allies' lives. Then they will be a part of that circle of support to (hopefully) help prevent sexual assault from occurring. But if it does then there will be men who are a part of the fabric of the survivor's life.

(K) {They'll} feel invested.



(V) Exactly. Who would be a better risk as far as somebody to trust, because they would have that investment.

We're seeing a lack of emotionally functional male interconnectedness. But really pretty much every woman has a rape story or knows a survivor of sexual assault.

(K) And about the Born in Flames conference, I did two work workshops there about mental health and not explicitly about sexual assault.

Being "crazy" seems in some ways to be a reasonable reaction to a completely f'ed up world. A more accepted reaction to being sexually assaulted, is to kind of "lose it." And so for me, there is a connection between the work that I do (with Icarus) and anti-rape work.

(V) Thank you Kim. There was something I thought was vital and always want to see more analysis about, within radical men's and liberation movements, is the compartmentalization of oppressions. For example in approaching communities to do education and awareness work, I saw this.

(K) You imply with the language that you are using to talk about anti-oppression work—but I think that it needs to be emphasized—that the goal of anti-oppression work is liberation. You know dealing with the hard shit, like this is a freeing experience. You're not just doing the work because it's your duty—because you're responsible, but also, because of that, your liberation is tied up with everyone else's. So while I wasn't a part of DWOS support groups, [I support guys supporting each other throughout the struggle.]

(V) Want to know what I think has been some of the best work to come out of the local anti-rape movement? The workshops and cabarets of Sexy Spring and Toolshed Collective. Events promoting consent and positive sexuality and healthy communication within that. And joyfully too! So this would be a part of a liberation politics. What would a rape-free world look like? I think it would look like a world where people aren't afraid—and are actually able to talk about what we want, and what feels good. Being okay, safe to not know what feels good (how one won't be transgressed upon in that space of not-knowing). Exploring those together.

(K) I've said that consent is a process, not an event. I've been talking with friends about the complexity of consent, that to me it should be about making sure that what is happening feels safe to everyone involved... When submission and domination are talked about it's usually in the media sense. And I think that, inherent to discussions of consent are submission and domination. We should recognize that they are present in every sexual interaction... [that???] is why you're able to play with them, and why you're able to find them arousing, and why it can be fun. But recognizing that they're always at play—even in "vanilla" sex there's still [that dynamic].

(V) Yeah. It's fundamental. Power, trust, who gets it, who doesn't.

(K) Thinking about DWOS' support group—I mean, I feel like within the punk/DIY scene here, mostly the only time... most men don't have emotional relationships with other men and they bond by hanging out and drinking together. There is lots of homophobia. If you don't have an emotional bond, there is absolutely no foundation to do liberatory work.

[End of interview.]

Kim C is a mental health activist who has worked closely with the Icarus Project and is a founding member of the North Star Health Collective.



15

## ON SAFER SPACE BY V.

MAKING THE WORLD A SAFER PLACE, FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABUSE SURVIVORS, SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR EVERY COMMUNITY - SECOND ONLY TO THE ELIMINATION OF SUCH ACTS, ASK A SURVIVOR WHAT S/H/(T)H(E)(Y) THINK, AND LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR WORLD.

WE DID.

AT THIS TIME THERE IS NO ANARCHIST OR ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN, COOPERATIVE HOUSEHOLD IN THE TWIN CITIES OF MINNEAPOLIS (ST. PAUL, (POP. 8-HUNDRED THOU. OR SUCH-LIKE), WE KNOW OF, WHICH HAS AS A UNIFYING PRINCIPLE AND STRUCTURE, THE ACTIVE PROVISION OF SAFE(R) SPACE, FOR THOSE LIVING WITH THE PAIN AND MADNESS OF HAVING BEEN THROUGH THE MONSTROUS EXPERIENCE OF BEING RAPED OR SEXUALLY ABUSED. (ONE SUCH HOUSE - THE QUEER, FEM-

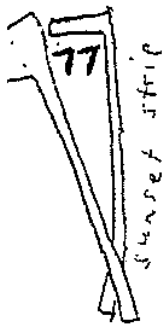


INIST ~~THE~~ TWIXT! - NO LONGER EXISTS).

THIS REVOLUTIONIZING OF COMMUNITY *at home* IS NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF SAYING, "WERE 'SAFE SPACE', WE SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS AND COMRADES WHO IDENTIFY AS SURVIVORS." AS A MEMBER OF THE TWIXT - ALSO A SURVIVOR - I KNOW WE HAD TO EDUCATE OURSELVES, TRAIN, BE AVAILABLE TO WIMMIN AND OTHERS AS AUTHENTIC, COMMITTED SUPPORTERS, AND CONSISTENTLY GET TOGETHER AND BE PART OF A CONSCIOUS PROCESS ABOUT OUR NEEDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AROUND THE REALITIES AND PARTICULAR SENSITIVITIES OF SURVIVOR AND NON-SURVIVOR ALIKE.

IT CAN BE DONE. WE HOPE YOU WILL ENDEAVOR TO CREATE HOUSES - AND COMMUNITIES, WORKPLACES, GROUPS - WHICH ARE IN ACTIVE AND



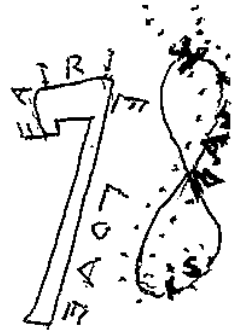


LOVING, DOWN-TO-EARTH BEAUTIFUL  
RESISTANCE TO RAPE CULTURE.  
IT WON'T BE EASY.

CREATING SAFER SPACES WHICH  
ENGENDER EVERYONE'S LIBERTY,  
AND WHICH MAINTAIN A FLEXIBLE /  
INFLEXIBLE BALANCE (DUE TO  
CHANGING NEEDS, DIFFERENT  
CIRCUMSTANCES, & AS FAR AS  
EXPECTATIONS AND HOUSE AGREE-  
MENTS, GOES - REQUIRES OF ITS  
MEMBERS A LOT OF HUMILITY.

THERE IS NO GUIDEBOOK, NO SET  
OF GUIDELINES FOR MAKING YOUR  
HOME OR COMMUNITY SPACE "SAFER"  
IN TERMS OF PREVENTING SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE, AND SUPPORTING ITS  
VICTIMS / SURVIVORS. (YOU DECIDE)!  
IT IS HOWEVER, A CRUCIAL EARLY  
STEP, IN ELIMINATING RAPE, AND  
BEING FOCUSED PARTICIPANTS





KEEPING IT REAL IN THE MOVE-  
MENT TO TRANSFORM—(THAT IS,  
TRANSFORMING)—RAPE CULTURE.

READERS SHOULD DERIVE INSPIRA-  
TION AND IDEAS FROM THE MOUTHS,  
(AND PENCIL-TYPEWRITER-COMPUTERS)  
OF PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY, WHICH  
CONSTITUTES THIS ZINE EFFORT.

SEXY SPRING COLLECTIVE GENEROUS-  
LY SHARED THEIR PROCESS WITH US,  
FOR HOW THEY WENT ABOUT IDEN-  
TIFYING THE STRUCTURE AND SUB-  
STANCE OF THE SPACE THEY NEEDED  
TO SEE, AS IT RELATES TO AND  
MANIFESTS THEIR VALUES.

(Thank, "Sexxies"! ) Vi, (Ed. no 3.)



# THE TOOLSHED COLLECTIVE



## Creating Safer Spaces at Sexy Spring

Safer Space is an essential part of every Sexy Spring event. We believe that Safer Spaces are inviting, engaging, and supportive environments in which all people feel comfortable behaving genuinely. Yet Sexy Spring participants have different communication styles, personalities and opinions, and come from diverse racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. In order to foster this kind of temporary community space, people must respect other and actively look out for the well being of all those attending this skill share. Supporting the most vulnerable members of our community is one of our goals. This is why we define safer space as survivor-centric space (which is a space that prioritizes survivors' needs).

We choose to say "Safer" Space rather than "safe space" because we acknowledge that no space is entirely "safe" for everyone. Some events may push people's boundaries more than other events. It is important that Sexy Staffers listen carefully to participants' experiences and act on what they hear.

It is our hope that the guidelines below can enable us to support each other in exploring our own experiences and boundaries. Sexy Spring strives to allow participants to learn new things at their own pace. We provide a Quiet Room for staffers and participants to use when they need some quiet time to process or rest.

Practicing active consent is essential to Safer Space. For the duration of Sexy Spring, consent is defined as a clearly asked question followed by a clearly stated yes.

### Guidelines for Creating Safer Space at Sexy Spring

#### 1. Respect your own physical, mental and emotional boundaries.

- Stay attuned to your own needs
- Feel free leave workshops at any time, for any reason
- If something doesn't feel right to you, please speak up. You may not be the only one who feels that way.
- If you don't want to talk or answer a question, say so.
- Don't wait for someone to "get the hint." Try to vocalize what you need.
- Be assertive if possible. Speak to the person you have a concern with and be direct
- If you need help negotiating a situation, find a Vibes Watcher to assist you.

#### 2. Respect others' physical, mental and emotional boundaries.

- **Always ask for explicit verbal consent before engaging or touching someone.** Never assume consent, especially if drug/alcohol use is involved. Highly intoxicated people are always considered non-consenting.
- **Don't assume** the race, sexuality, gender, history with violence etc. of others. Instead, ask if someone is open to engaging in dialogue about identity. Don't take it personally if someone doesn't want to answer a question. Try asking a Vibes Watcher instead.

**\*Special note on gender assumptions\*** Sexy Spring is a place where everyone should feel empowered to choose their own gender. If at all possible, find out what pronouns people prefer or use neutral pronouns such as 'they' or 'z'. It is also important to separate terms for peoples' genitals from their gender. We're born with our genitals but we get to choose our genders. Genitals can be referred to on an "internal/external" continuum as opposed to a "male/female" one.

- **Respect the confidentiality of others.** You are welcome to share what you learned at Sexy Spring, but not names or identifying details of other conference participants

#### 3. Sexy Spring is a cooperative learning environment

- We are all here to learn, and we all have something to offer
- Clarifying questions are encouraged
- Respect diverse opinions, beliefs, and points of view. Share ideas rather than judgments. Use 'I' statements as much as possible to state your reactions or your experiences.

- There is no such thing as totally Safe Space. In attending Sexy Spring you are taking a risk in order to learn. You may find yourself outside your comfort zone.
- Assume positive intent
- Everyone (including you) will make unintentional mistakes
- Be aware of the effects your behavior has on others and accept responsibility for it.
- Expect to be confronted by others if you make a mistake

### **Guidelines for Vibes Watchers and Sexy Staffers**

It's preferable for Sexy Staffers to work in pairs representing more than one gender.

1. **Before the workshop begins**, be sure you have backup and remember to practice healthy self-care. Check in with your fellow Staffer. Check in with the presenter, review the content of the presentation and discuss how active the presenter wants to be in maintaining Safer Space.
2. Familiarize yourself with the space. Keep vigilant about potential blind or trouble spots.
3. **When the workshop begins**, clearly identify yourself as a Safer Space provider and make it known that you are there to give help and support. Also, be sure that the Guidelines to Creating Safer Space are read and/or understood by all participants, especially the presenter, and that **everyone agrees to them**.
4. As well as responding to direct requests for support from participants, check in with the group or individuals when you think there is a need. You cannot always sense the "vibe". Feel free to ask.
5. When in a Safer Space provider role drink responsibly, if at all.

### **Guidelines for Interventions**

#### Individuals

1. Check in with the person who feels unsafe. Sometimes you will need to pursue a participant who leaves a workshop to find out if they need help. Focus on the needs of the person requesting help. Ask them what would make them feel more safe or comfortable, and get consent from them before any intervention begins.
2. Often the best solution is the simplest one. Sometimes a short talk, a drink of water, a few deep breaths, some caring attention or a few minutes in the quiet room will work wonders.
3. Get Help! You cannot care for someone, decide on next steps and watch a workshop all by yourself. Get Sexy Spring Organizers and other Sexy Staffers' input before taking further actions.

#### Groups

1. Assess your comfort and the vibe of the group as a whole. Try to keep the Guidelines in mind. Do not wait for things to get really uncomfortable. If necessary, stop the workshop to address your concerns. Safety and respect are much more important than the content of any workshop.
  2. If possible, restore good vibe by reminding the whole group of specific guidelines. When necessary, remind individuals, as unobtrusively as possible, of specific Guidelines.
  3. Repeated problems should not be addressed with repeated reminders. Stop the workshop to address the group as a whole, confer with fellow Staffers and/or ask to speak with an individual away from the group.
- Try to remain impartial/non-judgmental of all parties involved during an intervention.
  - Stay calm. Try to deescalate, rather than escalate a situation.
  - Do not act alone. Get Help! Consult with Sexy Spring organizers and other Sexy Staffers and try to reach consensus before deciding on a course of action.

**Feedback** Creating Safer Space requires active community feedback. Gathering feedback and putting it into action allows us to continue to improve as Safer Space providers. Please feel free to talk with Sexy Spring organizers about anything concerning Safer Space. Thank you.





## An Interview with Teresa, by Alex

Teresa is part of the Twin Cities Sexual Assault group M.O.R (Minneapolis Our Response) founded in '08. They are a mixed gender collective which formed proactively to be a presence at the Republican National Convention; and to be a continuing influence and source of support for folks in the Twin Cities.

[alex] So would you want to go through all the questions?

[teresa] We can...

[alex] Describe your experiences during the RNC. What goals and or ideas did you have or did MOR have?

[teresa] Well, during the RNC everyone in my house was involved at some level of organizing around the RNC. Mostly infrastructure- or care giving. I myself was street medicing. I feel like the ideas we had, had a lot to do with mutual aid and support, as opposed to direct action organizing. MOR was interested in serving as a resource to help support non local (and local) ~~protesters~~ protesters dealing with sexual assault during the RNC. The general idea of safer space was core. At that time we made the, 'just asking for fucking permission' poster, which gave general outlines of what consent and rape are, encouragement to feel empowered to challenge rape, and what to do if in crisis.



We were trying to be visible, visible so that non-accountable people would know that this protest, this mobilization would not be another place they could misuse power. We also set up a 24 hour crisis line.

[Alex] How do you deal with sexual assault in a culture and scene thats so transient? You know like, creating that structure for a mass mobilization is important in giving people the peace of mind that theres a very real attempt to create safer space.

[Teresa] I'm not sure we did create that. We tried to be visible and accessible anyway. One positive thing about transient culture and identifying abusers is that people know SO many people. The silence around the issue is very real, but it doesn't have to be. People in this sub-culture are tied into so many other people so hopefully they can find options if not for safe space, at least support and an ally.

[Alex] With DWOS I feel a lot of times we ended up being bombarded by perpetrators while trying to support survivors...

[Teresa] I've tried in the past to do groups that immediately default to **liaisons** between survivors and perps. I feel like a common attitude is to support or not exhile the perp, so that it wont happen again, which is nice, but it seems all too often focusing on being survivor-**centric** while doing so gets overlooked or ignored. Alot of us in MOR are in our personal lives already supporting survivors or attempting to support or hold aggressors accountable and usually these people are dear friends of ours. As a group, it doesn't seem tangible to do that just now. We are more about awareness raising and capacity building, taking care of our shit.



23

[Alex] You're making sure that you take care of yourselves...

[Teresa] Yes! And trying to take care of each other. This issue is rooted and so fucking heavy. We are moving slow, intentionally.

[Alex] So. Next question.

[Ed. note; subject looked the written question over. Pertains to whether subject has lived in a house where a rape<sup>was</sup> perpetrated, or a rapist was identified- essentially, has she tried to create survivor-centric, or NO PERFS houses.]

[Teresa] [answers no] Conversations are bountiful about the issue but the way my current house resembles safe space seems pretty organic.

[Alex] I also want to know, you have talked about when you move into a house you think about the people you're moving in with; are they going to have the same ideals that I have. And will I agree with them and do we have a similar stance on safer space, and like that?

[Teresa] Oh the perils of punk houses! It's hard to end up living with someone who is extremely macho or aggressive and you were just trying to get cheap rent. It's hard because power dynamics are ever abundant and sometimes the person trying to be safe, or make safer space is the one that has to go. I think its just a question of intentionality. And of course, do you have the luxury to be intentional about who you live with? That privilege is a big deal. I would love to see safer space guidelines be inducted into spaces, including peoples houses. In this community houses are not just where people live.

[On MOR] We have tried to squash any silencing or shitty dynamics pre-emptively by group workshops, or intentional educational conversations. We try to revolve around points of agreement...

Also recently, we had a retreat and one of the exercises I co-facilitated was an anonymous writing project. We all responded to three pre-written questions;  
 How does sexual assault affect your life everyday?  
 What do you feel is the difference between sexualized and non-sexualized violence?  
 What issues are you growing with, healing from?  
 We took everyone's answers and read them aloud [not giving authors names] and it was so powerful to me. There was genuine intimacy and understanding created within the group that I think is essential to sustain this kind of work.

[Alex] [Is there] anybody in MDR who does not have an established relationship with group members? If this doesn't exist now, could it in the future?

[Teresa] Not everyone in the group sees each other socially regularly. Many of us are close friends, roommates or have organized with each other in the past. For those who aren't, I feel we are more than acquaintances because of the nature of the work. Maybe I'm just being hopeful here...

[Alex] I first joined DWOS six years ago, I knew who all those people were. It's a small town...It was great to have diversity. We still were mostly white males, or male-identified people, but yet we came from very diverse aspects of the community or broader community...

[Teresa] I feel like we have to be similar kinds of people, or have similar identities because violence perpetration is very different for different people. And trust amongst group members can be hard to establish. Wondering if you are really on the same page. Like, I am white, MDR is white, I do not feel comfortable publicly addressing sexual assault against people of color. Because I don't live that, because that's exactly what the social service system says they do, and extremely ineffectively. The whole 'white savior' mentality.

With gender, it's somewhat the 'white elephant' in the group. But we are addressing it, trying to find ways to ensure that people with more privileged relationships to sexual assault, first recognize that and then develop their role as an ally after. It is so, so integral that male-bodied folks are a part of the process. It just has to be acknowledged that yes, we all live under rape culture, but some of us are victimized by it in a very different way. It can't be all intellectual. You have to start by recognizing the daily pain and trauma.

[Alex] That sounds like a breakthrough... It can't work if all we're doing is theorizing...

[Teresa] It's moving that way, yeah.

[alex] One more question, a big question. [you may] answer yes or no. Do you all feel like you have a voice, or support within your community? If you don't, what might that look like?

[Teresa]

Just me or everybody?

[Alex] Either.

[Teresa] [Considers awhile] I think so... No. I would say largely, I feel we don't. If folks were really focusing on these issues and on healing from them, things would look so much different. Aggressive gender oppression and presentation would be challenged, silence wouldn't keep communities in the dark, powerless people would reclaim their voices and spaces, consent would be a daily act, not just a sexual practice! You can feel how unequal the scene is here regarding gender alone. There are so many spaces where queers, transfolks, even women are barely present. Why? Because we don't feel safe or comfortable there. There has even been some mild backlash against [MOR] People are so far removed from the issue, they can get really defensive.

Like, a friend of mine who is male-bodied and a member of MORA, went to a local [scene] cafe and the barista there asks him what he's been up to. [My friend] says "I've been working with a local sexual assault awareness group." Immediately this barista says "I hope that we aren't gonna see fliers in here calling people out, cause that's just fucked up!" And my friend is like, "You know whats fucked up? Rape. Rape is fucked-up!" It's a shame, and it's also fairly typical. Instead of just asking him what we are doing, what we are learning, he gets defensive. This person has a large amount of leverage in this scene and that's really disappointing. Anyway, there are still a wealth of folks I know working hard not just to eradicate sexual violence from their communities, but genuinely dealing with their own shit. I'm definitely both appalled and inspired everyday.

(End of interview)

(a continuation, post edit between Vi and Teresa, MID SUMMER 2009)

(Vi) I did my darndest to transcribe your talk with alex, so that it was more or less coherent. Umm... were you punks drinking? Or what was going on for you at the time?

(Teresa) Of course we were drinking! Strong beer too. Being interviewed makes me nervous! But while we are on the subject, thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to edit myself. It was interesting to time travel to last year and force myself to make sense. A sort of intellectual masturbation...

(Vi) O-K! So it's several months later. We're "going to press" (xerox, 'natch) anyyear now. Any corrections or clarifications to your interview?



(Vi continued)... Because darling this ~~xxx~~ will be on your permanent record...

(Transcribers note: This time it is Vi who has been drinking, and Teresa transcribing)

(Teresa) No clarifications or corrections. A desire *to embellish* or tangent upon what I've learned in the last year exists... I mean, MOR is an awareness group. We didn't have models. I now work at a rape crisis center and it inflames the ineffectivity of what dealing with sexual assault in a "professional" way, so much for me. I would say the only way to cope with this trauma is to address it with restorative healing at the core. Hard work. complicated. painful. confusing. And totally worth doing. I don't see another option. Except of course prevention. Until we overthrow the state and confront our histories of colonization and domination and heal from the inside out, people will still keep abusing another. We have piles of shit to deal with. Reading Andrea Smith's "Conquest" and "Color of Violence," the Incite Anthology, are good places to start for education.

(Vi) I found the last part of your interview very "telling" as you like to say. The scene-stealer guy who dissed your friend. The rallying around a perp. Care to add more?

(Teresa) I think people are genuinely trying to support each other and that they see a value, while I see a martyrdom-in trying to defend perpetrators. It's radical-right? to not condemn, to forgive? I think people care, they just don't know where or how to really address it. Hence the importance of community building and information sharing, support.

(End of interview)



(For S.C.'s Zine, Licked To A Frazzle ...)



art by daniel nelson



some of us DWOS  
guys and guy  
galles planned  
a benefit party  
for a Dolly who  
was raped &  
survived to do

a zine all about  
her experience...  
and its also a  
survival guide  
for others rec-  
overing & reclaim-  
ing after exper-

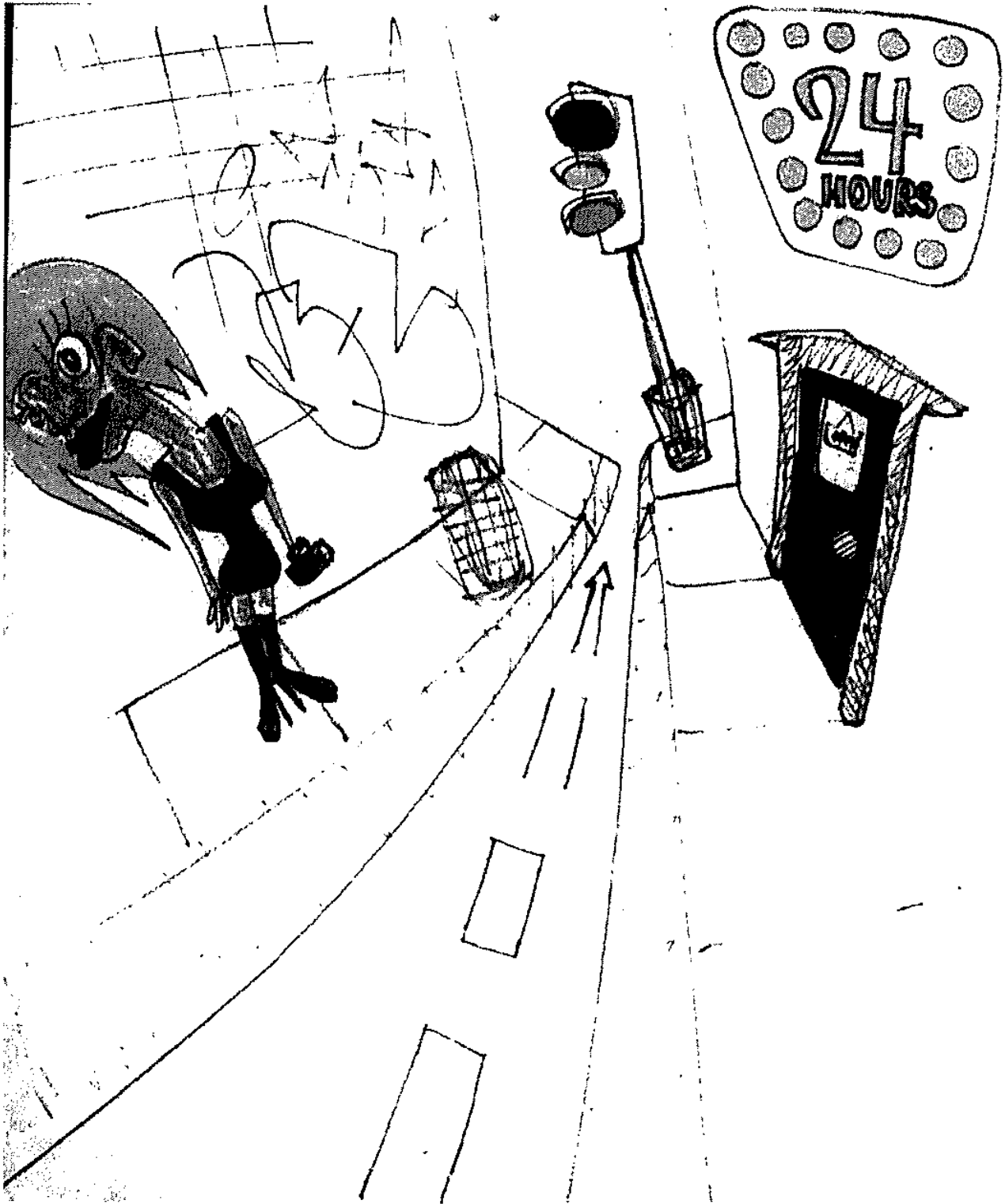
encing the life-  
shattering eff-  
ects of male  
sexual violence.  
r.r. contributed  
art for DWOS  
zine and our  
interview with

r.r. is in these  
pages. she has  
been a friend,  
& inspirational  
model of radical  
being for many  
in the Twin Cities.

she was a member  
of Twixt house,  
and helped out  
her friends in  
DWOS as a true  
ally of integrity.  
We love you, r.r. ♡



KATRINA K.



You are invited to the release  
of a new zine by rr about sexual assault



It's a real  
pick-me-upper!

Barbecue! Blugrass! Bonanza!



Let's forget the  
world is shit

and dance  
a waltz  
together

at The Twixt!

Friday May 11th

around 7 pm

3001 Oakland Av. S.

kid-friendly

bring food to grill

and beverage

if you like

91\*

# RAPE AND ALCOHOL

## Prevalence of Alcohol Use in Instances of Sexual Assault

Although rape is not caused by alcohol, alcohol is often a major contributing factor, especially for high school and college-age students. In college campus acquaintance rapes, 75% of men and 50% of women report drinking prior to the assault. According to Bohmer and Parrot, one typical scenario involves drinking at a party where the alcohol is disguised as punch. Of course, this does not describe the only scenario in which alcohol is part of sexual violence. When talking with young men about alcohol and sexual assault, the most important point to make is that when a woman (or a man) has been drinking significantly, s/he is considered incapable of consenting to sex. Therefore, any sexual act directed against her/him is considered a forcible sex offense.

## Myths

When discussing sexual violence with young people, the subject of alcohol will come up. When this happens, it is important to be aware of the cultural myths and assumptions that exist around alcohol, gender and sexual behavior so that you can better understand audience questions and respond effectively. What follows are some of the assumptions/myths you may encounter:

- A woman is sexier when she's drunk
- A woman who drinks and gets drunk is "unladylike" and deserves less respect
- A drunk woman is more sexually available
- A woman who gets drunk around guys is "looking for sex" and wants to be seduced
- Alcohol will lead a woman who has already said "no" to sex to eventually say "yes"
- It's okay to have sex with a woman after she's passed out from drinking too much
- Women are responsible for their own actions, so if they get so drunk that they can't stop the man, it's their fault.

Can you come up with others?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Frequent Audience Questions about Rape and Alcohol

1. What if she's really drunk and coming onto me and we have sex but then she decides in the morning that I raped her?
2. What if you're both really drunk and you have sex? Is it always the man's fault?
3. What if she tells you no, but then drinks a lot more and gets really drunk and you go ahead and have sex?



"Some guys get loaded and take advantage of girls. Then they say, 'We were drunk, what's the big deal?'"

# Reducing the Risk of Substance-Related Rape

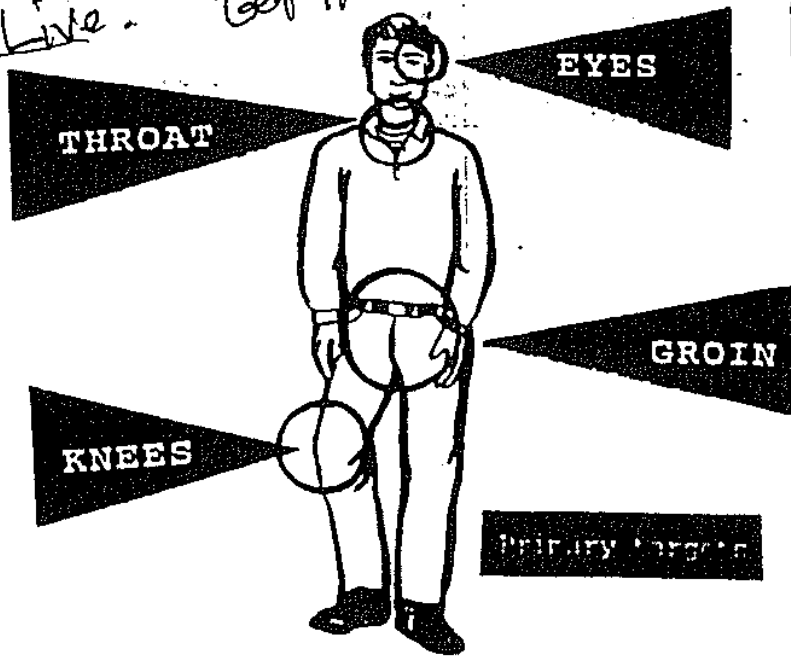
Substance-related rape has been occurring more frequently in recent years. Although the often tasteless drugs are hard to detect, there are precautionary steps one can take to reduce the risk of becoming prey to this criminal conduct.

- Do not leave beverages unattended.
- Do not take any beverages, including alcohol, from someone you do not know well and trust.
- At a bar or club, accept drinks only from the bartender or server.
- At parties, do not accept open-container drinks from anyone.
- Be alert to the behavior of friends. Anyone appearing disproportionately inebriated in relation to the amount of alcohol they have consumed may be in danger.
- Share this information with friends and talk about ways to look out for each other when you are at parties and social events.
- Anyone who believes they have consumed a sedative-like substance should be driven to a hospital emergency room or should call 911 for an ambulance. Try to keep a sample of the beverage for analysis.

THIS WAS IN WHY WE LIVE. GET IT FOR  
\$2 FROM YOUTH IN REVOLT DISTRO,  
PO BOX 4702, PORTLAND, OR 97208

93

this is also from 'Get it!  
Why We Live'



# FREE TO FIGHT!

an interactive self-defense project

**Primary Targets:**  
 There are 4 primary targets on the body: eyes, throat, groin, and knees. Targets are considered primary b/c they have an involuntary or automatic response when hit. They are the most vulnerable. They are not pain dependent. All attackers, no matter how big and strong, have eyes, throat, groin and knees. Muscle and size cannot protect the vulnerability of these targets. 25 pounds of pressure can bust out a knee and then an attacker can no longer chase us. Think about what happens when we get a piece of dust in our eye. Imagine getting ten, fingers in our eyes. And the throat - even gently pushing on our windpipe with our own hand makes us cough. When we hit hard and with multiple strikes we increase the likelihood of getting away safely. We use the strong parts of our bodies - such as our elbows, knees, hands, fists and feet against an attacker's weak parts, the primary targets. Remember it is the intention and the internal will of [ones self] which are really important - if we choose to fight back physically - with 100% and -- multiple ... [strikes? - (editor)]



# MENTORING

"If we are to be just in our internal rebuilding we must challenge tradition and cultural ways of life that relegate women to inferior status in the home, church/mosque/temple, workplace, political life, and education. Men are not born rapists; we are taught very subtly, often in unspoken ways, that women are ours for the taking. Generally, such teachings begin with the family. Enlightenment demands fairness, impartiality, and vision; it demands confrontation of outdated definitions and acceptance of fair and just resolutions. One's sex, race, social class, or wealth should not determine entitlements or justice. If we are honest, men must be in the forefront of eradicating sex stereotypes in all facets of private and public life. I think that being honest, as difficult and self-incriminating as it may be, is the only way we can truly liberate ourselves. If men can liberate themselves (with the help of women) from the negative aspects of the culture that produced them, maybe a just, fair, good, and liberated society is possible in our lifetime."

Haki R. Madhubuti from "Transforming a Rape Culture"





## Mentoring Perpetrators:

Accountability Work or Rubber  
Stamping Re-integration Into Community?  
by Dan G

I felt nervous, wary, excited, hopeful and unsure as the prospect of becoming a mentor drew closer. Two other DWDS'ers had already been mentoring for over a year, so I had some inkling of the intensity, techniques, and strategies involved. It seemed like a massive responsibility and I was energized at the thought of trying a new, to Minneapolis anyways, way of handling sexual assault.

Then the request for mentoring came. Two different women reached out to DWDS and asked that we mentor a guy who'd been a local activist and was fairly well known. At this time details of the incidents were largely unknown by us. We trusted the survivors and decided to get the details of the assaults from the mentee himself. We took a serious stance on supporting survivors and tried to prevent them having to tell their story over and over again. We figured that if the guy agreed to being mentored then he would be willing to be accountable, truthful and forthcoming. More on all of this later.

DWDS thought that having 2 mentors would be ideal but to start out with we incorporated one of the guys who'd had some



experience mentoring. The 3 of us met several times to discuss our approach. Since we are not professionals DWS agreed it was essential for the mentee to enter therapy as well as meet with us on a regular basis. Now I still think this is a good idea, as did our advisors, but we lacked any kind of referral list thus leaving it up to the mentee to find their own therapist. Sometimes it worked out fine, sometimes it didn't.

When we first met with the mentee we explained that this was a new process and it would be a learning process for us all. The meetings got off to a slow start. Actually, they never stopped being slow. Our mentee (I'll call him Guy X from now on) was shy, quiet and very reserved. We soon discovered that Guy X claimed he didn't know what behaviors had landed him in this position. I asked him why he agreed to entering the process, if he didn't know what he'd done, and he just shrugged his shoulders and said, more or less, "I guess I must've done something." We decide, or hope at least, that eventually he'll divulge his behaviors when he feels more comfortable with us. So, for the time being, we remained in the dark as to exactly what he'd done.

Our request that he find a therapist took months and months for him to sort out. The meetings were pretty stilted as Guy X



remained reluctant to talk. An air of uncertainty began to creep in. We thought entering therapy would draw him out and allow for more open, thoughtful and searching conversation.

After a few months the DWOS member who was involved in another mentoring project decided he was too busy and had to stop mentoring with Guy X. The two remaining mentors to switch from weekly meetings to meeting every other week. Each meeting lasted an hour or more. We tried to talk about family history, ways we learned about sex and sexuality, what was consent, role models both positive and negative, feminism, masculinity, communication and the divisiveness sexual assault has created within radical political movements. At times it feels like we're attempting therapy and end up grasping at straws. We also get the feeling that Guy X doesn't really want to be doing any of this. When he shared that his friends were questioning his involvement we sensed that this whole process was, perhaps, slipping away.

6 months in and Guy X finally got into therapy and our hopes rose, if only temporarily. We soon found out that his therapist did not specialise in sexuality, relationships or issues of abuse. Guy X told us that she was very sceptical, if not outright hostile, towards the mentoring process. She didn't understand "what gave us the right to



do this?". He still maintained his ignorance around his actions but shared that "cuddling" with different female friends might have something to do with it. It seemed he was getting very, very little out of his therapy sessions or our meetings.

We grew increasingly frustrated and struggled to come up with new ideas to move us forward. So, about 7-8 months in, we decided to contact the survivors to find out what Guy X had done. It turned out that what he'd termed "cuddling" were actually acts of sexual molestation without any consent whatsoever. Guy X maintained his claim that he was unaware of his behavior (how can cuddling be bad?) but stated "IF that's what they said I did then I guess I did." He took the new information to his therapist who told him she didn't see what the problem was. Ugh! It felt like we were encountering resistance from our mentee, his friends, and the therapist. Interestingly enough, as the therapist continued to question our involvement he slowly became more comfortable in therapy.

At this point things went from bad to worse. My co-mentor pulled out of the process for reasons involving his self-implication as a machivist. Another DWO'er agreed to step in and got caught up on all of the goings on. Understandably, Guy X was reluctant to continue with a new mentor but agreed nonetheless. For a brief moment some new





energy was brought in as we agreed to journal together and read an anti-sexual assault zine outta Portland. More significantly though, trust, which we'd struggled to build just a smidgeon of, was lost. Our meetings became increasingly sporadic. Either Guy X didn't show or the new mentor or, sometimes, both.

A month or so later the new mentor quit too. This basically brought a crawling on its knees process to a complete and bewildering stop. I decided to send a letter to the mentee (after several unreturned phone calls) requesting a meeting to discuss the situation. After 2 more months without a reply the process of ficially ended.

I know that DWS messed up this particular mentoring project in many ways and we need to be accountable for our mistakes. Having a revolving door of mentors was very bad for several reasons. First, it showed a lack of commitment and follow thru on our part. How could we expect the mentee to be committed in the face of this? Second, it significantly eroded trust and created uncertainty. It's truly impossible to delve into complicated and emotional discussions without trust. Third, it exposed a flaw we tried to address from the beginning; our lack of experience. As mentors we didn't develop solid working relationships with each other and were also unable to challenge the



mentee in meaningful ways. We waited too long in getting the assault details and were not helpful in finding an appropriate therapist.

That being said, Guy<sup>x</sup> chose not to fully invest himself in the process from the get go. He didn't view it as a chance to learn, grow, heal or improve himself. My impression is that he wanted to clear his name with as little effort as possible. In that way I think we allowed ourselves to be used over the course of 9 months and that is definitely disappointing.

It's not good enough that we tried, you know? I was, and still am, frustrated with all parties involved. Myself included. It took many dozens of hours and many heart/headaches. Even writing this now has been stressful. Thankfully not all of the DWS mentoring projects ended this badly. I still believe that peer mentoring of perpetrators is great, if complex, idea and I've seen it work! It is, of course, down to all the people involved. But ultimately, be us perpetrators or not, men must be willing to challenge and change our words, behaviors and mindsets if we ever want to join with women to build and create a freer society.



101

**Rosemary F is a radical youth worker focusing on healthy sexuality education.**

1. What were your first impressions of d.w.o.s.?

When d.w.o.s. was first forming, I remember being excited that men were finally going to make an organized, hopefully sustainable, effort to address sexual violence issues in the community. So often when there are meetings in response to specific instances of victimization, it is women who show up, women who do the difficult work, and women who continue talking about these issues even after situation-specific meetings end. D.w.o.s. was doing a lot of radical things - including providing child care for parents trying to do organizing around these and other issues. That kind of really concrete stuff often gets missed as people talk about violence and rape, but d.w.o.s. was getting it.

2. To you, what does a male ally against sexual assault constitute?

Maybe it's easier to say what it doesn't constitute - it's not the knight in shining armor rescuing anyone or the know-it-all activist with all the answers. For any ally, it is important to keep the primary focus on supporting survivors when addressing specific situations of sexual violence (not just focusing on the perpetrators). But for any ally it is also very important to see beyond specific instances of violence to the bigger picture of rape culture, sexism, patriarchy, the ways that our "scenes" and "communities" perpetuate these systems, how these intersect with other forms of oppression, what role privilege plays, and start to think about how the hell we address sexual violence in this broader context. It's never just about one asshole that raped someone who needs to be dealt with. Somehow, that perpetrator thought it was acceptable or thought it was something he or she could get away with. And if it is someone in our supposedly radical or politicized "community", that perpetrator also was able to think that it is okay to at once be an anarchist or a punk or activist or a whatever (fill in the blank) and behave in this way. That's not just about the perpetrator anymore, that's about all of us. Men in the scene need to be involved in ongoing work - not just specifically about rape but about male privilege, about sexism, about what their role is as a man in perpetuating this and about stopping it. It's lazy and irresponsible of men in the scene to expect women to either tolerate the situation we are in or to do all of the work to fix it ourselves - it is exhausting and we need your help. And in the end, it is these conversations about complicated shit that build communities - these are the kind of human connections that prevent sexual violence from even happening.





3. Please share your thoughts on d.w.o.s.'s mentoring project.  
(positives ,negatives, tactically, etc.)

Well, that's a tricky question. I have a lot of mixed feelings about this. The mentoring project was a really interesting idea that was far from perfect. To be more successful it needed more community involvement around a few issues - first of all, a better understanding of what it was and was not trying to do and secondly more support from the community it was working in. As I understand, more recently d.w.o.s. was comprised of only four guys doing emotionally taxing work that was widely misperceived in the community. The four guys doing this were typically not involved in the same scenes as some of the guys we referred to you - but when you were, there were some really messy interpersonal boundary issues. A lot of the problems around the mentoring project had to do with misperceptions that perpetrators went in to it and came out "cured". The broader community has some responsibility for this. A lot of people have this idea that the way to "fix" sexual violence issues is in some mimicked alternative court system - perpetrators are tried by the "community" who for some reason thinks it has a right to know all the details of an assault (regardless of the damage this can do to a survivor) and then are sentenced (sometimes in a punitive way by kicking their ass or excommunicating them, sometimes in a "reformatory" way by sending them to you to be "fixed"). This misperception of sexual violence issues and the options of dealing with them led some to believe the mentoring project could decide who was and wasn't fit to come to shows again and led others to believe that you were taking liberties with this power - and especially with you being men, a lot of us thought that was kind of fucked. Somehow d.w.o.s. and groups affected by the perpetrators you were mentoring needed ways to communicate about what your role was and how these processes were working to better define your role or at least communicate your role.

4. In your mind, what prevents seemingly politicized "scenes" from taking the issues of rape and sexual assault seriously?

There are probably hundreds of reasons why seemingly politicized scenes do not take issues of rape and sexual assault seriously. It takes a lot of education to undo the influences of society to understand that this is a problem and even more that it is a problem in our own social circles. It is complicated, - it will always be complicated and that means addressing it is a lot of hard work where you will probably end up making mistakes with really serious consequences. Some people that mean well simply feel immobilized by the amount of effort this takes and the risks involved in messing it up. It is hard to feel like you are getting anywhere when it just keeps happening over and over. It is hard to hold ourselves accountable and it can be even harder to recognize the needs of survivors and choose to take the steps that are necessary to support them. There is no formulaic way of responding to any one situation and there is no glory in doing long-term, sustainable work around these issues. But for as hard as this work is, every time I have the privilege of working with allies around this I come away with new friendships and a better understanding of these issues. That is the satisfying part.

- Rosemary -





Mentoring: DWOS style  
By David

An important fact to remember is that, as a group, DWOS did not come voluntarily, proactively or even self-consciously to mentoring. Mentoring came to DWOS. We had discussed what it would mean to create and develop a more 'transformative process' for guys dealing with their shit. Something more lasting and effective than exile or retribution, but we had not put ourselves out there as a group to come to if you were a known perpetrator.

At one of our regular meetings that took place at the Babylon Art and Culture Center on East Lake St., about a year and a half after the group had formed, two new guys showed up, which in and of itself was not that unusual. They seemed nervous, one of them particularly fidgety and it seemed like some of the younger guys in the group knew what was up because there was a lot of chatter, more than usual. It turned out that one of the guys had been called out as a perpetrator, for sexual assault, for rape. He wanted to know if this was a group that he could participate in as a part of his process.

Our collective silence spoke to just how unprepared we were for this, and several of us went into the back room to try and figure out what if anything we were going to do. It was agreed, after we had discussed it with the whole group that a few of us would meet with him outside of DWOS to do sort of an interview, to try and get a sense of his motivations for coming to the group, and to also give us time to figure out just what we were going to do. It is important to note that it was not a consensus decision, there were one or two voices in the room that felt like they might be comfortable letting him come to meetings, but the majority were uncomfortable and felt like some other process was needed, we hadn't even given it the title of 'mentoring' yet, that would come later.

I wrote an e-mail to DWOS members after this meeting and I was cautious of the possibility of taking this on, "I caution us, however, from thinking that we are 'qualified' to take on such a role...to create a space for 'perpetrators' to tell their stories. What I mean by this is that, last time I checked, none of us has undergone the training/education/experience to be a 'therapist'...and what perpetrators will potentially be sharing are stories that can lead to transformation...or the possibility of more deeply ingraining the pattern that brought them to us."

I also had concerns that what were about to undertake, attempting to design some sort of mentoring process, might be more than DWOS could handle, "can we create a group that serves both of these functions? That of support and accountability...I think so...but it will not be easy. I hope that we do not split into two factions...especially if one is purely a support group."

As someone who had agreed to become a 'mentor' to this new guy, I was also concerned that we would, over time, lose what had been a foundation of why we came together in the first place, to be a group men and male-identified folks who were challenging a rape culture through holding perpetrators accountable, but also supporting survivors, and could we realistically and effectively do both?

It was one of those moments, where we could have in all honesty just said to him, "You know we're really not qualified to deal with this. You should be in therapy. Here are a few good therapists in town that you can contact to really help you deal with your shit." So there were some heroics involved on our part, the need to be the 'fixers', but also the desire to create an extra legal process. As anarchists/autonomists/anti-authoritarians we

104

believe that we should be constructing and creating these kinds of structures of accountability by and for ourselves.

As mentors my partner and I had a thousand questions and very few answers except to be present, to support each other in the process and to figure out what this new kind of relating as men would be like. I had never mentored before and quite frankly felt enormously unprepared, but I have known my mentoring partner for over a decade and have immense trust in his process and felt like I had to take the leap because it was what was needed at that time and we all knew that we needed to figure out this process because we see it repeating itself over and over again. We needed to have some kind of process to deal with the realities of our predatory culture. We also were coming to the realization that as anarchists we were not at all immune to this predatory nature, in fact we were painfully 'normal', and that often the feelings of betrayal are that much deeper because we do hold higher expectations of each other than we do for the rest of society.

So we began meeting with him twice a month at first, at local coffee shops and checking in with him. We came up with the following ground rules:

- 1) Being accountable: taking responsibility and owning his actions; in other words not trying to mince words around what had or hadn't happened. This was a prerequisite for being mentored.
- 2) Being willing to enter into professional therapy for predatory sexual behavior.
- 3) Confidentiality between mentor and mentee. Trust is an essential part of the process of accountability and transformation.
- 4) Understanding that we would be in direct or indirect contact with the survivor to try and make sure that we were being transparent and accountable in our process, and as part of this realizing that we ourselves were accountable to the larger community.
- 5) And following the fourth agreement to respect the survivor's requests and inquests into our process and to agree to what boundaries would be set regarding safe space in the community and other needs as defined by the survivor.

Our mentee consented to all of these agreements and what ensued was a relationship that lasted three plus years. We never said, "This is going to be a three year long process." It just unfolded that way, week-to-week, month-to-month.

At first our mentee was overly eager to know what to do in order to make amends. We spent a lot of time talking about accountability, consent, and restorative justice. Over time, our conversations moved from the abstract and philosophical to the subjective and personal and that shift was a conscious effort to change the questions being asked, to move beyond the 'fix it' tendencies that are especially ingrained in little boys who sometimes become men. We spoke a lot about 'process', and 'emotional intelligence', as opposed to intellect that can so often be sharp and predatory, conquering and conniving.

Our process culminated in professional mediation between our mentee/perpetrator and the survivor of his actions. This mediation didn't 'make it all better', but it was an important step in the process of all parties and important for us as mentors as well: To not just advocate a transformative process but to try and navigate the murky waters of transformation.



One of the most important lessons of this experience was reflecting on the fact that I feel that the real transformation began when he finally let go of the need to be 're-integrated' into the radical scene in the Twin Cities, when he let go of that as an expectation of why he was doing this, and began seeing the process as something that he wanted to do for his own personal transformation.

During this time we decided that just as our mentee was involved in professional therapy, we needed to be trained professionally in some aspects of survivor support, to understand some of the issues we were dealing with, so we both went through the Sexual Offense Services training program in St. Paul. For some time after this I volunteered for their crisis hotline and this was a profound experience in listening to some of the impacts of sexual assault. My mentoring partner still volunteers to this day with S.O.S.

By the time this first mentoring project culminated DWOS had shrunk in size from an average of 12 or so guys at every meeting to an average of six or so. Not everyone was ready or interested in being mentors and those of us mentoring didn't have time for anything else. We didn't put together workshops or discussion circles about sexism and homophobia like we had when DWOS was just beginning. Eventually that number would shrink again to four regulars at meetings.

The next time I was asked to mentor was with someone who had been a part of the group, who had taken on a leadership role within the group which just further solidified our belief that we can all be perpetrators who can also be and often are survivors.

I think it is hard to get away from the heroic model, the good guys and the bad guys, as opposed to just the guys, all of us who have been trained consciously and unconsciously to be predators and manipulators. The mentoring project helped us see into the depths of what we all knew intellectually but every time a new guy was called out, someone who we had worked with politically or who had been influential in the scene, it just became that much clearer.

This time it ended quickly though when the mentee decided that he didn't want to be labeled as an abuser. He said that he wanted to deal with his shit, but not in a way that made him seem guilty in the eyes of his peers.

He had also entered into therapy with a therapist who profoundly questioned and distrusted the process, "Who are these guys?"

In fact this was a response from several professional therapists. Their clients were not convicted by the system, so they were not court ordered into therapy. I think some therapists were afraid that we were some sort of cult bent on smashing the self esteem of their clients, plus we were doing this work for free, so we were challenging their money based help you out industrial complex. Notable exceptions to this included some therapists at the Domestic Abuse Project and Sexual Offense Services who I think were supportive, if perhaps a bit apprehensive about what we had undertaken.

So we ended it. We told him that our mentoring relationship could only exist if he agreed to the pre-conditions that included accountability and owning up to his actions. Feelings were hurt all around. As a group we felt deeply manipulated by this individual, and it wouldn't be the first or last time that is seemed like men wanted to deal with their shit as long as it was on their terms, they were in control, they decided.



The third time I was called upon to mentor was probably the most challenging for two main reasons. The first being that the perpetrator is a long time friend of mine and the second reason being that he is a person of color and as a group dwos had been almost exclusively white, and more importantly I am white. The fact that we are friends made the power differential that much more glaring, in that even though we say that we are not judges, that we are not heroes, that we are all potential perpetrators and victims, that in spite of all that it made me realize how challenging it is to be sitting on the other side of the table from the mentors. How this authority automatically forms in our minds when one of the parties is the 'guilty' one. And as a white male person how living in a white supremacist society automatically grants me authority and how that can play out in the labyrinth of crime and punishment.

During the time that we were mentoring him, he also had a mentor from his cultural community that worked with him, and he sought out a therapist that worked in his cultural community as well. During the process I realized that I wanted him to enter into a formal/professionally mediated setting with survivors. Initially this came from a fear that the mentee would be able to easily manipulate the process. This was not an unfounded fear given that he had agreed to be mentored by us because of manipulative and abusive behaviors.

It also came from a more genuine place of seeing what professional mediation had done in our first mentoring experience, especially in creating a safe space for the survivor to be able to dialogue.

And it turns out that this fear was well founded. After mentoring him for a while, he decided that he wanted to end the relationship. So we stopped mentoring him. I would see him now and then. It turns out that he got back together with one of the women that he had 'worked things out' with. Of course, it ended horribly with the survivor feeling manipulated and abused again. This felt incredibly frustrating as a mentor. It solidified a feeling that we are not really qualified to be doing this kind of work. It highlighted how easily we were manipulated and played by the majority of guys that we worked with.

Another serious consideration that came up during this time for me was the implications predatory behavior has on a wider circle than perpetrator and survivor, the ripple effect. Our mentee felt like he was dealing with his shit by working through what had happened one on one with the survivors. What he failed to do was take into serious consideration the impacts that his actions had on the broader 'community'.

I also made this same mistake during this particular mentoring experience, the mistake of not understanding the need to communicate what was going on to people not seemingly directly impacted by my friend's behavior. This is one of the more important developments in creating a process around these issues that can be more effective. It must include the outer rings of impact and allow people to self-define how they fit into all that, not making that assumption for them.

Another lesson to anyone interested in doing this kind of work in the future: never mentor a friend. Even if no one else steps up, has the time, or whatever, just don't mentor a friend.

The failure of my friend to deal with the outer rings of impact has left a bitter taste in the mouths of several local women allies, and others doing work around supporting survivors of sexual violence. It gets to the heart of the question of who gets to define what dealing

with our shit is, us, or the people impacted by us? At some point the 'community' needs to also set some criteria by which perpetrators can be measured.

And implicit in this is the question of what commitment do we have to each other in a broader sense? Does the community have avenues of accountability, ways of dealing with the interpersonal wounds that always happen around predatory sexual behavior? Can we even call ourselves 'community' if we aren't committed to the long haul, to figuring out how to deal with our shit personally and collectively?

What do I take away from the last six or so years of DWOS? On the whole I would have to say that we have made the same mistakes within our movements that caused radical feminist separatism in the 1970's and 1980's. The reluctance of men in the scene to challenge predatory sexual behavior and the sexism and entitlement that are the precursors to this behavior is the major factor of a breakdown in feelings of solidarity and community.

I feel that in general DWOS was resented by men in the predominately white radical scene for a variety of reasons, and distrusted by a lot of the women in that same scene. Some people were appreciative and hopeful of our efforts, but a lot of people felt like we were the unofficial 'cops' of the scene, the party poopers. I would notice people treating me differently, being less open, more guarded about what they would or wouldn't share. Quite a few friendships faded away.

I think that some of the men that came to us as a way to get a blanket stamp of approval. That was their hope anyway. We were not very open about our process and what was happening with our mentees, except with the survivors themselves. No one really knew how to relate to what we were trying to do, including ourselves.

It is important to note that the only 'success' that we had in mentoring happened when our mentee came to us, on his own, without any outside pressure, to work on his shit. In every case in which we 'intervened' in some form of community accountability process we got played, and manipulated by guys who were in trouble for being players, predators, manipulators.

Do I think that this is important work? I would say that this is the most real work that I have ever done, political or otherwise. I have learned more about myself and about people around me, the 'community', and the enormity of what we are up against.

I also come away from this experience with a profound disappointment in the new wave of 'anarchism', the Seattle and post-Seattle earth-firsty kind of 'anarchism'. The carhart or bust generation that is really proficient in sleeping dragons, black bears and police scanners but pathetic in the way of creating meaningful dialogue and follow through around dealing with interlocking oppressions. Anarchism isn't just about smashing the system, as an old buddy of mine once put it, 'anarchy is not chaos', it's about building a new society to take it's place.

The next time you're in some group circle and some guy says that we need to get back to the revolution and we'll deal with this shit later, take a deep look into his eyes and realize that he's most likely a perpetrator, either he has been or will be. If nothing else his thought process is still mired in the acceptance of a rape culture that created him. That mind set is what gets us into this whole mess to begin with, that somehow the revolution is something other than how we treat each other every day. That we should just deal with it.



In reflecting on this time I am also overwhelmed with sadness, at a community that I saw come together in some amazing resistance, only to be torn apart, largely by acts of sexual assault and manipulative behavior.

I also realize my own culpability in this, as one of those guys that it took quite a few discussions with to get me to step up and start doing this work. It wasn't just the perpetrators who were tearing things apart it was the enablers of this behavior, the 'it's not really any of my business' guys like myself who helped create such an oppressive and disempowering atmosphere. Who needs COINTELPRO with friends like these?

And for a nuts and bolts perspective, should someone who has gone through a process like DWOS be seen as having a stamp of approval, some kind of merit badge that then makes him trustworthy? Absolutely not, but the same goes for the 'good guys' the ones 'doing the work', the ones who can walk the walk and talk the talk, the ones with the 'smash patriarchy' t-shirt on.

Who knows what long-term impact this project will have on the lives of the men that we mentored? I have an enthusiastically utopian belief that somewhere down the line it will have had some long-term effect that will help them to change their behaviors that have been so harmful to women around them. This will require them to want to change on their own so that they can transform themselves away from the role of community destroyers.

No, we live in a culture that has taught us as men to be predators, period. It takes a life time of work to even begin to undo some of the devastating effects, but more importantly it takes organization, and commitment and avenues of accountability before you can even talk about creating a community of resistance. Without this dedication to this work it is clear that the kind of trust that is essential to build long-standing communities of resistance will be continually torn apart by predatory behavior. Absent these avenues of accountability what you have is business as usual and that, at the current time, means rape culture.



109

V interview with M 7/30/08 8:36pm – 12:30am  
Minneapolis, MN

#### Background for Interview

This interview is for a zine DWOS is creating in order to be transparent about their history and group process. DWOS founders are interviewing folks directly affected by their group and allies. As a group DWOS was committed to the worthy goal of stopping rape in our communities, survivor-centric support, and examining privilege of a male identity especially pertaining to sexism and homophobia in radical circles. Literally dealing with our shit, participated in community process around accountability and mentoring of perpetrators while maintaining a survivor-centric space for group topic meetings and other events.

V

Hi M. Thank you for your enthusiasm and computer expertise. I want to express how glad I am that you are in my life and my enthusiasm for working with you again! I have some questions to put to you, feel free to address a question, tweak it, or not even answer if this works best for you. In this interview, I am interested to know and to share in this zine, your experience with d.w.o.s.

First, do you recall when/how you became aware that J. (the perpetrator being mentored) came to the group seeking help and support? How did you feel or what were your thoughts as far as J. taking this step?

M

Hey V. I'm also glad to be doing this interview with you. I would like to be transparent about our history together, my relationship to sexual assault, and my process as a survivor before I answer this first question.

My sexual assault occurred at a time when I was 19 and going to college. I had not had conversations about sexual assault in a community context previous to my assault. After participating in my first women's circle, I realized that, unfortunately, many women had shared my experience. After that circle, I had language for what happened to me. A friend urged me to go to a counselor at the University of Minnesota and get support for my assault. This counselor further validated my experience. I left Minneapolis for about a year, in that time I wrote a zine about my experience, naming it sexual assault.

Folks in Minneapolis responded by asking me what I wanted to do to deal



610

with the situation. I felt pressured to take action in some way by folks, who told me J's behavior was inappropriate or potentially harmful to others in activist circles. I responded by writing and posting a flier in public community spaces such as the Hard Times and the Seward, etc. I chose to use my full name and J's full name and write a detailed description of the assault. I got a lot of responses from writing that flier including support from older activist women and skepticism from some folks who doubted my experiences.

My motivation for posting this information was so folks wouldn't question my credibility and to request a community response. To me, accountability meant J getting help for his issues and others being aware of his past behavior. I didn't know what that would look like exactly. Years later DWOS and V mentored J and this was a huge part of what I saw as accountability and community response.

As a survivor I wanted to be supportive of others survivors and be a part of community accountability. Part of doing this was completing a SVC training program to be a rape crisis line operator and an advocate of survivors of sexual assault. Another part of this was attending community circles supporting other survivors and eventually facilitating workshops around consent and survivor support. It was through community circles that I met V. We were a part of organizing groups around consent and community responses to sexual assault. We knew each other for a few years socially and through this activism.

To finally answer your question. I heard about a men's group, which was later known as DWOS (dealing with our shit) in 2002 or so. I found out through men going to the group that it was a survivor centric group that functioned also as a support group and discussion forum. Later, I heard that DWOS was working on issues of accountability with perpetrators and interested in mentoring individuals. I was approached by V as a member of DWOS and asked about what my needs around accountability and support were regarding J. I remember it came up later when I approached V about potentially moving into the place he lived. We had a discussion at this point about whether there was a conflict of interest around space and safety. I decided I could be comfortable living with someone who was mentoring my perp as long as the perp wasn't in my living space. So, we agreed to perp free (to the best of our knowledge) living space and I moved in.

When I first heard J decided to approach DWOS to be mentored, I felt relieved that two folks who I trusted to do good work around sexual assault





111

would be working with him. I wanted J to get help for his issues and change his behavior around consent. A few years before, I'd been approached by some of J's friends around a process involving what seemed at the time as a kind of "hearing/mediation" of my side and his side. I was willing to try that out at the time, but I felt some serious anxiety about my safety around my emotional well being. Even though I felt like people had good intentions, I didn't know if they had survivor-centric motivations at that time. That process never happened, but I was relieved when years later J was in a mentorship with folks I trusted and felt comfortable with. I was grateful that he was willing to show initiative to seek out a mentorship as well. My feeling is that in order for real change to happen a person has to genuinely want to change.

V

Did you feel effort was made to support you, in your process as a survivor and in community (being spaces shared also by J)? How did that work? Did it work? Since d.w.o.s. was focusing particularly on the perpetrator/person in a process of accountability, did it seem your needs were being considered as they should be?

I know, because I had chosen to be the mentor who also took on the role of contact and advocate for you, that I had concerns about whether I could play both roles. These concerns were, if anything magnified because of my training in advocacy and support for survivors. Care to speak to the impact of J's process forcing that history to the forefront in a public or personal way? And finally, thoughts on an activism which endeavors to accomplish both areas of support, perpetrator and survivor?

M

I felt supported in my process as a survivor in many ways by the mentors. The mentors asked me what my specific requests were around space. Previously J had self-exiled from any community spaces that he thought I might be in. It felt like a relief to be able to make requests around which spaces I didn't want to see J in and to have those requests seriously considered and respected. I felt safer and more secure. It worked for me. I felt like I had focused a lot on my process around healing from sexual assault previous to J's mentorship. Since one of my requests in my healing process was accountability from J and that he seek help, I felt that focusing on J in a mentorship relationship was respecting my needs. Even though it was years after the assault, it did feel like, for a while that it was triggering in some ways to think about him and the assault. I was worried that folks would question my credibility or process. I didn't feel like the mentors would do this, but I felt like talking about it might make others



respond this way. However, my experience was for the most part feeling supported by a community.

I think it's possible for individuals to provide support of both a perpetrator and survivor, but I think it's better for advocates to focus on primarily supporting a perpetrator or survivor separately.

V

In retrospect I realize you helped me to know how to support you. You were in my view a remarkable person even without considering your journey due to your experience of sexual assault. I felt uneasy in my dual roles, and the fact that I could trust you to know and stand up for your boundaries; needs; and that you had really found your voice as an agent of change- all gave me confidence that we were doing this work together. I'd like to ask you this: for a survivor who hasn't the support system or who hasn't found their voice- empowerment' I guess- how might a triad, or dual intervention not be helpful? Do you feel like responding- either from an activist or educator perspective, or perhaps from other survivors you have advocated for or known?

M

To clarify your question about a dual intervention, do you mean one or a pair of advocates for both a perpetrator and survivor or an individual/a pair of advocates working with a perpetrator and survivor separately?

V

My question goes back to what I now see as a conflict, potentially a conflict of interest, but also my own concerns regarding my dual role. D being strictly mentor and I, mentor and survivor contact. At the time I believed that by asking for your input in the form of what your needs- and out of those, your requests-would be, I was coming from a survivor-centric place. You already had a support network. So, frankly I wouldn't encourage anyone to try to duplicate what we did the way we did it. I strongly advocate that mentoring be a two to one relationship. Two mentors and the mentored. I think a survivor in other circumstances should have, and certainly, deserves their own advocate to support them through their process of empowerment/recovery.

M

So, are you saying that survivors could also have a two to one support/advocacy team to communicate with the advocate/mentors of the perpetrator around issues coming up around the mentorship?



113

V

I do think that ideally there's the two to one mentor to mentored ratio or working with pairs as (a collective group in Portland) did of at least two people for each perpetrator and survivor.

M

Even though you played a dual role as a mentor and survivor contact, I mostly felt positively about having a direct connection with you and D because I felt comfortable and trusted you both. However, I can see the value in many situations in which the survivor is not as familiar with the mentors, in which the survivor could choose his/her advocates to communicate around mentorship issues and receive support and in this way feel empowered to choose their own support network.

V

After 3 years mentoring J, I started a conversation with an acquaintance that has a mediation practice. She had not specifically mediated a relationship where sexual assault was the point of conflict. After explaining the mentoring process she agreed to talk with you. By this time J, had completed sexual offender treatment and he'd been in therapy for over two years. It seemed like the mentoring relationship might be approaching some sort of completion. Our question, D and I, at the time was: what would completion look like?

At this point I approached you with some hesitation, due to my complete lack of experience with this sort of thing. My research into restorative practices and experience with you around community circles compelled me in this direction. You agreed to mediation and meeting with C, the mediator. Would you care to describe what mediation looked like? Describe the session and how the agreements were formed?

M

For me, a letter from J initiated the mediation process. This was the first direct communication I'd received from J, since before I'd called him out. The letter, which was guided by V and D, explained what his process of accountability had been and asked if I was willing to participate in mediation. I thought about it and decided it would be a potentially healing experience for me and it would be a safer space for me to reach closure with J. I was advised by V and D to seek out folks who would specifically be my support for the mediation. I was really nervous and the subject matter was very deep and triggering to me in some ways despite the mediator working hard to make the experience as safe and healing as



possible. I first met with C, the mediator, separately, and so did J. J and I both decided we wanted a familiar third party present at the mediation. Before hand I wrote out my experience of the assault, what I felt I was personally accountable for, what I was hoping to get out of the mediation and what my requests were for a future agreement about shared space and other issues. I came up with a post mediation plan to be with support people afterwards. J also had requests that I listened to. We both had a chance to speak and listen to each other uninterrupted. There were a few ground rules we agreed upon. At the end I did feel a sense of closure and relief. The mediation allowed me to feel comfortable knowing that J was sorry and that he respected my experience as valid and that he was telling people about his perpetrator history. I decided I could feel comfortable with him in the same spaces in the future. I also remember requesting that if he write something about his experience as some one going through an accountability process/a perpetrator that I get a chance to read it before it's published or shared in a community. I kept my records of requests and I don't remember them exactly now, but it may be something useful to share for others trying to decide what process could work for accountability and survivor healing. It's amazing to me that I don't think about the assault all the time and that I can't remember all my requests. It indicates to me, how much I have healed and grown.

V

I'll offer some recollections I have of the day of mediation. These "mental snapshots" will be with me for a long time. Like the assassination of Martin Luther King; and the first lunar landing I can recall vividly all the details down to the minutest- I see meeting J on bicycles in the morning. I recall waking up that day feeling a sense of apprehension mixed with excitement and disbelief. When we arrived we locked up our bikes and I remember that J. gasped. When I looked at him to see what was the matter his face was flushed red. I had the thought to tell him, "breathe. Just breathe deeply for a minute." We checked in then: How did he feel physically. Emotionally. We reviewed for the mediation. We agreed, (because J. recognized your bike), I would enter the house and say hello to give you a heads-up that we had come and to see where you were at. Also, I recall being surprised that you had chosen to do it without the supporters I had expected. I reminded J. that I was there for him, as his supporter and mentor; he was concerned for you not having on hand your own supporters. I reassured him they would join you later. During the session I was acutely aware of your courage and groundedness, and of J's. I can say that I felt this stew of pride and love and fear about the vulnerabilities of two people I cared very much for. I also had this intuitive or energetic sense and knowledge that it didn't progress to this point, this fruition without it being sure to mean



115  
W

closure. As I sat quietly listening to you I felt immense gratitude. Listening to J. I couldn't help but want to coach him- I had grown accustomed to it! He sputtered and he fretted, and gradually he rose to meet you as an equal, his own belief in himself and his process propping him up. It wasn't about, 'what [redacted] thinks I should do' or 'what V. and D. think.' I was happy to see my mediator friend had created an impressive and powerful medium.

These are my recollections. Then, after everyone left, my mentee's immense relief and the gratitude he expressed- and getting to express to him my pride in his growth and effort- these I'll not soon forget.

Note: the subject of this interview helped out by offering Interviewer the invaluable service (and favor) of doing a final, "cleanup" edit.

140

existence" (117). Men need to establish specific metaphors that provide a new vision of masculinity.

If a new conception of work can change the way men conceive of themselves as social beings, the river as an alternative to the machine metaphor might affect the way we imagine ourselves as men. I conceive of the river not in its Huck Finn motif as a source of escape from responsibility but as a fluid, sustaining, vital image of masculinity. In place of the metaphor of the machine, the river provides an organic, exciting, moving, and changing conception of manhood. With its flowing channels, plunging waterfalls, and deep ravines, the river suggests a masculinity that is dynamic, forceful, and receptive. The languid marshlands and the plummeting whirlpools, racing currents, and serene bays allude to a sexuality based on periods of both activity and rest. The flowing, surging, rippling river with its islands, beaches, and sandbars presents an image of manhood associated with vitality, subtlety, and complication, that is, a masculinity that appreciates the dynamic in life, the give and take, the complexities, dangers, and satisfactions.

Fr. STUBS, TOOLS, and THE FAMILY JEWELS.

masculinity: identity conflict and transformation ... New metaphors of masculinity.  
- author uncredited.\*

\*(from a training for men, by "Skunk", PMS Media)



by Drew

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Journal entry #1...

I've been meaning to start documenting the mentorship process with J for a while now. We've been meeting since late fall, about four months or so. We meet once a week for about two hours, typically on the weekend. Yesterday we met up at a coffee shop and decided to go for a walk. Typically we sit and discuss ourselves, but today was unusually warm so we headed to the park and played a little bit to relieve some of the tension that is commonplace in these visits. After the park we walked along the railroad tracks that cross the Mississippi and had a seat amidst the steel, graffiti, and beautiful sunset. The ambiance seemed a bit unstructured, however it was a welcome change. J seemed a bit more at ease, having professed discomfort at Mapp's café last week.

My general recollection of yesterday was conversation pertaining to a few different topics. First, we always have a check-in and talk (all three of us) about how our week's went. It's a nice way to catch up and to gauge where J's at as far as energy, confidence, optimism, etc.. are concerned. Yesterday, he seemed a bit discouraged. I think it's setting in that this is some hard shit to swallow. Being kicked out of his home and job a few months back have caused necessary difficulty in looking at management of self. He's having trouble finding work, thus complicating his living situation in that he has no money to pay rent. I struggle with whether it's my responsibility to help him find a job. I don't really think it is, but I do have empathy and try to help him not lose hope.

Actually, I think the meeting-mentorship process has been good in helping him not lose hope. I would say that his first impression of the process, especially pertaining to me, was hostility. Kinda along the lines of I-don't-know-you, you've-got-no-business-being-in-my-life attitude. He's right; we don't. However, the reality of it all is that our process is intended to show accountability, positivity, and the desire to change. If he wants to dump us and go at it alone, that's his prerogative. You see, we're not a government agency and people aren't court ordered to us. Not because we've been told to by the state, because it's important for us to create healthy communities. So, he knows that he can stop the process anytime, but that people close to him, as well as the survivor, are aware of the process.



117

by drew

June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Some thoughts on accountability. In last week's mentorship meeting it was discussed by our mentee that both mentors be more open about the issue of transparency. He felt that it was one-sided for us to expect the complete divulgence of all things personal and profoundly painful, so we each obliged. Here's an account of what I disclosed in order to be a better ally to the mentee, to better be able to understand my own process, and to be more transparent to the community and the men's group.

Within this 10-minute period of revisiting the past, I became aware of some behavior and actions that I had blocked out in the men's meeting go-around a half year back. It surprised me to realize that some of my prior behavior would become unconsciously blocked from my everyday thoughts. However, I'm undoubtedly grateful to the process and the reality that the more I dig, the more I find. I could only guess that I'm far from alone; perhaps it's just my willingness to look internally that may separate me from most male peers. It's a bit scary to be this open, but my health and the well-being of my relationships with men and women depend on it.

One reality that struck hard was the realization that I've assaulted before. Up until a week ago I felt only compelled to believe that I'd exhibited bad behavior, but never had crossed boundaries of safety for others. It's safe to say that this opened up a door toward further critiquing questionable behavior in past intimate relationships.

When I was 15 or 16, I spent a lot of time with two male friends. I was one year older than them and two or three years older than two female friends of the one guy. They would come over and hang out with us, but I always thought they were kinda trashy or promiscuous. I enjoyed them



around as a way to interact with the opposite sex, but never did I feel like we were on the same level. Looking back, I'd say that they were pretty and that I was threatened by their free spiritedness. The way they dressed and how they acted became justification in my head to act out whatever preconceived notions I had about who they were. One day I tried to make out with one of the girls and she wasn't interested. We were all in the same general area of the apartment, so I followed her into one of the bedrooms and started grabbing her breasts. In essence, I groped her in a way that she was obviously uncomfortable with. She made it known that she wasn't into my advances, told me to stop, and I pressured her to keep going. I finally let up after a few more tries. I don't know what made me stop, but I'm thankful today that something told me to stop. I think it's important to point out this story because many people would say that's just teenage fun, experimentation, folly, and/or poor judgement. However, I truly believe that incidences such as this do negatively affect the way that boys and girls interact, the normalization of such "coming-of-age" behavior at the expense of another soul, and the stripping away of safety that people should be allowed to feel.

(Drew)







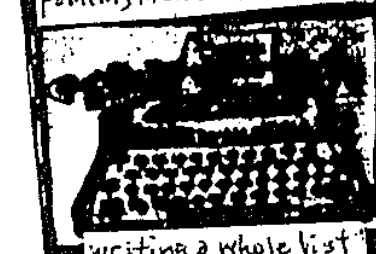
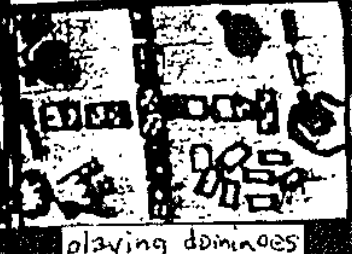



\* \* \*  
\* 119 \*  
\* \* \*

# THE TOOLBOX

(NO QUICK FIX)

59

these are coping mechanisms i used \*\*\*\*\*

 <p>painting the home pratty</p>	 <p>making elaborate meals</p>
 <p>writing a whole list</p>	 <p>playing dominoes</p>
 <p>reading hard books (and blaming it on the authors when it takes more time than usual)</p>	 <p>making mix tapes</p>
 <p>borrowing dogs for walks</p>	 <p>not bubble baths.</p>

120

A Conversational Interview with Emily  
(Questions by Vi)

Vi: Hello and thank you for agreeing to share your thoughts with readers of the Zine. I personally (and the others, too) needed to at least ask you to contribute, and hoped that you would want to. I can't say how important your energy and example have been to me as one who is doing this work.

So, want to tell me what you were thinking when I asked to interview you for a zine about Dealing With Our Sexism/Shit, or, DWOS?

Emily: I was excited that DWOS is putting together a zine and glad to be a part of it. Within our scene (or within any scene or community for that matter) there is not enough work being done to address the damage done by perpetrators of sexual violence, especially work that focuses on perpetrator accountability. What I think is special, and even radical, about DWOS is that you have worked to identify the problem of sexual assault as a community (not just individual) problem and as a problem rooted in systematic oppressions (with resisting patriarchy being a particular focus of DWOS). My take on DWOS is that you see sexual violence as a problem for which men bear particular responsibility and as a problem that male/male-identified peer relationships can play a very key role in addressing. I respect the efforts to do this work that you have made as a group over the years and appreciate your invitation to discuss how this has played out.

I hope this zine will inspire and cross-pollinate with ideas elsewhere and encourage others to take on self education and accountability work as a part of the work necessary to end sexual violence.

Vi: Did you have any concerns about potential harm to Survivors, especially since its being a men's-and-male identified exclusive space means that other voices, women's voices in particular were not represented?

Emily: This is a good question, especially since women's voices are so often the center of anti-violence work and credible anti-violence male voices are so few and so far between.

In terms of DWOS specifically, I think that this might have been a bigger deal if I hadn't known you and a couple other core members of the group prior to the creation of DWOS. Even if I didn't know you all well at that point, I had already discussed issues of sexual violence with each of you. All of the DWOS folks I knew had already been affected directly and indirectly by sexual violence, you were (collectively) grounded in some of the important issues, and you were deeply concerned both in your politics and in your hearts. In addition, knowing the activist/organizing history of the folks involved let me know that y'all were (these are my words) feminist and queer-positive and interested in fighting for an end to oppressions. I knew you all had been active for years, so I didn't think you'd take off the next week and forget the commitment you made.

I trusted the integrity of the members of your group to ask questions, seek good answers, and follow through on what you were learning.



Although women's voices were not included as "members" of DWOS, I believe that the group prioritized and sought out knowledgeable women, peers, and other community members to listen to and learn from. You situated yourselves within the anti-sexual assault movement, (several of) you got trained as advocates for a rape crisis center, some of you volunteered for hotlines. You educated yourselves and you showed with your actions that supporting survivors and holding violators accountable was what you were about. I feel that while DWOS members experience male privilege of various sorts, you worked to show respect for women in general and for survivors (who can, of course, be of any gender) in particular.

DWOS' work was a great departure from the hastily gathered "community circles" I have seen in which peers as well as survivors and perpetrators are called together - as if in front of a peer jury - so that these supposedly concerned 'friends' can basically assess and "resolve" situations of intra-community violence over the course of a few hours. That sort of BS process tends to make peers feel better (like they are "doing" something) without actually challenging the abuse of power and privilege or bothering them the next day when they don't want to think about sexual violence anymore. I didn't see DWOS trying for this sort of quick fix, and that made your work seem promising from the start!

Vi: When after a year or so of doing what DWOS does, a man came to a meeting wanting to get involved. I didn't know him personally or by name, though when I learned who the woman was he'd sexually assaulted- and been named by- she is somebody with whom I had organized (gender inclusive) education and action circles with. We ended up deciding to help him figure out his accountability outside and apart from the group, supported by DWOS, and with me acting as liason for the survivor, to know her needs and to bring her "requests" to the mentoring table. Any thoughts from when you first learned of this decision? Did you feel conflicted, or see our decision as a conflict in any way? Knowing that you had by this time given tremendous energy and committed yourself to being an advocate of survivors, and how you had to fight for space in the community for survivors- for women's autonomy as well- I wonder if you saw us jumping the track, so to speak.

Emily: I'm glad that you are reminding me of this: that DWOS evolved into mentoring perpetrators, the group didn't start out with that intention. Also, that this evolution came in response to organic needs within the community.

I appreciate DWOS' mentorship work because it addressed multiple needs I have heard raised by survivors and allies. It did more than just 'call out' problematic behavior or banish rapists (which a lot of people see as simply pushing the problem somewhere else). Ideally, it holds perpetrators in a relationship with people they have agreed to work with, who have accepted the (long term) role of challenging and supporting the perpetrator to understand their behavior (in individual and social contexts), to stop hurting people in that way, and to really address the deep harms they have caused to others.

Because I believe acts of violation are the perpetrator's active choice to take/hurt/violate (even if a combination of socialization and denial make that choice seem invisible, acceptable, or like it might be a 'misunderstanding' rather than the abuse it is), I think peers challenging violators to learn to make different choices is an **essential** step in ending sexual violence. As long as the mentorship work





remains linked with the needs and desires of the survivor and as long as the mentees are willing to admit their wrongs, I think there is much positive potential for this work and that it is not at all opposed to other survivor-support roles.

Vi: What do you see as our shortcomings?

Emily: From my perspective, I see DWOS doing good internal unlearning sexism work (particularly in regards to binary sexes) and solid work at naming the dynamics of violence that adult men perpetrate against adult women in predominantly heterosexual contexts among acquaintances or within a relationship. The full spectrum of sexual violence is much wider than this, but I understand the need to focus and those types of assaults are certainly common.

While of course I have limited knowledge of the internal workings of DWOS, it was my sense that the group had struggles around how long or short some participants were involved, around community support, around appropriate boundaries for mentors and mentees who had been friends, around survivor participation and the definition of accountability, around burnout, and around the question of how race and racism affect responses to assault and the accountability processes (especially when all core DWOS folks are white).

For the most part, I think DWOS engaged in honest struggle around difficult issues and at times made imperfect decisions within imperfect contexts.

Vi: In spite of the fact that people knew about an anti-sexism anti-rape "mens group" there was a way that DWOS was isolated- as if it existed apart, really and not within community. David sees the problem as being that there did not exist anywhere, a sort of "hub" or space (apart from meetings and groups) that was expressly survivor-and-ally centered. Or maybe that's my take, and he means a space just for guys. Do you have ideas, or have you ever dreamed of this kind of a place, Emily?

Emily: I'm not sure if this answers your question or not, but I agree that DWOS was isolated. And in my experience of punk/anti-authoritarian/DIY/whatever you want to call it subculture in Minneapolis, I would say that the isolation came from a lack of general interest in your project. I feel like there were issues of visibility or public support for DWOS that might have been because many of you are older than the young rabble rousers in town and lacked some social connections, but I think it was really about a shortage of support for truly ending sexual violence and/or any oppressive '-ism' and a distressing failure of the general 'community' to follow through on these issues even though they pervade our scene (like many others).

That is one of the reasons that I became formally trained as an advocate for a rape crisis center about eight years ago. I was so frustrated that my 'activist' peers weren't activated by the assaults happening to our friends (so often by our activist friends!) that I needed to connect with folks who got the issues and were doing something about it. This work has given and continues to give me much needed grounding, support, and inspiration that this resistance is worth it!

It is not enough to think sexual violence is bad. Our society and our scene feed this rape culture, and it will not go away until we eradicate it. This means that we have to have to do ongoing, difficult, and at times unpleasant work to accomplish this. It



1230

will not happen on its own - the history of the anti-sexual violence movement (among others) has taught us this.

At best, I feel that individuals in the scene would support DWOS and actively participate for a period of time (maybe for a few months or a year - and this work was important), but then leave the group or leave town to do something else (returning the burden of commitment to the small core of the group). At worst, I think the scene tried to have DWOS do its dirty work—eradicate the perpetrators without others having to challenge the rape culture that pervades our homes, parties, collectives, etc.

While it seems to me that there are a lot of (typically young/white/DIY/anarchist sort of) folks in town who self-identify as 'radical' I wonder at times how this term is defined. I say this because within the scene I see too little happening that reflects the rich history and current reality of what I would personally call radical movements that are working to challenge all systematic oppressions: sexism, racism, capitalism, queer- and transphobia, ableism, ageism, and all the rest. Just as I respect the work DWOS has done to confront privilege, challenge abusive behaviors, and even make mistakes along the way, I want to engage in that work myself around my own areas of privilege. I think this work is essential to our collective liberation and I'm glad for what I have learned from the creativity and dedication of DWOS.

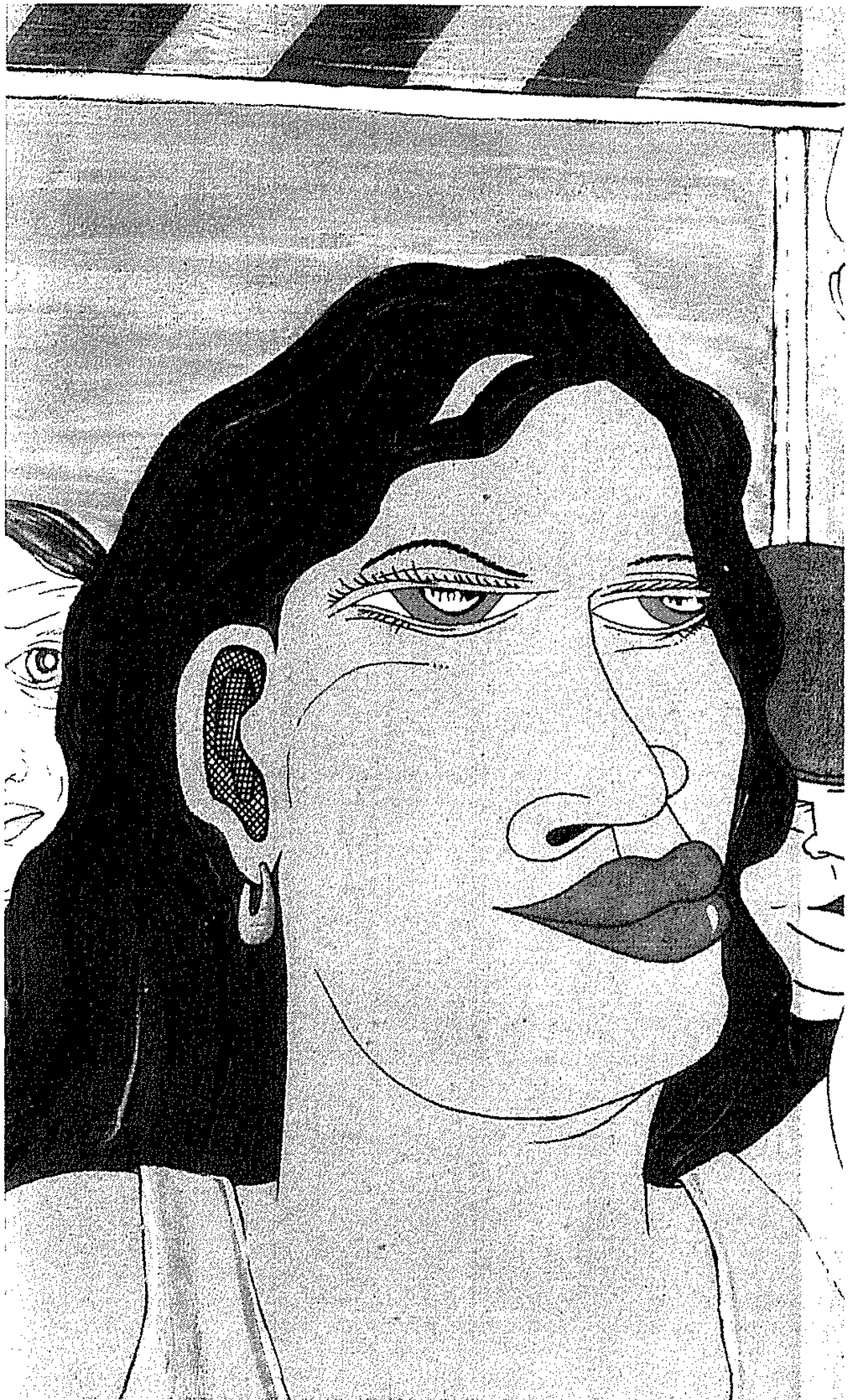
Emily L is a community activist focusing on interlocking oppressions and is a trained survivor support advocate.

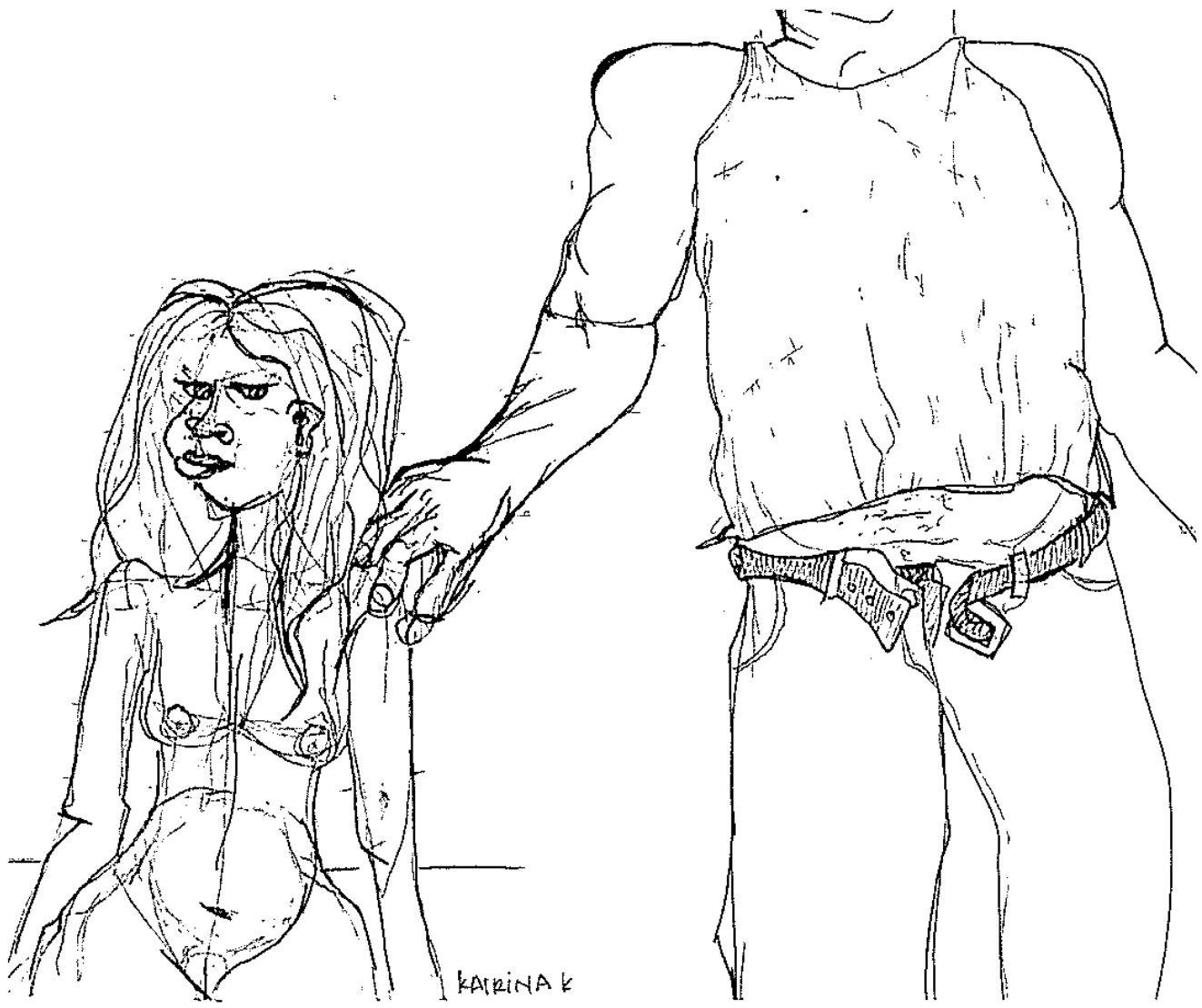
★ NEWLY PUBLISHED. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED! ★

text below borrowed from: *The Hiptionary: A Survey of African American Speech Patterns With A Digest of Key Words And Phrases.*



art by M. Hashizman (1/1) ★ used with author's permission ★





( Continued from GAY MEN AND RAPE, p. 65 )

# MEN AGAINST RAPE

There is a qualitative difference in being a woman in America and being a man. Women are raped, assaulted, beaten, killed on the streets far more often than men. Women live in fear of rape twenty-four hours a day. The fear every strange (and many familiar) men they pass on the street--especially when it's dark, poorly lit, and there are few people around. Women are constantly aware of rape. Men are not. We need to become aware of what women feel walking down the street and then act out of that knowledge to allay their fears.



## INDIVIDUAL ACTION

There are patterns of male behavior that men have learned, internalized, and act out unconsciously. These patterns are visible to women. Let women know you're not a rapist.

Consider wearing nonmale-identified clothing: earrings, jewelry, colorful clothes, skirts, blouses, purses.

Wear buttons: I AM NOT A RAPIST.

Put a bumper sticker on your car: STOP RAPE.

When approaching a woman on the streets, keep your hands visible. Walk so that women have a clear path. Be aware that every man is a potential rapist/killer to every woman. No fast sudden moves or jerky body movements.

Confront potential rape scenes. When you see a man hassling a woman on the street, step in and ask her, "Is this man bothering you?" Be prepared for him to answer, perhaps strike out at you. Give the woman time and space to escape if she's in danger.

Be conscious when walking in groups of men approaching a woman. Remember how afraid she probably feels and give her space on the street.

Confront men's rape jokes and rapist remarks.

Stand up to other men about what rape really is and how they are supporting rapist energy by their behavior. Be prepared to lose the support you get from men when you bond with them.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

Organize Men Against Rape group. Support ERA and women's struggle for reproductive rights.

Take supporting roles in Women Take Back the Night marches.

Volunteer energy and money to local Rape Crisis centers.

Write as a concerned group of males to newspapers about rape.

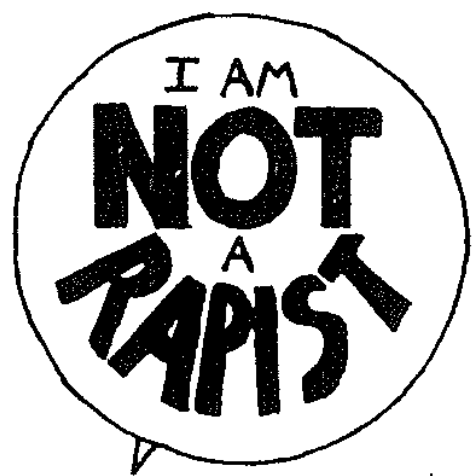
Hold public meetings about Men and Rape.

As men, demand better police action on rape. Demand police/court public support for rape victims.

Publically identify rapists. Protest the media images that show women as willing victims of violence.

Publish a leaflet refuting the myths of rape.

Explore male-male sexuality.



101





125

### Crisis/Emergency Resources For Hennepin County

\*Information taken from Sexual Violence Center

#### Victim Services:

**Rape and Sexual Abuse Center (RSAC)** (612) 825-4357 (crisis)  
2431 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis. 55405 (612) 374-9077 (business)  
*rape crisis center, 24 hour hotline*

**Sexual Offense Services (SOS)** (651) 643-3006 (crisis)  
1619 Dayton Ave., Suite 201, St. Paul 55104  
*rape crisis center, 24 hour hotline* (RMS4-County)

**Aurora Center (UMN Program Against Sexual Violence)** (612) 626-9111 (crisis)  
410 Church St. SE, Minneapolis. 55455 (612) 626-2929 (business)  
*rape crisis center, 24 hour hotline*

**Chrysalis Center for Women** (612) 871-0118  
4432 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis. 55407  
*crisis referral*

**Minnesota Council on Crime and Justice** (612) 340-5400 (crisis)  
903 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis. 55415 (612) 348-7874 (business)  
*victim services, 24 hour hotline*

**Chicanos Latinos Unidos En Servicios (CLUES)**  
St. Paul office: (651) 292-0117 (RMS4-County)  
220 S. Robert St., Suite 103, St. Paul 55107  
Minneapolis office: (612) 871-0200  
2110 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis  
*Chicana/Latino rape crisis center, 24 hour hotline*

**OutFront Minnesota** (612) 822-0127  
310 East 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 204, Minneapolis 55409 1-800-800-0350  
*GLBT Services and allied communities, 24 hours/day*

**WATCH** (612) 341-2747  
608 So. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Ste#1001 Northstar East, Mpls, MN 55402  
*Legal, victim services*

**Sexual Violence Center (SVC)**  
3757 Fremont Ave. N.  
Minneapolis, MN 55412  
(612) 871-5111 (Crisis)  
(612) 871-5100 (Business)  
Rape Crisis Center, 24 Hour Hotline

**Domestic Abuse Project (DAP)**  
(612-) 874-7063  
204 West Franklin Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Therapy and Advocacy for domestic abuse  
Survivors ages 4 and up, batterers' therapy.



122

Crisis/Emergency Resources  
For Hennepin County

Emergency Medical Services (Evidentiary Exams):

Abbot Northwestern Hospital (612) 863-4233  
800 East 28<sup>th</sup> St., Minneapolis 55407

Hennepin County Medical Center (612) 347-3131  
701 Park Ave., Minneapolis 55415

Fairview-Riverside Medical Center (612) 672-6402  
2450 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis 55454

Fairview-University Medical Center (612) 273-2700  
420 Delaware St. SE, Minneapolis 55454

Fairview-Southdale Hospital (612) 924-5141  
6401 France Ave. S., Edina 55435

Methodist Hospital (952) 993-5353  
6500 Excelsior Blvd., St. Louis Park 55426

North Memorial Medical Center (763) 520-5542  
3300 Oakdale Ave. N., Robbinsdale 55422

Sexual Assault Resource Services (SARS) (612) 347-5832

525 Portland Ave., Room 712, Minneapolis 55415

*SARS nurses are contacted by the emergency room to perform evidentiary exams. They will provide support counseling for up to a year at the survivor's request.*



17

## Referrals for Perpetrators/Inappropriate Callers

Use your instincts and best judgment. If a call feels odd or "yucky," it probably is. You do not have to talk to anyone or about anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. It is important to maintain your boundaries. We do not deal with perpetrator issues at SVC. Please refer identified perpetrators or callers who you think are perpetrators to the following numbers and end the call.

Alpha Human Services, Inc.  
2712 Fremont Ave So.  
Mpls, MN 55408  
612-872-8218

Project Pathfinder, Inc.  
1821 University Ave  
Suite #N-385  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-644-8515

Violence Intervention Project - VIP Call for nearest location  
612-928-8377

Crisis Connection Men's Line  
612-379-6367

The Men's Center  
3249 Hennepin Ave Ste#55  
Mpls, MN 55408  
612-822-5892

[www.violence-intervention.org](http://www.violence-intervention.org)

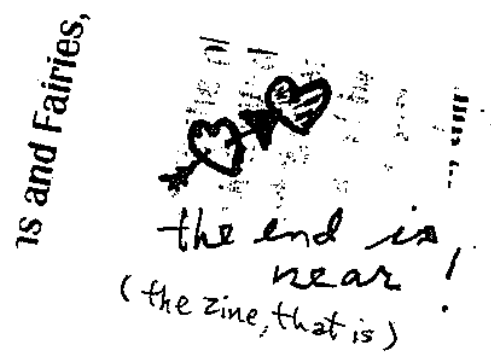
**Domestic Abuse Project (DAP)**  
(612-) 874-7063  
204 West Franklin Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Therapy and Advocacy for domestic abuse  
Survivors ages 4 and up, batterers' therapy.



S.O.S. (Sexual Offense Services) Rape Crisis/Telephone Counselor Training

FFI: 651 643-3006

- ⊗ This is an in-depth training. It is highly recommended by all of us in DWOS
- ⊗ each spring and fall



DWOS people involved in the making of this zine: Vi, Dan g, David, Alex, Robert, Dan GRiff.

For questions about our group  
for the zine e-mail us @  
redsquirrel@riseup.net

Zine requests or correspondence,  
write / send a donation if you  
can (~~CA\$H~~ ONLY please), to:

D.W.O.S! c/o  
M. haldeman  
1506 Laurel ave, apt. 35  
Mpls, mn. 55403  
 (mailing cost est. \$2.14+)



## Glossary of Terms

Words will appear in here which some readers may not be familiar with, or do not use a lot. This glossary can be helpful if folks have not worked as advocates or counselors. The editors encourage readers to become comfortable with terms and their meanings, as well as definitions. Each person defines for themselves what feels right. We have included various definitions regarding rape and sexual assault. Not everyone will define it alike; we prefer the Feminist Definition advocated by Men Can Stop Rape.

It is important to know, what may feel, or seem right to you and I, might not be respectful or supportive to Survivors. It is therefore up to each of us to grow aware of the impacts our words may have. We feel it is especially important that men and male-identified folks consider the impacts our words and definitions have on women, and on survivors, since the culture assumes we are not responsible for the choices other males make in regards to systems of violence and sexist oppression.

Some of the definitions given in this glossary have come from conversations between members of DWOS; others have come from literature and people that we resonate with.

**Victim-Survivor:** In this zine contributors choose generally to use the term "survivor", to describe one who has been abused or violated physically and/or sexually. Some writers are themselves survivors. "victim-survivor" may be deemed appropriate in certain situations. For more discussion we have pirated the following, "A few words about words", this is from the zine Thoughts about Community Support around Intimate Violence. "English is pretty limited in its terminology, and most of the words that do exist around this stuff have connotations that we're not thrilled with. For example, the word 'abuser' tends to demonize, 'victim' is disempowering, 'survivor' assigns value for suffering, and 'accused' questions the validity of the problem".

**Survivor Centric:** Our and perhaps your conscious decision, to be concerned primarily with the needs/wishes/well being/autonomy/safety of survivors of sexual violence.

**Perpetrator:** one who commits an act of sexual assault; coercion; "power-over"; or a pattern of such unwanted behavior. In this zine we refer to a perpetrator as one who commits acts of sexual violence, or in anyway deprives another of their right to be safe/free from harm.



2

130

**Ally:** Not just a friend, but someone who is willing to put in the work needed to stand with someone whom you care about and help them out, victim or perpetrator. To anti-rape organizers, working to transform rape culture, being an ally is many things. Ally to a survivor is, being there for them in ways they may direct us to be; hanging in there; when they may not know. Holding accountable a person who has harmed someone, when to turn your back may result in more harm; linking advocacy with a desire on the perp's part to admit they assaulted someone and to deal fully with the consequences.

Knowing when to step aside when working with a survivor so that they are empowered to make decisions about their own recovery and healing process. Maintaining confidentiality; outing a rapist; doing community education; organizing a benefit fundraiser... Getting trained in advocacy and support. Ally work is about justice; about change. Most emphatically, we become allies through intention and learning.

**Mentor:** Is a peer that has a relationship with a perpetrator, which is focused on personal responsibility and transformation. This relationship also prioritizes the needs and interests of survivors. Mentors act in ways which challenge and encourage a mentee on their process.

Mentors can act as a bridge, facilitating communication between the survivor, their support, and others in a community.

You will want to adapt your "mentoring" to fit a survivor's and your needs, wishes, values, political/personal process, and so on. (Mentoring isn't just for Volunteers of America anymore!)

**Accountability:** Is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions. For perpetrators this is them owning up to what they have done, understanding how their actions have hurt someone, and then their desire to change the behavior that is hurting themselves and other people. With groups like ours (DWOS) accountability means that we are clear with the survivors and the community about our goals and intentions. It also means that we share with them as much as we can information about the processes of the perpetrators and our group.

**Transparency:** The full, accurate, and timely disclosure of information. That's the text book definition. To us transparency means we're trying to make our business clear to all. Both addressing concerns expressed about the process of support (for survivors and perpetrators) as well as sharing the status of our relationships with persons in recovery. Obviously there are issues of confidentiality involved here both with the survivors and the



perpetrators. So at times out of concern for their safety and confidence it is our obligation to omit certain aspects and details of our relationships with these people.

**Process:** In this context the word is used as the plan or way in which the survivors and perpetrators change/heal, i.e., a process of accountability, change, recovery, support...

**Sexual Assault:** Is the use of unwanted sexual actions or words used to gain or maintain power and control over another person or group of people.

**Rape:** See, Rape: Defining It.

**Consent:** Is the difference between assault and sex. Is the presence of yes, not the absence of no. Is free of coercion, intimidation, threats, manipulation, and force. Can be withdrawn at anytime. Cannot be assumed from past interactions. See also pReNC 5.3 Sexual Assault Policy for further definition.

**Male-identified:** Any person that prefers a male pronoun regardless of their biological make-up.

for a look at  
 more of the  
 work of  
 Katrina K, artist and organizer,  
 go to : katrina612@gmail.  
 & www.activeart.wordpress.com



THANK YOU!!  
 Are in order  
 miriams  
 Emily L, editing  
 pp. 68-74  
 Andrew  
 centerfold by:  
 A.W.O.L.I.  
 Eriq R.  
 Jim and the men who created "A D.I.Y. GUIDE TO PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT"  
 niknaz & Em: production and edits, Format, pp. 129-131.  
 & to all of you who struggle and strive!



Art by Rosemary





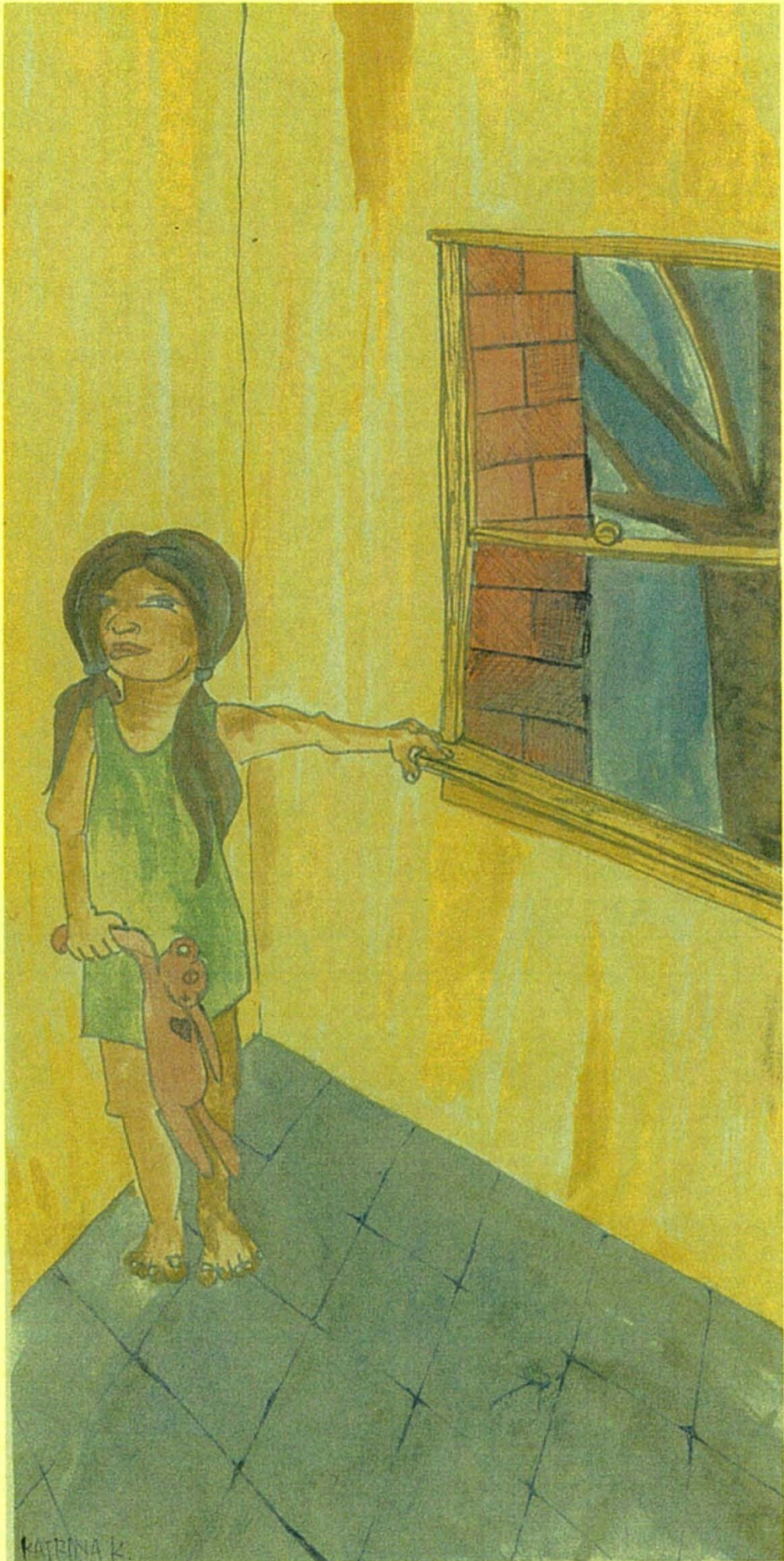
resume.

stop  
breathe..

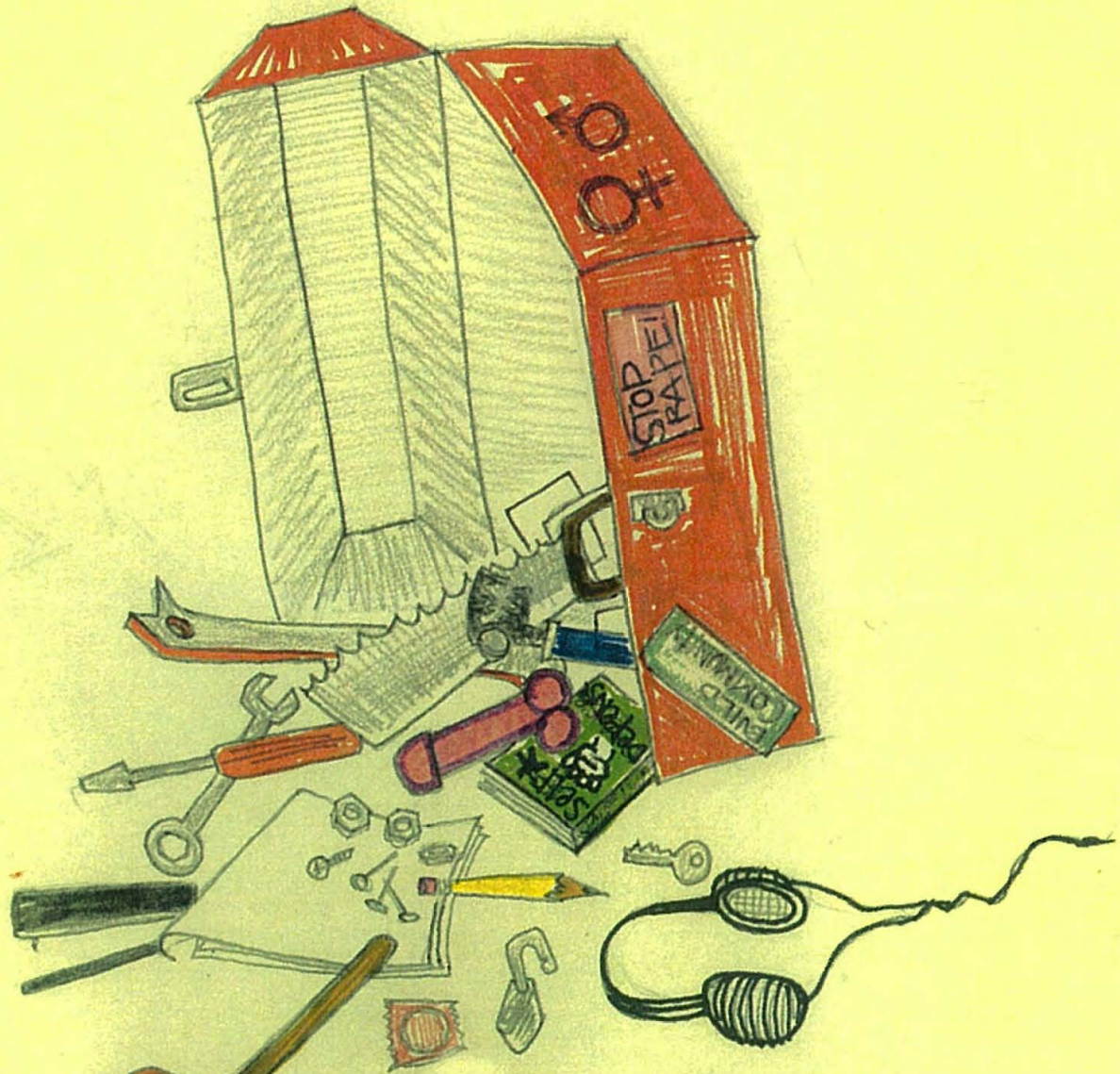
image, courtesy of :

The Icarus Project and Freedom Center  
from, Harm Reduction Guide to Coming Off  
psychiatric drugs.









**DISMANTLE**  
**IT YOURSELF!**