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About

We Believe You: Survivors of Campus Sexual Assault Speak Out by Annie E. Clark & Andrea L. Pino

2017-2018, One Book, One College

Moraine Valley Library, Bookstore, and Counseling & Career Development Center

Sexual violence occurs on college campuses across the country: more than twenty percent of women and five percent of men are assaulted as students. High profile cases have brought this issue into the national conversation, but too often the focus is on how the incident is exceptional, rather than revealing that this is part of ♦the college experience♦ for many students. Time spent at college should be a time of growth and personal development, but for many, it is a time of trauma and undeserved shame.

Annie E. Clark and Andrea L. Pino♦s *We Believe You: Survivors of Campus Sexual Assault Speak Out* is part of a growing movement attempting to bring attention to this crisis on our college campuses. In *We Believe You*, we hear the voices of 34 survivors of college sexual assault. They share painful and intimate stories about their experiences of trauma, survival, and healing. This is a book that students, staff, and faculty on college campuses need to read. It breaks down myths around sexual assault, highlights the voices of those often unheard, emphasizes the diversity of experiences, and works to break the cycle of blaming victims.

As a One Book, *We Believe You* continues the important work of Moraine Valley♦s Counseling & Career Development Center has initiated with the ♦It♦s on Us♦

campaign. The One Book program will advance the conversations around this important topic and support faculty to bring the discussion into their classrooms. We Believe You offers a range of themes that touch on many areas of our curriculum. More importantly, we hope to open up the conversation so that we can recognize that sexual assault is an issue that impacts our community, and each one of us can be a part of the solution. We Believe You should be more than the title of a book, it should be our message to all survivors.

Themes

Myths and Facts about Sexual Assault

What is sexual assault? We often think of it as violent acts by strangers, but 9 out of 10 college students are assaulted by someone they know. Sexual assault is more common than we realize, but because it is not discussed, many people carry misconceptions about both the victims and perpetrators. This program will offer data and reliable information about sexual assault as we explore its prevalence and impact.

Victim Rights and Advocacy

Too often, the victims of sexual assault are blamed: ❖ Why was she wearing that? ❖ ❖ Why did she go to that party? ❖ ❖ She was drinking... ❖ ❖ She must be lying... ❖

Victim blaming prevents the truth about sexual assault from being heard and when we assume the victim is lying we are only protecting the perpetrator. We may claim that sexual assault is wrong but societal, cultural, and institutional attitudes undermine this claim. Yet, stats of false reports for rape and sexual violence are almost nonexistent. This program will consider ways that we can advocate for and support victims.

Bystander Intervention

Bystander interventions are strategies that empower people to speak up and stop situations that may lead to sexual assault. These strategies might include interrupting bad behavior, calling out sexist language among friends, or getting help in difficult situations. These interventions challenge the cultural norms that support and perpetuate rape culture, and put the responsibility of ending sexual assault in the hands of the community rather than on the individual. Education and awareness of the issues around sexual assault can help in knowing how and when to speak up.

Rape Culture

Our society normalizes sexual violence by accepting sexist language as 💎locker room talk💎, creating pop culture that suggests that 💎no💎 really means 💎yes💎, and doubting the truth of women💎s experiences. Rape is often discussed as something that only impacts women, and the conversations rarely acknowledge that those committing sexual assault are most often men. How do we make these conversations more inclusive and start talking about the ways traditional gender roles and expectations of masculinity contribute to violence against women?

LGBTQ Experience with Sexual Assault

LGBTQ communities face marginalization and stigma that puts LGBTQ individuals at a higher risk for experiencing sexual violence. LGBTQ survivors may be hesitant to report sexual violence to police, seek medical services, or utilize resources like rape crisis centers for fear of discrimination. An intersectional approach is essential in supporting LGBTQ survivors of sexual violence.

Sexual Health & Building Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships include knowledge about sexual health, like contraception options and STI prevention, as well as communication skills to express what you want and need from a romantic or sexual partner. We carry myths about sexual health and relationships from high school and popular culture that have an ongoing impact on our sexual well-being. How do we break down myths and share information about sexual health? How do we create healthy relationships and positive sexual identities?

Consent is Sexy

What is the one thing you can💎t have sex without? There is a movement on college campuses to bring awareness to the ways we communicate about sex. Consent requires communication and an active agreement about how to proceed in a sexual relationship. Rather than 💎killing the mood💎, it opens up opportunities to communicate desires and develop healthy relationships. It is "sexy" to be given the green light, and empowering to give it, so what does that look like, and how do you recognize it?

Engaging New Voices

We are more powerful when we raise our voices together. We call on all students, faculty, staff, and administration to participate in expanding and energizing prevention efforts. We call on you to influence cultural change, support victims, and pull in new voices who have not traditionally been a part of the conversation and movement

Companion Texts

***Yes Means Yes!: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape* (2008)**

by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti

"Activists and writers Friedman and Valenti deliver an extraordinary essay compilation focusing on the struggle to stop rape in the U.S. and the importance of sexual identity and ownership. Early on, Thomas MacAulay Millar and Rachel Kramer Bussel explain how the "no means no" concept (sexual consent equals the absence of no) must be rejected in favor of a "yes means yes" mentality: the idea that consent means affirmative participation in the act itself, a broader definition that better protects women while encouraging power over-not fear of-personal sexual identity." (from Publishers Weekly)

***The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and and How All Men Can Help* (2006)**

by Jackson Katz

"Katz is cofounder of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (MVP), and his focus is on prevention—his intended audience is not violent men who need help changing their ways, but all men, who, he says, have a role to play in preventing male violence against women. His basic assertion is that rape, battering, sexual abuse and harassment are so widespread that they must be viewed as a social problem rooted in our culture, not as the problem of troubled individuals. He urges men to directly confront the misogynistic attitudes and behavior of their peers. (from *Publishers Weekly*)

***Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town* (2016)**

by Jon Krakauer

"Toward the end of this powerful, absorbing book, best-selling author Jon Krakauer quotes a jury member as she sums up popular assumptions about sexual assault: ♦(1) A stranger jumps out from the bushes; (2) There is no (assault) unless the woman puts up a fight, to the death if necessary.♦ The truth is much different—assaults by acquaintances are by far the most common form of the crime. In Missoula, Krakauer examines one community♦s struggle with such accusations, shining a bright light on a problem that frequently goes underreported and is all-too-easy to sweep under the rug. Not only must victims contend with the after-effects of the crime, they must often face doubting police, antagonistic lawyers, and the whims of popular opinion." (Amazon review by Chris Schluep)

***Asking for It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture--and What We Can Do about It* (2015)**

by Kate Harding

"Informative and informal, the book is a smart, impassioned and well-researched agenda for a strictly no-nonsense understanding of rape culture...Harding covers a lot of territory, including the in/appropriateness of rape jokes, the impact of false reports fueled by racism, and the depressingly high number of unprocessed rape kits...The fundamentals are here — consent, politics, trolls and police accountability. But throughout, Harding offers a fluid, urgent and clear message that ends on a hopeful note." (from the *LA Times*)

About the One Book Program

For thousands of years, humans have used stories to communicate knowledge about the world. Stories provide contexts for our understanding of facts, emotions, discoveries, history, relationships, and all kinds of human interaction. For this reason, the Moraine Valley Library and the Moraine Valley Bookstore invite all members of the community to come together to discuss a selected story in the One Book, One College program. Join us as we share knowledge across disciplines, exchange new ideas on useful topics, and enrich our curriculum in new ways. For more information, contact us at (708) 974-5709 or swanson[at]morainevalley.edu.

Previous One Book, One College Selections:

- Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (2004)
- Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2005-2006)
- George Orwell's *1984* (2006-2007)
- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley* (2007-2008)
- Elizabeth Royte's *Garbage Land* (2008-2009)
- Studs Terkel's *Working* (2009-2010)
- Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010-2011)
- Roxanna Saberi's *Between Two Worlds* (2011-2012)
- Tony Horwitz's *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (2012-2013)
- Max Brooks' *World War Z: The Oral History of the Zombie War* (2013-2014)
- Jame Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (2014-2015)
- Joselyn Angel N.'s *Illegal: Reflections of an Undocumented Immigrant* (2015-2016)

- Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: the Musical* (2016-2017)

"It is possible to begin to smile
in such a way
that it reaches your eyes "

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