From stories of ghosts to the first Thanksgiving, this is a season of storytelling. It is appropriate then to consider how, as service providers, our stories affect our work with survivors of sexual violence.

Stories are the building blocks of our history and define how we come to understand who we are and our relationships to people, communities, the environment, and systems. Stories establish our identities and inform how we navigate through the world. How have you come to understand who you are and the stories you tell?

Brene Brown, researcher and storyteller, has spent the past decade studying shame, vulnerability, and courage and their relationships to the stories we tell. To understand our stories, we must first understand how we are showing up to our lives and connecting with the world around us. Connection is a fundamental component of the human experience; it gives purpose and meaning to our lives. So what prevents us from being able to fully connect at times, according to Brown? It is shame, the fear of disconnection. “I’m not _____ enough.” Fill in the blank: good, smart, paid, perfect. What are your shame triggers that lead you to believe you are not _____ enough? Underneath shame lies vulnerability.

Brown defines vulnerability as living whole-heartedly from a deep place of worthiness and belonging, and doing so with the courage to be imperfect. She defines courage from the Latin word cor, meaning heart, with the original definition of telling the story of who you are with your whole heart (i.e., authenticity).

**The Stories We Tell**

*By Ginger Francis*

Jessica eloquently shared her journey from victim to activist, and began by disclosing to participants a difficult past involving physical, emotional, and sexual abuse at the hand of her own mother. Jessica agreed to share her story for the WCASA newsletter, as her story can help others understand the intersections of sexual violence and disabilities.

Jessica and her twin were born with cerebral palsy to their single, 17-year-old mother. Because of cerebral palsy, Jessica has had to depend on the care of others to meet her daily living needs. For most families, caring for children with disabilities is difficult, especially without support. For Jessica’s mother, this was no different. And because of the stress and lack of support, she took out her frustration on her children.

**A Survivor’s Story**

*By Naomi Takahashi*

WCASA hosted the annual fall Survivors and Allies Task Force Gathering on October 18th in Green Bay. There were many new participants, and many wonderful breakout sessions, including “Boundaries, Healthy Relationships after Sexual Assault” and a session on activities to use with survivors to promote healing. One presentation, however, stood out and touched the hearts of everyone in attendance. This breakout, “Victim to Survivor to Advocate to Activist,” featured the personal story of Jessica Nell, MSW, CSW.

**WCASA Annual Member Meeting**

November 13, 2014: 10:00am-3:30pm
Catholic Multi-Cultural Center (1862 Beld St, Madison, WI 53713)

This year we gather to Celebrate Everyone. **Register here**

Join us at the Annual Member Meeting and celebrate this year’s accomplishments and our commitment to survivors.
The Capitol Report
By Dominic Holt

On the public policy front, we have much to be grateful for. In October, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to take up lower court decisions that effectively legalized same-sex marriage in several states, including Wisconsin. In addition, California passed the first-ever statewide “yes means yes” affirmative consent law, showing what sexual violence prevention can look like in public policy. Lastly, WCASA hosted a webinar providing an update on the Wisconsin Attorney General’s Sexual Assault Response Team (AG-SART). Read on here.

Visionary Evaluation
By Rose Hennessy

In mid-October I had the privilege to present at the American Evaluation Association’s annual conference on Visionary Evaluation. I presented on WCASA’s system of collecting and tracking technical assistance and training. WCASA’s regional technical assistants and staff informed the development of the system. Over 60 people attended the presentation of WCASA’s work! Best of all, other violence prevention evaluators shared their hopes to replicate similar systems in their communities. Read on here.

Help Support Victims

The Victim Accompaniment bill and other lobbying strategies (including reinstating SAVS funding) could not have happened without your support. Please help us continue to fund these important endeavors.

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Upcoming Events

11/7: CCR Networking Meeting, Madison
11/13: WCASA Annual Meeting, Madison
11/17: NFL Conference Call
11/17: Understanding the Impact of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Stevens Point
11/20: CCR Networking Meeting, Wausau

November Awareness Dates

Upcoming dates to keep in mind:

- Forensic Nurses Week (10th-14th)
- Transgender Awareness Week (11th-17th)
- Transgender Day of Remembrance (20th)
- International Day for the Elimination of VAW (25th)
- Speak Out Sunday (23rd)

NFL Conference Call

On Monday, November 17th at 10:00am, join WCASA and End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin to address topical issues in the NFL for domestic and sexual violence prevention.

To join, please call 605-475-4700 and when prompted enter: 1042414#.

Because Our Lives Matter.

Visit WCASA on: