

Healthy Sexuality

By Mindy Hammann, Service Coordinator at Community Associates

As a service provider to adult women with developmental disabilities I am regularly faced with finding a balance between my role of ensuring health and safety in all aspects of one's life and my role of providing 'dignity of risk' to enjoy life's experiences like any other adult. Exploring one's sexuality and intimate relationships is a big part of being in the adult world, and this adventure certainly comes with so many risks. The women we serve are particularly vulnerable to sexual predators by virtue of their disability or may find themselves in a relationship with a peer where there is an imbalance of power.

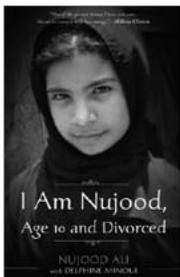
Since I, as a person and as part of Community Associates (a program of the Counseling Service of Addison County), value one's right to make mistakes in pursuit of a full life, I look to

the Vermont State 'Policy on Education and Support of Sexuality' written by the Division of Developmental Services (2004). This sets a standard for service providers to support individuals with developmental disabilities to be safe from sexual abuse while expressing their sexuality as one's right. Ongoing education and guidance are key components to responsibly balancing this right responsibly.

A vehicle that is utilized to provide education is a sexuality curriculum created by Planned Parenthood (PPNNE) and Green Mountain Self-Advocates (2007). Community Associates (CA) offers a weekly group for women served by CA and this is a venue for discussion on various topics including building healthy relationships, communication, decision making, anatomy, pregnancy/STIs, and sexual abuse awareness. Also important to note is that a strong message is delivered regarding the value of

body image and self-advocacy of one's rights.

This education program seemingly addresses all of the needs of our group but these are women who are more likely than the average woman to have experienced trauma in their earlier life as well as having a distorted sense of body image. In addition, each woman is unique in their cognitive abilities. To be sure that we are successful in delivering information we try to use a variety of tools to help each one gather and retain information in a way that works for them. We see many of the women return for the new season of our group for a refresher. We look to local resources, such as WomenSafe, who have an expertise in a particular area to be guest speakers and collaborators. Through community partnership we can continue to work toward empowering women to understand and live their lives free from sexual abuse.



Book Review

I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced

Reviewed by Foresta Castañeda, Outreach Advocate

I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced tells the heart wrenching true story of how Nujood Ali became the first child bride in Yemen to ask for and win a divorce. Written in her own voice, Nujood recalls with vivid detail how at age 10 her father arranged her marriage to a man three times her age and her childhood came to an abrupt end.

With unflinching directness she describes the daily realities of being a child bride, and paints a stark picture rife with ongoing physical and psychological abuse, and nightly sexual violence she endured at the hands of her much older husband, his mother and his family. As Nujood recounts her incredible escape and the historic court case that followed, the reader is confronted with the reality of a brave young woman whose childhood has been interrupted and whose circumstances have forced her to mature well beyond her years.

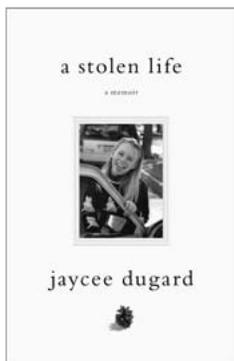
While the circumstances of Nujood's story are (sadly) hardly

unique in parts of the world that allow the practice of child marriage to continue, her willingness to share openly with the world about her experiences of being a child bride are a testament to her courage and strength and to her desire to make a difference in the lives of other child brides in Yemen and beyond.

I highly recommend this quick read to anyone who cares about the rights and wellbeing of female children throughout the world and who wishes to learn more about child brides and the dangers and injustices they face. While Nujood's historic actions paved the way for many more child brides to seek justice- without further efforts to outlaw the practice of child brides, stories like Nujood's will continue to emerge.

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Book Review

A Stolen Life

Reviewed by Kerri Duquette-Hoffman,
Advocacy Program Coordinator

A Stolen Life by Jaycee Lee Dugard is an intense and powerful memoir of a horrific event. The audio version of this book is all the more powerful as you hear the voice of this strong and

courageous woman which sounds impossibly youthful for a woman who is almost 30. This firsthand account is written as

she remembers the terrifying details of her kidnapping and 18 years of being held hostage and as a sex slave.

There are many aspects of this book that are painful to hear, and even more painful to reconcile with the horrific circumstances of her captivity (the sex offender who held her captive was on probation and received at times frequent visits from corrections officers). However, her voice and perspective is that of resilience and vitality. As with so many women who walk through the doors at WomenSafe, she is extremely strong and fighting to put a life back together one piece at a time. In this respect, the book is quite inspiring. Her story reminds the reader of how indomitable the human spirit truly is.

Sexual Violence in the Trans Community

By Jean Sienkewicz, SafeSpace Co-Coordinator/Program Advocate

For many of us, gender is invisible—an afterthought, perhaps if a thought at all. And yet, it acts upon us constantly. Our society's gender binary requires an individual's gender to be fixed—either “male” or “female” as determined by personal biology (genitalia, hormones, etc.)—and sanctions only behaviors that link to these physical traits. These taken-for-granted rules then dictate a multitude of “shoulds”: what our body should look like, what we should wear, how we should express ourselves, etc.. They also provide a reasonable assurance as to how society should respond to us as we move through the world. But what about those people whose self-concept does not match, or fit neatly, into the physical “package” they were born into?

Transgender people break away from one or more of society's expectations around gender. And as a result of this rigid construction and interpretation of gender norms, individuals who are “deviant” suffer very concrete consequences—at the very least, experiencing incidents that attempt to force them to conform. At worst, they can experience brutal violence, even death, at the hands of others. Along similar lines, stories of sexual violence within the transgender community are all too common.

There is a dearth of research on this subject in particular, but given the statistics for sexual violence (SV) within the general population (1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men) and that transgender individuals were assigned one of these genders at birth, it would make sense that they experience SV at at least the same rate. According to Munson, “many trans activists believe that the overall presence of violence (including SV) is higher among trans people” (2). This is due in large part to the our society's “investment in gender and sexual conformity”; consequently, trans individuals who want to be seen as fully male or fully female but are not able to successfully “pass” as that gender are at higher risk, as are those people who consciously straddle the gender binary (3).

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Sex Trafficking

By Erin O'Keefe, University of Vermont Masters of Social Work Student Intern

Sex trafficking occurs when ‘force, fraud, or coercion’ are used to manipulate someone to participate in the commercial sex industry. Since both federal and international trafficking legislation passed in 2000, awareness about the issue has spread. While many people are aware trafficking exists, misinformation and misconceptions abound about what it is and who it affects.

Anyone can be a victim of sexual trafficking, but the vast majority (the United Nations estimated 98%) are women and girls. Undocumented women and runaway teens are at particular risk in the United States. Residential brothels, hostess clubs, online escort services, massage parlors, strip clubs and street prostitution rings are avenues through which trafficking is known to occur. Often, sexual trafficking is seen as an international problem, however the US is a major player. Although trafficking statistics are extremely difficult to generate, between 50,000 and 75,000 adults are trafficked into the US and 100,000-300,000 American children are commercially sexually exploited each year. Victims of sex trafficking frequently live isolated lives, terrorized by a pimp or “controller”, sometimes living in debt servitude- trying to repay the controller to gain freedom. This type of enslavement is extremely lucrative, second only to the drug trade as a source of illegal revenue: international annual estimates are around \$7 billion.

In 2011, based on existing laws, Vermont and received a “D” grade from Shared Hope International- an organization working to end the child sex trade. 26 states received an “F” and no state received an “A”. Vermont, like the rest of our country, has a long way to go to become a true ally and agent for the prevention of human sexual trafficking.

For information about Human Trafficking in Vermont, visit www.covast.org

For information about Human Trafficking in the United States, visit www.polarisproject.org

Additional Risks for Immigrant Women

By Kate Bass, Middlebury College Graduate and WomenSafe Volunteer

Silvia lifted the fray of her jeans over her calf. It was enough to have a clear idea of what she indicated—bruises in an array of blues up her leg. The director of the Migrant Resource Center in Agua Prieta, Mexico, a small city on the U.S.-Mexico border, looked concerned. “This happened in the detention center?” he asked—referring to where the

existing gender inequality and abusive behavior. In one study, 42 percent of Latinas reported an increase in domestic abuse since coming to the United States. Immigration markedly increases a woman’s dependency on family, intimate partners, employers, and cultural or national groups. U.S. immigration policy favors the family unit. In 2003, three quarters of all immigrants admitted to the country received visas because of family ties. Many women chose not to report abuse or leave an abusive situation, at work or at home, because they could lose their immigration status. Legal channels exist for immigrant survivors of abuse to gain tem-

porarily come to Vermont in order live with their partners. Language barriers are incredibly restrictive, even with a growing network of volunteer interpreters throughout the state. Despite these challenges, organizations like WomenSafe and the Addison County Farm Worker Coalition have recognized the vulnerability of, and reached out to, local migrant women. The Middlebury Police Department maintains progressive, rational policies that support victims and witnesses. In bridging the migrant and resident Vermonter communities, we reduce the odds against women feeling alone and unable to seek help. Our community, in our poli-

“In one study, 42 percent of Latinas reported an increase in domestic abuse since coming to the United States.”

woman was held by U.S. immigration officials before she was deported. “No, this happened last night—here.” She had left her abusive boyfriend in the United States a little over a week before. When she left him, she understood the risks; in addition to rejection by her family, she faced detention, deportation to an unfamiliar border city, and no way to get home on either side of the border. The day before she walked into our center, a group of men tried to rape her as she waited for a bus to go to the women’s shelter in Agua Prieta. When she left her boyfriend, she said she had thought it was worth the risk.

Unfortunately, Silvia’s decision was no more complex than that of many immigrant women living in the United States today. Whether they have entered the country illegally or legally, immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual abuse by both fellow immigrants and U.S. citizens. Immigration frequently exacerbates

porary and permanent visas. However, the visas are limited in number and social and linguistic barriers often make going to the authorities very difficult.

Vermont is a particularly challenging place to address the vulnerability of immigrant women. Migrant farm workers in Addison County often live where they work, on secluded farms in rural areas. Transportation is difficult, as most do not have access to a driver’s license or a car because they lack paperwork. Migrant farm worker women fre-

quently come to Vermont in order live with their partners. Language barriers are incredibly restrictive, even with a growing network of volunteer interpreters throughout the state. Despite these challenges, organizations like WomenSafe and the Addison County Farm Worker Coalition have recognized the vulnerability of, and reached out to, local migrant women. The Middlebury Police Department maintains progressive, rational policies that support victims and witnesses. In bridging the migrant and resident Vermonter communities, we reduce the odds against women feeling alone and unable to seek help. Our community, in our poli-



**Your voice is powerful.
Start the conversation.**

**Sexual violence
thrives in silence**
**Let's TALK
about it**

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Sexual Violence in the Trans Community

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After experiencing sexual violence, transgender individuals also experience specific barriers to receiving services. These include fear of going to the hospital and/or seeking medical care based on prior significant negative experiences with medical providers; fear of turning to the police for help due to fear of bias and/or abuse (such as victim-blaming and verbal re-victimization); and lack of eligibility for or comfort with services offered by mainstream DV or SV agencies as some have policies that segregate services by sex. Many trans individuals also fear experiencing bias or discrimination (such as withholding of resources) from transphobic service providers, or simply having to educate the provider designated to assist them.

While not everyone reading this article may have a specific role to play in working with SV survivors, each step that each of us—as community members and fellow human beings—can take to stop, and prevent, the gender-based stereotyping trans individuals experience on a regular basis is critical. What can we do? Here are some specific recommendations for how to start:

- Examine your own beliefs and potential biases. Are there ways that we may unconsciously (or consciously) invalidate a trans person's gender identity, or hold it against them?

- Don't make assumptions—about a trans individual's gender (even if it seems obvious), sexual orientation, relationship status, or if they have a partner, their partner's gender or sexual orientation.
- Don't go "sightseeing." Trans peoples' body parts, medical information, process with transitioning, etc. are their own, and are personal. Although many of us may be curious because trans peoples' experiences are so different from our own, it does not give us permission to ask invasive questions about private matters.
- Use resources such as <http://forge-forward.org/> and <http://survivorproject.org/> to learn more about DV and SV in the trans community, and how to further support survivors.

Finally, if you are or know a transgender person who has experienced SV and is looking for LGBTQ-specific services, the SafeSpace antiviolence program at the RU12? Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Community Center has advocates available to help. Their support line is 802.863.0003.

Resources:

Munson, M. (2008, 2006). "Practical Tips for Working with Transgender Survivors of Sexual Violence". http://www.forge-forward.org/handouts/Trans_survivor_tips.pdf.

Munson, M. and Cook-Daniels, L. (2005). "Transgender Sexual Violence Project Final Review. August 15, 2005." http://www.forge-forward.org/transviolence/docs/FINAL_narrative_implications.pdf.

Sexual Abuse of Incarcerated Women

By Joanna Berger, University of Vermont Masters of Social Work Student Intern

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007), more than 70,000 prisoners are sexually assaulted every year. More than half of these assaults are perpetrated by the prison staff who control nearly every aspect of inmates' lives and have access to places where they sleep and bathe.

The incidence of reporting is especially low in correctional settings, where fears of not being believed or retaliated against can be heightened. Many women who come forward are forced to move into segregated units to "protect" them from retaliation and may risk losing visitation. Additionally, although all sexual contact in prison is illegal, women may not view using sex to obtain contraband or extra privileges as a form of violence.

The overwhelming majority of women entering our correctional facilities are survivors of physical or sexual abuse. During their incarceration, the experience of constant monitoring by predominantly male correctional officers, routine strip searches, and general powerlessness may re-victimize survivors of abuse.

Increasing public understanding of the violence experienced by many people who are incarcerated is important for changing these practices. Informing prisoners of their rights, improving the response to sexual assault, and providing continuing education for prison staff are important steps to take towards eliminating sexual assault in prisons.

Help Us By Going Paperless

WomenSafe works hard to conserve our environment. Please help us by signing up to receive *The Advocate* via email. Your participation means that not only would we save more trees and use less petroleum products in the production and distribution of this newsletter, but you would also be helping us to continue to raise awareness and consciousness of the issues faced by our family, friends and neighbors who are being victimized by their partners or other people in their lives - but in a cost-effective manner. Thank you to the nearly 78 people who have already signed up! If you would like to "Go Paperless," let us know at info@womensafe.net.



Child Sexual Abuse ~ How Offenders Offend

By Willow Wheelock, Education Coordinator

At least 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys (Stop It Now!) will experience sexual abuse before they turn 18 years old. In every childcare center, classroom, doctor's office, neighborhood and community there are children who have been violated by an adult or older child. How can child sexual abuse be so prevalent? People who want to gain access to children will engage in a subtle, gradual process of developing the trust of adults around children and then the trust of the children themselves while slowly building up the amount of time alone they spend with children, all while being undetected.

"Grooming can occur over the course of weeks, months or years, long before any sexual abuse actually takes place, as an offender moves gradually in order to decrease suspicion."

This intentional process is called grooming, and it plays a significant role in the prevalence of child sexual abuse.

In order to offend against children, someone first needs to gain access to them. By intentionally building relationships with adults in children's lives and engaging in a deliberate set of behaviors, offenders work to ensure that their time with children is welcomed and encouraged. Grooming can occur over the course of weeks, months or years, long before any sexual abuse actually takes place, as an offender moves gradually in order to decrease suspicion. As they are establishing the trust of the adults, offenders will begin spending small amounts of time alone with children; as the trust grows, so may the time alone.

Shortly after gaining access to a child, an offender will begin to test the child's boundaries (telling inappropriate jokes, use

of sexual language, pulling a child down on a lap, 'accidentally' exposing them to pornography); this will be followed by an offender's efforts to desensitize the child to sexual touch (accidental sexual touch during play that builds up over time). Some children may not recognize these behaviors as sexual abuse, and those who do may be overwhelmed with confusion because of the trust and the relationship with the offender.

Once abuse has progressed, an offender will use guilt, coercion and threats to keep a child from telling about the abuse. Convincing a child s/he won't be believed, somebody will be in trouble, their family will be torn apart, or someone will be hurt are some of the manipulations an offender uses to convince kids to not disclose the secret of abuse. Understanding

the incredible pressure kids are put under to not tell helps explain why only 1 in 10 kids discloses abuse during their childhood.

Remember that offenders have worked hard to manipulate the adults into not believing children when they do tell of sexual abuse. Establishing an open, honest relationship with children and youth, telling them that if they are ever mixed up or confused about touch or a relationship they can ask you or two or three grown-ups for help, paying careful attention to kids as they provide you with hints at their distress, and believing them wholeheartedly (even when it's hard to believe) when they disclose are some steps to counter the power offenders carry.

Stop It Now! 2008-2010. May 2011 <http://www.stopitnow.org/csa_fact_prevalence1>.

Kimberly Krans Award

By Christina Grier, The Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator

WomenSafe was pleased to honor Dottie Neuberger as the recipient of the 2012 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award (Kimberly Krans Award). The award is presented annually to a woman in Addison County and Rochester whose outstanding work and achievements have had

positive impacts on and furthered the safety of women and/or children in our community.

The award ceremony is held in March as part of National Women's History Month. This year's Kimberly Krans Award ceremony was held on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at 109 Catamount Park in Middlebury. We were truly honored to shed some light on such a dedicated woman who has made such a tremendous impact on our community.

Dottie started working for the Counsel-



ing Service of Addison County (CSAC) in July 1972. She spent the first five

Kimberly Krans Award

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years at CSAC as an Impact Worker moving patients from the state hospital to community care homes. She then worked as the first School Based Clinician at Middlebury Union High School (MUHS) for 25 years.

Dottie retired from CSAC in 2000, but according to her, she “flunked retirement” and worked as a substitute with special programs at the middle and high school. In 2008, Dottie started working at Bridport Central School as a replacement guidance counselor before becoming the School Based Clinician the following year. Dottie is back working for CSAC as she continues to work at Bridport.

Dottie has also worked as a community volunteer at a variety of places including the Middlebury Congregational Church; UD #3 School Board; Porter Hospital Board, including Chair-

person for two years; United Way Board for eight years; and on the Governor’s Council on Hunger from 2009 to present. In 2001 and continuing today, Dottie and her family, along with other local families, began the Christmas Day Dinner at the Middlebury Commons. Dottie was also instrumental in starting the Community Supper program in March of 2005 and continues to help serve meals on Fridays at the Middlebury Congregational Church.

The most amazing thing about Dottie is her selfless nature. She insists that “... none of the things that I have done have been done by me alone - it truly takes a village to makes these things work and we live in a wonderful village!”

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2013 Kimberly Krans Award, please contact us at info@womensafe.net or 388-9180. Nominations are accepted throughout the year and until December 31, 2012.

What If?

By Missy Holland, WomenSafe Volunteer

At the end of 2011 the nation was riveted by a case of sexual violence against children.

Jerry Sandusky, an assistant football coach at Pennsylvania State University, was indicted on 40 counts of sex crimes against young boys, includ-

emotions – shock, anger, dismay, sorrow – all too often accompanied by excuses, justifications, and woefully inadequate apologies.

Now what can we take away from this? On the one hand, were we distracted by the high-profile nature of the case? Did larger-than-life players keep us from seeing the individual, all too young victims? As a corrective to the

scandal engulfing the Catholic Church surely taught us that our most revered institutions create and sustain cultures where sexual predators are harbored and their victims betrayed. These institutions reward loyalty above all else, tend to be hierarchical and generally male. There apparently was not one woman in the Penn State chain of command.

“The crimes at Penn State are about the raping of children. That is all they are about.” ~ Charles Pierce

ing the rape of one boy in a university football facility. In that one instance, a graduate assistant coach had witnessed the incident and reported it the next day, not to the police, but to his higher-ups. As the report climbed the ladder, “anal intercourse” somehow became “horsing around.” No one called the police. When the story went public, the role of the university came under fire; denial was no longer an option. Revered head coach Joe Paterno had the information and passed it up but never followed up. The President of the university, who expressed support for his staff, but no concern for their victims resigned.

blather about football and coaching records, Charles Pierce in Grantland insisted it was very simple: “The crimes at Penn State are about the raping of children. That is all they are about. The crimes at Penn State are about the raping of children by Jerry Sandusky, and the possibility that people lied to a grand jury about the raping of children by Jerry Sandusky, and the likelihood that most of the people who had the authority at Penn State to stop the raping of children by Jerry Sandusky proved themselves to have the moral backbone of ribbon worms.”

On the other hand, this crime did not occur in a vacuum and there are compelling reasons to look at the culpability of our institutions. The continuing

Moreover, this is an institution of higher education. I found the reaction of a large number of Penn State students chilling. They protested not against sexual violence and in support of the child victims, but against their institution for firing a beloved football coach who had lost his job for harboring a predator. In addition to indictable crimes, Penn State must face its failure to instill in its students the ability to distinguish between sexual violence and athletic success.

Finally, I am haunted by this question, for which I had no clear answer: What if that young boy in the locker room shower had been a girl?

Spring Has Arrived!

If you have gently used clothes or household items, consider donating them to Neat Repeats and designating WomenSafe as the recipient of the proceeds. If you are able to contribute in this way, Neat Repeats has the following reminders to donors:

- They gladly accept clean, current styles of clothing
- Consignments must arrive in the shop during business hours.
- Please do not drop them, with a note, into the outside donation box
- If Neat Repeats has to launder items, they become the property of the shop and not a sale for WomenSafe
- There is a difference between sellable and useable items; WomenSafe only makes money on the sellable items

For more information, call Neat Repeats at 388-4488 or Carol at 388-9180.



RSVP

Thank you to Faith, Sylvia, Marvel, Judy, Lucille & Janice - the RSVP volunteers who spend many hours preparing 2,000 newsletters for our mailing. We couldn't get this information out to our readers without their help. We appreciate all their hard work and dedication! A special thank you to Sylvia who coordinates the biannual RSVP mailing for WomenSafe.

A special thank you . . .

to the Turtle Fur Group of Morrisville for donating nearly 100 hats, gators, ear warmers and mittens! The items are displayed on a clothesline in our office making them available for service users who stop by. These beautiful creations made our office space festive and warm during the dark, cold winter. Thank you!



Benefit Bake for WomenSafe

Eliminating Violence Through Service, Education & Social Change

Wednesday, April 11th 5:00 - 9:00

Eat in or take out

\$3 From the sale of each flatbread will be donated to WomenSafe.

For more info, please call:
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The Advocate

WomenSafe Spring 2012 Vol 17, Issue 1

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WomenSafe

Committed to ending
domestic and sexual violence

The Advocate

Newsletter of WomenSafe

Volume 17, Issue 1, Spring 2012

WomenSafe Provides:

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 - Emotional Support
 - Medical Advocacy
 - Legal Advocacy
 - Transitional Housing
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- **Supervised Visitation
& Monitored Exchange**

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