



PATHWAYS *for* **Change**

ending the silence...
ending sexual violence

Rosa Fernandez (she/her/ella): Director of Education and Outreach

Who is Pathways for Change?

- We were founded in 1973
- We cover 47 cities and towns in Central MA
- We are free and confidential
- We have counselors who speak English, Spanish, and Portuguese
- We have a Deaf Survivor Program that signs ASL
- We are a stand-alone sexual violence agency
- We serve Survivors 12 years and older
- We offer additional counseling support to the Survivors support people
- We operate from a strengths based perspective
- We offer choices to the Survivor putting them back into control



What Services does PFC Provide?

- Survivor counseling
- Significant other counseling
- Hotline services
- Hospital advocacy
- Police advocacy
- Court advocacy
- Healthy relationship training





Who do we Support?

Survivors

- Childhood Sexual Abuse/Incest
- Rape
- Attempted Assaults
- Sexual Harassment
- Any form of SV
- Sexually Exploited individuals

Significant Others

- Parents or Guardians
- Other Family (siblings, cousins, grandparents, etc)
- Partners (spouses, girl/boyfriends)
- Friends/Classmates

Professionals

- First responder counseling
- Collaborate services
- Trainings, workshops
- Provide Technical Support



Deaf Survivor Program

- Our Deaf Survivor Program is fully staffed by Deaf/Hard of Hearing or ASL fluent and culturally aware members of the Deaf community
- We serve ALL Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals in the state of Massachusetts, as well as their family members, by:
 - ***24/7/365 Counseling Videophone Hotline***
 - ***Safety Planning***
 - ***Legal, Medical and Court Advocacy***
 - ***Referrals***
 - ***Counseling***
 - ***Support Groups***
 - ***Professional Consultation***
 - ***Equipment Donation Program***
 - ***Training Webinars and Classes***



Survivors with IDD

(Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities)



- Over 7 years developing materials and programs
- Accessibility to the best of our abilities
- Turing ROI's, Client Rights, etc. into plain language
 - Plain language is helpful when English is not the first language
- Create a Training: Helping staff to better understand how to work with survivors with IDD
- Understanding how to work with guardians/support staff



Intersectionality

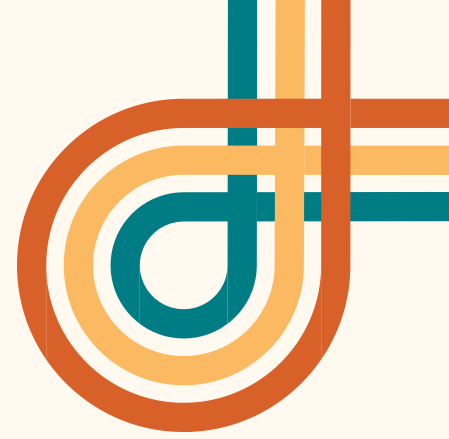
- Survivor-centered
- No one lives in a bubble
 - Past and future experiences affect healing
- Taking into account factors of oppression
- We are always learning
- Approach from a place of curiosity

There are many, many different kinds of intersectional exclusions - not just black women but other women of color. Not just people of color, but people with disabilities. Immigrants. LGBTQ people. Indigenous people.
— Kimberle Williams Crenshaw



Trauma and the Brain

When we experience trauma, the brain shuts down all nonessential systems and activates the sympathetic nervous system. To help us survive the trauma, the brain releases stress hormones and activates the flight or fight response.



Trauma and the Brain



- Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)
 - Responds to dangerous or stressful situations
 - Controls fight, flight, or freeze/submit response
- Physical changes caused by SNS
 - Eyes: Enlarge pupils to let in more light and improve vision
 - Lungs: Relax airway muscles to improve oxygen delivery
 - Digestive Tract: Slows down so energy can be diverted to other areas
 - Liver: Activates energy stores so it can be used quickly




Traumatic Memories



- The brain's first job is survival
- The brain commonly fractures memories of a traumatic event
- A Survivor may not be able to recall what happened right away
- Memories may come back in waves days, weeks, or even months after the event
- Not remembering everything is normal and does not mean they are lying

With adequate and supportive responses
from individuals and institutions, healing is possible!





What is Sexual Exploitation

- Any actual or attempted abuse from a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to: profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sex Trafficking

- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Coercion can be physical or psychological
- Doesn't have to involve smuggling or movement
- Making money off of another person by forcing or coercing them into some sort of commercial sex acts

Sexual Exploitation

- No money is changing hands
- The commercial element does not exist because it's not a money-making venture
- Sometimes– no trafficker or pimp



Sexual Exploitation



- Not a victimless crime
 - Many individuals are exploited without their consent
- Impacts people of all backgrounds
- It happens everywhere
 - Hotels, massage parlors, social media, websites, neighborhoods, etc.
- Just because someone is a sex worker, does not mean they cannot experience sexual violence

If Someone Discloses

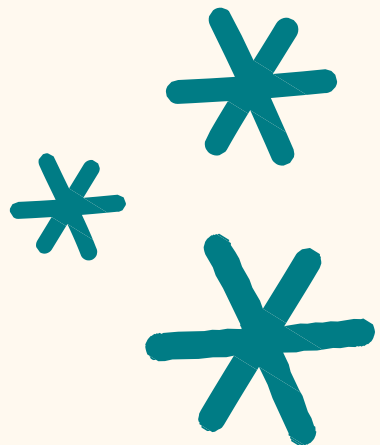
- Listen & Validate
 - They turned to you because they trust you
 - Let them know that what they just shared matters
- Believe them
 - Survivors of SV often self-blame
- Remind them that it is not their fault
 - For example, if they say, "I shouldn't have been alone with them," remind them that they trusted someone and that the trust was violated





What Happens After?

- The Survivor goes to the hospital
- The Survivor reports to the police
- The Survivor obtains a restraining order
- The Survivor begins counseling
- Nothing



Allow the Survivor to choose the next step that is best for them without making them feel judged. It returns the power that was taken from them by the perpetrator



Survivor Reporting Fears

- Mistrust of institutions
 - Medical, court, police, school staff
- Long, drawn-out court proceedings
- Deportation
- Reactions by first responders and others
- Not being believed
- No memory
- Retaliation
- Not knowing what happened was illegal



SANE Forensic Exam



- Immediate care
 - Being medically cleared by ER doctor
- History
 - Survivor's sexual violence story
- Head-to-toe exam
- Possible mandated reporting
 - If the Survivor is a minor, disabled, or elderly
- Follow-up care





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24/7/365 Hotline:

(800) 870-5905

24/7/365 VP ASL Hotline:

(508) 502-7681

Office (M-F 9-5):

(508) 852-7600

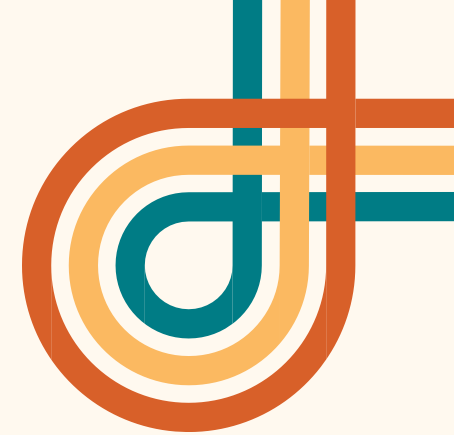
Address:

588 Main St.

Worcester, MA

Website:

<https://pathwaysforchange.help>



Thank you!