

Pandora's Project

www.pandys.org

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The Importance of Volunteering

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The Pandora's Aquarium message board has been operating for over 10 years and relies entirely on a staff of volunteers. Over 50 survivors volunteer their time to moderate board and chat activities. We started as a small message board run by one woman, and our many volunteers have helped us grow into a non-profit organization and offer a wide range of services and resources to survivors of sexual violence.

Most of our volunteers re-

port that spending their time helping other survivors has helped them move forward with their own healing. Although the jobs can be challenging at times, it can also be extremely rewarding to see that you are making a difference in the lives of other survivors.

If you are interested in volunteering for Pandora's Project, please keep an eye on the Announcements forum of the message

board or on our Facebook page for opportunities.

There are many other community organizations that rely on volunteers to help combat sexual violence. If you are looking for other ways to get involved, we suggest that you look for volunteer opportunities with organizations in your own community.

Thank you to all those who have given their time to help other survivors and to make Pandys what it is today!



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Survivor Care Packages

One of the most challenging emotions we feel after being raped is the feeling that we are alone. Regardless of our support system, being the victim of a sexual assault can be a very isolating feeling.

In an effort to minimize those feelings even a little, Pandys began sending out survivor care packages to members of our message board who had

recently been assaulted. Staff members are responsible for identifying members and contacting the moderating team.

At this point in time these care packages are sent out in the US and Canada by Jackie, Stephanie handles the UK, and Louise handles Australia. We've sent out over 50 care

packages thus far and look forward to this being a permanent component of what Pandora's Project has to offer.

Thank you to all those who have been so generous in making contributions that allow us to cover the cost of these items as well as the postage!



Spotlight: An Infinite Mind by Founder Jaime P.

When I was diagnosed in 2005 with Dissociative Identity Disorder, I felt so completely alone. I believed no one would ever accept me. Due to the stigmatic fear, DID became my secret.

At one point, I decided to seek out support on the internet. I was frustrated by the lack of resources available; especially ones that showed DID positively. Through my searching, I met many survivors with DID who were hiding their disorder just as I was. This angered me because we were no one more responsible for the DID than the abuse that caused it yet were we being punished. I became determined to change the reputation of DID.



I started An Infinite Mind, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to educating the public and professional community about all trauma based dissociative disorders to dispel the myths and stigmas. We consult with professional trauma organizations and speak to a variety of public institutions. We write articles for survivor journals and magazines, appear in local and national media, and speak at a variety of community and professional events in an effort to spread awareness and inspire change.

Our website has become a one-stop resource for anyone interested in learning more about DID. Every resource on our page has been personally vetted by one of our board members to ensure it reflects our mission to spread positive truth.

We offer local support groups for people with DID and are preparing for the third annual Healing Together Conference. This one of a kind conference brings together people with DID, their loved ones, and mental health professionals to support each other in healing. Every year our conference grows and we are proud that this past year, we had an international crowd with attendees coming from Canada and England.

I am so proud to know we creating hope that people with DID can find the support and resources they need and will no longer fear the stigma surrounding the disorder.

For more information on An Infinite Mind please visit <http://aninfinitemind.com/>

Healing Exercise: Gratitude Journal

Healing from sexual violence can become discouraging and may often leave survivors focused on all of the negatives in their lives. You may find it helpful to try focus on the positives and to take time to be grateful for the positive things in your life. Try finding one thing every day that you are

grateful for. It can be something small, like a beautiful flower in your garden, or something bigger, like a good friend. Try using this daily affirmation to help you stay focused on the positives in your life.

What are you grateful for today?

Going Back to School: Campus Safety

The fall is an exciting time for returning to school, seeing friends and getting back into studying and playing!

It's also a time to renew your sense of safety in your surroundings.

Planning and preparation can always be helpful in keeping yourself safe, but please keep in mind that there are never any ways to fully prevent a crime from happening. Men and women are most often assaulted by individuals they know. Regardless if you know or do not know the person, it is still considered rape.

It's a good idea to educate yourself on your campus' safety statistics and what programs are in place to help students stay safe.

While it may be an awkward conversation, it's helpful to talk with friends about safety and acting responsibly. It's always a good idea to talk to them about looking out for each other and speaking

up when something doesn't seem right.

If you are assaulted, on campus, we encourage you to talk to someone and to reach out for support. Many university and college campuses offer rape crisis and counseling services to students.

Statistics show that 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted in college. While there is no way to completely prevent an assault, here are some tips that can help you feel safer.*

- ◆ Don't walk alone—use a shuttle or walk with friends when possible.
- ◆ Walk in well-lit/well-travelled areas, preferably areas that are monitored by security.
- ◆ Know the number to campus security.
- ◆ Carry your cell phone.
- ◆ Never leave your drink unattended.
- ◆ It's okay to trust your gut if something doesn't feel right.

*Hirsch, Kathleen (1990) "Fraternities of Fear: Gang Rape, Male Bonding, and the Silencing of Women." Ms., 1(2) 52-56.

Please check out our back page and consider printing our flyer to post in your dorm or campus center.

Research: Another way to help

Over the course of the last several years Pandora's Project has participated in many studies related to sexual violence and the aftermath.

We are frequently contacted by individuals ranging from university students to professors to na-

tional media outlets seeking our input.

All officially submitted research requests are thoroughly reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate for participation. Requests are approved based upon our ability to contribute something

positive in the advancement of awareness of sexual violence and the journey we all face. If you feel able, please consider participating in our Research forum to help advance education on and understanding of sexual violence.

Q&A With Grace Brown from Project Unbreakable

What is Project Unbreakable?

Project Unbreakable is a photography project I created in October of last year. I photograph survivors of sexual assault holding posters with quotes from their attackers.

What led you to create this project?

I've always been surrounded by survivors. Someone once described me as the "survivor whisperer"; I think I just have always felt compassionate towards people who are affected by this. One day, when I was out with a friend last October, she blurted out her story. For some reason, though I had heard a dozens of stories before, this one particularly got to me. I felt like I was living in a world where this was just going to continue to happen to people I cared about. I went to bed feeling like I'd never be able to change that fact - and then in the morning, I woke up with the idea for Project Unbreakable.

Why did you decide to photograph survivors holding quotes from their attackers?

In high school, I began stating one sexual assault statistic a day to my peers at our lunch table, just to bring awareness. I'd watch as they would take it in and then forget about it a minute later. While they did legitimately care about the topic, for Project Unbreakable, I wanted to create something that no one would ever forget.

What have you learned about how the survivors in your photos choose their quotes?

They tend to write down the one that has most stayed with them. Sometimes, when they are confused about which they want to write, I tell them to write down the one they most want to let go.

How do you choose who to photograph?

I photograph anyone who emails me, basically, if I am in the city they live in. I don't really have any rules or regulations for that.

What's involved in one of your sessions?

I've always been introverted, so it's usually very quiet. The participant will meet me where I am photographing, write their poster, and I photograph them as soon as they are ready. The best part for me is the end when they thank me for what I do. I can tell it's coming from a really genuine place, and it shows me all the work I put into Project Unbreakable is actually making a difference.

What kind of responses have you gotten from the survivors you have photographed?

The kind of response that I never expected. I truly started this to just bring awareness; I didn't realize I would be getting hundreds and hundreds of emails from people wanting to be involved. Survivors have told me that they feel like by participating, they finally have a voice again. Someone once told me her life began again after participating.

What kind of responses have you gotten from the public?

Again, the kind of response I never expected. I think people are really amazed by it, which is so incredible to me. I was preparing for a lot of backlash when I started. It's done really well with the public.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

I think it's common for people in this field to feel like they're not doing enough. I've gotten much better at it, but I used to think I had to be working all the time. I still work a lot, but I take time off when I want time off and I don't feel guilty about it.

What aspect of Project Unbreakable are you most proud of so far?

How so many more people are able to discuss the topic of sexual abuse, whether they themselves are affected or if they simply support the project. It's been really wonderful to watch my peers - friends from high school who weren't personally affected - step up and say "It's time to talk about this stuff."

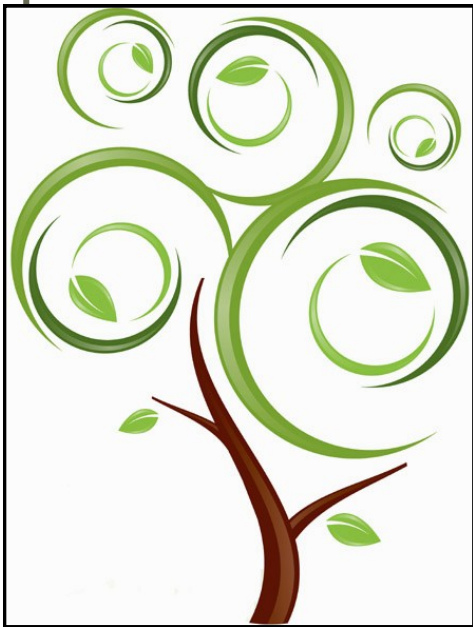
Where do you see this project going in the future?

I'm hoping to turn it into an organization., I'd also like to photograph in different countries. It will happen one day-it will just take a bit of work.

[To see photos and find more information on Project Unbreakable, please visit their site.](#)

Online Support for Sexual Assault Survivors

Pandora's Aquarium is a non-profit organization with a message board, chat room, survivor blogs, and lending library. We have been dedicated to healing since 1999.



- Peer support and self-help available 24/7 to survivors of rape, sexual abuse, molestation, and all sexual assault.
- Over 50 support forums, safely moderated by a diverse group of survivors. Men and women are welcome.
- Support for issues common in healing:
 - flashbacks, depression, PTSD;
 - self-harm and eating disorders;
 - relationships, sex & intimacy;
 - pregnancy & parenting;
 - legal concerns;
 - help for supporters of survivors.

We welcome all survivors of sexual violence.

Break the silence. Reach out today.

You are not alone!

www.pandys.org

Questions? Email admin@pandys.org

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