

SECRET SURVIVORS

USING THEATER TO BREAK THE SILENCE

TOOLKIT AND DISCUSSION GUIDE + DOCUMENTARY

GLOSSARY

Definitions of Key Terms Used in Regard to Child Sexual Abuse

Child Abuse – (as defined by federal law) any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.ⁱ

Cisgender – an adjective describing individuals whose gender identity corresponds to the gender they were assigned at birth (as opposed to transgender or gender non-conforming individuals).

Community-Based Accountability – process that seeks to hold perpetrators of violence accountable while still recognizing their humanity (along with the humanity of the person directly harmed and of members of the affected communities). Uses an intersectional lens of analysis, acknowledges that many people who cause harm are themselves survivors, and takes the survivor's vision of a just outcome into account. Operates outside of the criminal legal system/prison industrial complex, given the inherent biases within those systems.

Criminal Legal System – an alternate term to describe the system more often called the 'criminal justice' system. This alternate term challenges the notion that 'justice' can be achieved for survivors of sexual abuse through a court of law.

Disclosure – the way a survivor of child sexual abuse informs someone that the abuse has occurred. Disclosures can be very direct, with a survivor clearly stating what happened and who was involved, or may be subtle. For instance, a survivor, especially a young survivor, may hint at what has happened, divulge details in bits and pieces, or blurt it all out one time and then not want to discuss it again.

Dissociation - the splitting off of a group of mental processes from the main body of consciousness. May involve loss of memory, numbness to feeling, compartmentalized or multiple personalities, etc.

Flashback - A sudden and disturbing vivid memory of a past traumatic event.

Gender Identity – self-identification as male, female, neither (sometimes called 'genderqueer') or both (ex: Two Spirit people in Native American traditions)

Gender Non-Conforming – (sometimes called “gender variant”) a term denoting people whose physical gender expression and/or behavior does not entirely align with societal constructions of gender roles and expectations for them based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

Grooming - when a perpetrator of child sexual abuse pays a lot of special attention to a child to build up trust, with the intention of eventually sexually abusing that child. Those who perpetrate are skilled at tricking the victim into thinking it is their choice or their fault.

Heteronormativity – social and cultural norms that hold that people fall into distinct and complementary genders (male and female) with corresponding ‘natural’ roles. Also includes the assertion that heterosexuality is the ‘normal’ sexual orientation. A ‘heteronormative’ worldview therefore involves alignment of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender roles, according to these conventional and dominant norms.

Historical Trauma – cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, resulting from massive group trauma experiences (ex: trauma resulting from slavery, colonization, genocide, apartheid in South Africa, occupation in Palestine, partition in South Asia, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the Holocaust, etc.).

Intersectionality – a lens of analysis and sociological theory that recognizes how various social and cultural categories such as gender identity, race, class, ability, national origin, sexual orientation, immigration status, age, religion and other axes of identity interact on multiple, often simultaneous, levels, contributing to systemic social inequality. gender, race, class, ability, and other axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality. Intersectionality asserts that forms of oppression are interrelated, and that people who live at the intersections of multiple oppressions experience an accordingly weighted form of discrimination and marginalization.

Intimate Violence – violence committed by someone known to the victim (as opposed to violence perpetrated by a stranger). Sometimes called “non-stranger assault” or “acquaintance assault.”

Intimate Partner Violence – a term that is more inclusive than ‘domestic violence,’ it denotes physical, emotional, economic, psychological and/or sexual abuse from one consensual romantic/sexual partner to another. Includes non-cohabitating couples and same-sex couples.

Mandated Reporting – In the United States, each state has laws requiring certain people to report concerns of child abuse and neglect to local child protective services. While some states require all people to report their concerns, many identify specific professionals as mandated reporters; these

often include social workers, medical and mental health professionals, teachers, and child care providers.ⁱⁱ

Mandatory Reporter – refers to an individual who is required by law to report child maltreatment under specific circumstances. The circumstances under which a mandatory reporter must make a report vary from State to State. Typically, a report must be made when the reporter, in his or her official capacity, *suspects or has reasons to believe* that a child has been abused or neglected. Approximately 48 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands designate professions whose members are mandated by law to report child maltreatment.¹ Individuals designated as mandatory reporters typically have frequent contact with children. Such individuals may include: Social workers, Teachers and other school personnel, Physicians and other health-care workers, Mental health professionals, Child care providers, Medical examiners or coroners, Law enforcement officers. More details on state statutes can be found here: www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm

Medical Industrial Complex - refers to the health industry, composed of the intersection of multibillion-dollar enterprises including doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, insurance companies, drug manufacturers, hospital supply and equipment companies, real estate and construction businesses, health systems consulting and accounting firms, and banks. The concept conveys the idea that the important functions of the health care system in the United States are business (making profits), research and education.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) - a mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event(s). Symptoms are generally grouped into three categories: intrusive memories, avoidance and numbing, and increased anxiety or heightened emotions. These may manifest as flashbacks of the traumatic event(s), insomnia, nightmares, memory problems, difficulty concentrating, hopelessness about the future, feelings of guilt or shame, and/or addiction, amongst other symptoms. PTSD is common in war veterans and in survivors of intimate violence.

Prevention (NOTE: there is no standardized definition) - actions that can be taken so that sexual abuse is never perpetrated in the first place, so that those who cause sexual harm for individual or commercial gain are not “grown”, so that environments are established where it is highly unlikely that a child would ever be sexually objectified, commoditized, harmed or abused. This involves environments/norms/standards that invest in ALL children’s healthy development to strengthen their protective factors, which does more than minimize their risks of being victimized or developing into those who would perpetrate. Comprehensive prevention includes actions to make the changes needed so that CSA never occurs in the first place, so that the healthy choices are the easy choices, including early intervention to help those harmed and those who did the harm, including treatment to help address trauma and break cycles of abuse.

Prison Industrial Complex – refers to the rapid expansion of the U.S. inmate population due to the political influence of private prison companies and businesses that supply goods and services to government prison agencies. These include corporations that contract prison labor, construction companies, surveillance technology vendors, lawyers, and lobby groups that represent them. The

concept conveys the idea that decision-makers behind the prison industrial complex are most motivated by making profits thanks to an expanding prison population, rather than by a desire to rehabilitate criminals or reduce crime rates.

Queer – an umbrella term denoting people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender and/or people who are committed to undoing heteronormativity. Also, in some parts of the world, a slur against people who are not heterosexual and/or gender-conforming. (note: “queer” as the umbrella term is used by people of that identity who have reclaimed the word as a political term)

Rape - penetration of the mouth/anus/vagina by genitalia/fingers/mouth/objects

Resilience – the ability to recover from or adjust to the effects of trauma. Research has shown that the ability to build at least a few healthy relationships (with peers and/or non-abusive adults), having at least one non-abusive, protective parent in their life, possessing the capacity to be hopeful (for instance, because of spiritual beliefs), possessing a well-developed imagination (allowing one to imagine a better future), having strong problem-solving skills, being connected to and feeling a sense of care toward nature/animals, and having a sense of one’s unique, important role in the world can increase a child’s resilience and ability to recover from trauma.

Sexual Assault – any undesired physical contact of a sexual nature perpetrated against another

Sexual Orientation – attraction (emotional, romantic, sexual, or some combination of these) to people of the opposite gender, the same gender, both, or neither.

Social Justice – the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being.

Somatic Healing/Somatic Therapy – a form of healing from trauma that focuses on mind-body integration by drawing a survivor’s attention to parts of the body that are holding pain, contraction or other remnants of trauma. Draws heavily on healing practices and traditions including but not limited to: yoga, meditation, martial arts, and other traditions originating in Asia, lomi lomi body work practices from Hawaii, European practices including the Feldenkrais Method and Gestalt therapy, and the Alexander Technique, which originated in Australia.

Stranger Danger – a phrase intended to capture the danger associated with adults whom children do not know. The phrase became popularized through public service announcements in the 1980’s, despite evidence that 90% of children who are sexually abused are harmed by someone they know.

Transformative Justice - an approach to respond to and prevent child sexual abuse and other forms of violence that focuses on collective liberation and looks to transform both individual and community experiences of violence as well as the social conditions that allow this violence to occur.ⁱⁱⁱ

Transgender – an umbrella term denoting individuals whose gender identity, behavior and/or presentation/expression deviate from conventional expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. (ex: an individual who was labeled ‘female’ at birth who uses male pronouns, wears men’s clothing, and uses men’s restrooms).

Trigger – an experience or sensation that causes a survivor to think about or re-experience the feelings associated with their abuse (ex: sights, smells, tastes, sounds, situations, etc.)

ⁱ The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A. § 5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 <http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/defining/federal.cfm>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/mandated.cfm>

ⁱⁱⁱ As described by Generation FIVE on their website (<http://www.generationfive.org/tj.php>). For more information on this approach, see their document *Toward Transformative Justice* (www.generationfive.org/downloads/G5_Toward_Transformative_Justice.pdf)