



## **Sisters**

**Artist: Chimakwa Nibawii**

### **Artist's statement:**

This artwork features three females who represent the three sisters Corn, Squash, and Beans. We plant them close to each other, recognizing that we need to have our sisters close by, helping each other out.

### **This issue collaboratively produced:**

- American Indians Against Abuse
- End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin
- The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- The Wisconsin Department of Justice Office of Crime Victim Services

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## INTRODUCTION

This issue of the Coalition Chronicles focuses on people who have experienced human trafficking, and those who advocate alongside them in Wisconsin. American Indians Against Abuse, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and the Wisconsin Office of Crime Victim Services, Department of Justice worked together to develop the publication.

Inside this issue we have amplified the voices of those with lived experience of trafficking, highlighted the growing Human Trafficking Community of Care, and spotlighted the work of Asia Jackson (DCF) and Julie Braun (DOJ). Intervention and prevention of human trafficking is highly collaborative, involving many more people than we could identify in this publication.

We have gathered resources, grouped into categories: Beginning Learner; Continued Learning; Assistance for Persons Who Have Been Trafficked; Assistance for Youth Who Have Been Trafficked; Legal Assistance; Labor Trafficking; and Policy and Systems. We included the collaborative Human Trafficking in Wisconsin Statement of Support, Intention, and Expectations, distributed to domestic abuse and sexual assault services providers in 2021, and concluded with the words of the executive directors of the agencies who developed this issue.

Thanks to Denise Johnson (American Indians Against Abuse), Alma Mann (Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault), Colleen Cox, Kelsey Mullins, Olivia Osborne, & Tegan Swanson (End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin) Amanda Powers (Office of Crime Victim Services, Department of Justice) and Shira Phelps.

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- Colleen Cox, Editor

Throughout this issue, we hear the voices of those whose lived experience has included trafficking, through visual art, poetry and books. We have included several authors who selected books and prepared short excerpts to share in these pages. We connected with artists including Chimakwa Nibawii, whose work appears on the cover page, Hannah Lorenzo, and Jeanne Suarez Del Real, whose work was introduced to us through [LOTUS Legal Clinic's Untold Stories](#). We lead with the voice of author Chris Stark, below.

### **Nickels: A Tale of Dissociation (Reflections of America)**

Nickels is the groundbreaking debut of Minneapolis-area author and artist Christine Stark. Told in a series of prose poems, *Nickels'* lyrical and inventive language conveys the dissociative states born of a world formed by persistent and brutal incest and homophobia. The dissociative states enable the child's survival and, ultimately, the adult's healing. The story is both heartbreaking and triumphant. It is widely available online, or find a local independent bookseller at [Indie Bound](#).

### **Carnival Lights**

"Carnival Lights" centers on the story of two native Ojibwe girls. Author Chris Stark brilliantly weaves in the history of generational trauma still being suffered by the Ojibwe people and other native tribes. This history of abuse and broken treaties created vulnerabilities that left women and youth exposed to and at risk of being victims of sex trafficking. [Available at BirchBark Books](#) and wherever books are sold.

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**Chris Stark** is an award-winning writer, organizer, and researcher with Ojibwe, Cherokee, and European ancestry. We highlight two of her books, along with an excerpt from **Carnival Lights** selected by the author.



## Excerpt from *Carnival Lights*, by Chris Stark

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### Minneapolis, August 1969

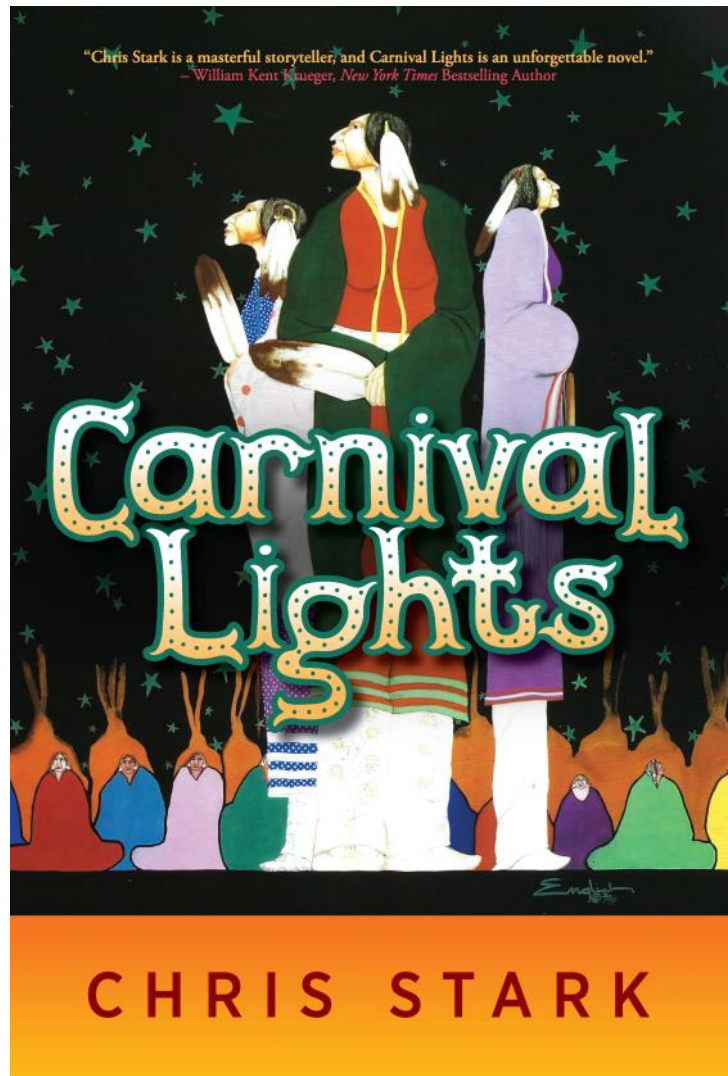
The girls ran into the dark street.

The pack slapped against Sher's back. "In here," she pulled Kristin down a narrow brick alley. A cat ran off. Sher cut behind a garbage can, lost her footing and slid into a pile of bulky garbage bags. Kristin tumbled behind her. The girls froze like the statue game they used to play. It smelled like fish and sour milk.

Footsteps approached. Sher peered between the cans and reached back reflexively and touched Kristin's lips. The well-dressed man stepped into the alley, stopped, and then continued down the sidewalk. Sher watched the street and Kristin watched her, her head low. The girls did not move. Another man trotted by from the direction of the bus depot. Sher thought, but could not be sure, that it was the second man. After he passed the alley Sher looked at Kristin and lifted her eyebrows as if to say *who knows*.

When the girls were babies their grandmother pinched their lips to teach them silence. The girls knew how to be still, not make any sound, thoughtful even of their breathing, until their grandmother found them flat on the floor beneath the

(Continued on page 5)



*(Excerpt from Chris Stark's Carnival Lights, continued from page 4)*

homemade horsehair stuffed mattress or under the work shelf in the basement over which their grandmother had draped an old wool blanket to hide them from the white lady social workers who came looking to steal Indian children.

The girls stayed in the alley for some time, occasionally glancing behind them where the alley doglegged to the right. A silence rose up around them, split by sirens and the squeals of wheels. Anxiety rose up in Kris. She rested her head on Sher's calf. Sher smoothed her cousin's hair and kept watch, breathing through her mouth to minimize the smell, wanting to spit, but afraid of the noise that would make.

Time stilled. The moon edged west.

Voices drifted down the alley. Sher hunched, found a crack she could peer through, and then locked her body in that position. Kris buried her head in Sher's legs. The voices neared. The depot men stopped and looked down the alley.

"Look down there?"

"No need," the well-dressed man said. "I would of seen them turn into it."

The second man stared down the alley. "They're gone. For now. One's Indian. Maybe both."

"We'll find them," the well-dressed man said. "Can't hide on these streets forever.



Photo by [Coby Degroot](#) from [Pexels](#)

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***Secret Danse Macabre***

(previously published in [Untold Stories Magazine](#), Issue 4)

***Jeanne Suarez Del Real***

But it does not matter that you have never experienced him that way.

Closing your eyes does not change the truth.

You know congenial Dr. Jekyll. I know vile Mr. Hyde.

I hid the secret danse of his brutality and my helplessness, his

Malignance and my coerced collaboration, my

Unbearable burden of self-betrayal.

Toxic childhood left my hands empty to identify danger—

No toolbox of self-defense. Instead, I came pre-loaded with

Abuse-rationalizations and self-castigations firmly in place.

Rageful hands around my neck, sheltering my son upon my lap, I feared my

Toddler would be the only witness to his mother's death. I could not, I

Would not allow that to be our legacy to him. I did not know how

To defend myself, but by God, I would protect my child.

My fingers curled into a weapon and forever changed our warfare.

I wish it had not.

At least I understood bruises were abuse.

I knew I needed help for a black eye or broken arm.

Bruises traded in for more cerebral manipulation and control—

Bullying sans outward proofs. His exploitation, my isolation.

His arrogance, my degradation.

(Continued on page 7)

*(Secret Danse Macabre, Continued from page 6)*

Erosion creates cavernous canyons gradually over years.

He systematically dismantled me, piece by piece.

I did not accept the humiliation of my un-being all at once.

Like a treasured album once full of memories gathered over time, now

Shredded in his fury. None of the pieces fit together.

This is our Masterpiece of Pain.

But your blood bonds prevent you from believing me about your

Beloved brother, whose jester charms disguise his calculated harm.

It is far more palatable to believe him, the Patriarch,

A personable pillar of family, church, and community.

I wanted to believe that for our children, for our happy ever after.

You call it a battering ram of malice, a figment of my bitterness. I tell you,

This is my witness to trauma of relational imprisonment.

I hold space with truth to lament my loss, to grieve and

Not forget the poison I was forced to swallow.

I unmask the long hidden Danse, not so you hate him, not so you take sides.

I reveal our dark secret, because suffering births meaning and purpose

When it holds hands with the gentle partner of healing. Unlearning

Fear creates the light-hearted dance of freedom.

Truth is truth—I will lie for him no more.

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In November 2021 we reached out to **Eileen Cruz (Alvarado)** to discuss her healing journey related to her work , and to select an excerpt from her writing for this collaborative publication. Eileen responded:

***Hope Looks Like You*** has touched the lives of many survivors of trafficking. In the year 2018-2019 copies of the book were distributed to young people who passed through Milwaukee Center for Children and Youth, Pathfinders, Child Advocacy Center, UMOS Latina Resource Center, and Milwaukee County Vel R Phillips Juvenile Justice Center. During that time, I was called out to these different agencies to advocate and offer emotional support to young people who were trafficked. Many of the young people had testified to how the book had brought them hope.

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Eileen Cruz (Alvarado) is the author of ***Caught in My Thoughts, Fearlessly Finding My Peace***, and ***Hope Looks like You, Surviving Abuse***. She enjoys writing as a way of healing not only for herself but also to help others. For the past twelve years, Eileen has been working with young people who have experienced different forms of abuse or trauma. She believes survivors are the image of Hope. She uses her books to help people uncover the pain that tries to keep them from living an emotionally healthy life.



(Eileen Alvarado, continued from page 8)

A little over a year ago, I had to take a break from the work for self-care and my path for healing. Stepping away helped renew my journey in helping others. When I came back to [Milwaukee Center for Children and Youth](#), with the support of my supervisor, I decided to focus on support groups for teens, primarily with survivors of dating violence and sexual assault.

Since then, I have created a [book club](#) based on the book *Hope Looks Like You, Discovering a Healthier You*, and my most recent book *Caught in My Thoughts, Fearlessly Finding My Peace*. With the help of nonprofit organizations, Milwaukee Public Schools, and community partners, I am now using my books to help people uncover the pain that tries to keep them from living an emotionally healthy life. It is a 10-week program that delves deep into discussions of the characters of the book. Through the topics, young people have been able to talk about their own trauma. It's a safe place where they build trust and healing for themselves.

Information for the materials can be found at <https://www.eileencruzalvarado.com/>.

Excerpt from the book *Hope Looks Like You, Surviving Abuse*:

Too often we accept the love we think we deserve. Love won't take you to those places. It's not a place of pain. Even if it's hard to trust that good will eventually come, you have to believe it will. No one can take you to this place but you.

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***Death by a thousand cuts***  
***Hannah Lenzo***

The fear of misperceiving reality due to my hurt and trauma?  
That's a familiar experience and it often leads to some further drama.  
But when you've been told that you've made choices that you never made,  
When you're told, as a kid, that you have to do sex work, but you don't deserve to get paid  
When you're told that you are dirty and worthless and unclean  
When you're told the best you can do is hide yourself and avoid being seen,  
Maybe after a while of hearing them, you start to believe these things  
And maybe you've been avoiding acknowledging the abuse and the grief it brings  
So maybe you live like this for years, even as people tell you "this is no way to live"  
But maybe they just can't understand your fear, that you have nothing to offer, nothing to give.  
So what's the antidote? It's growth, it's reflection; it's meditation, it's healing, it's rest.  
It's cultivating the refusal to accept anyone else's definition of your worth or what's your "best"  
You know who the fuck you are, and you know exactly what you're worth.  
You've been learning, you've been growing, and you've been reaping because you've been  
sowing—you have put in the work.  
And the person who questions your worth usually doesn't invest in your worth  
And they don't know what your goals and objectives are worth  
And they probably don't know how to fight through obstacles, through hurt.  
But you? You know how to fight  
And you know how to write.  
You melt obstacles like they're popsicles;  
You—you can do the impossible.  
You have heart, you have soul; you're responsible  
For everything you think, feel, do and say  
And with pen and ink you can heal and you can do it all day.  
And your exes might say damn! You threw it all away  
But the disconnection will remain when you turn to them and say:  
"when a woman leaves you for herself, she's never coming back  
So while I go focus on my wellness and my health, you can focus on remembering that."

**But you? You know how to fight  
And you know how to write.**

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***The Sum of My Parts*** is a memoir by **Olga Trujillo**, a survivor of child sexual abuse, human trafficking and sexual assault, that carefully walks the reader through Olga's experience as they split themselves into "parts" and develop dissociative identity disorder (DID) to cope with the abuse. The book follows Olga as they struggle to live with parts and eventually heal from the abuse, detailing how they have learned to safely walk through the world as if they are one. You can find Olga's book wherever books are sold, and at [www.olgatrujillo.com](http://www.olgatrujillo.com) where you will find information about DID and Olga's experience, including videos about living with DID. The critically acclaimed film, *A Survivor's Story*, is Olga's first-hand account of the impact of violence in their life. Presented in four ten-minute segments, this insightful documentary is a powerful training tool and a lifeline for those beginning their own journey towards survival.

Excerpt from

**The Sum of My Parts: A  
Survivor's Story of  
Dissociative Identity Disorder,  
by Olga Trujillo**

I was diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) in 1993, when I was 31 years old. I have spent many of the intervening years learning about DID: what it is, how it affects my life, how I developed it and what I can do about it. There is a stigma associated with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), including its most extreme manifestation, multiple personality disorder, and I want people to understand what it is and how it develops so that they may better work with or live with people that have DID. It is also my hope that those who experience DID may feel that they are not alone and may learn more about this disorder. This book

(Continued on page 12)

is based on my experience only and is not intended to describe or define anyone else's. Naturally, the person sitting in front of you with DID is the expert. They will best describe to you how they think and feel, and their story is likely to have some similarities but many differences to my experience.

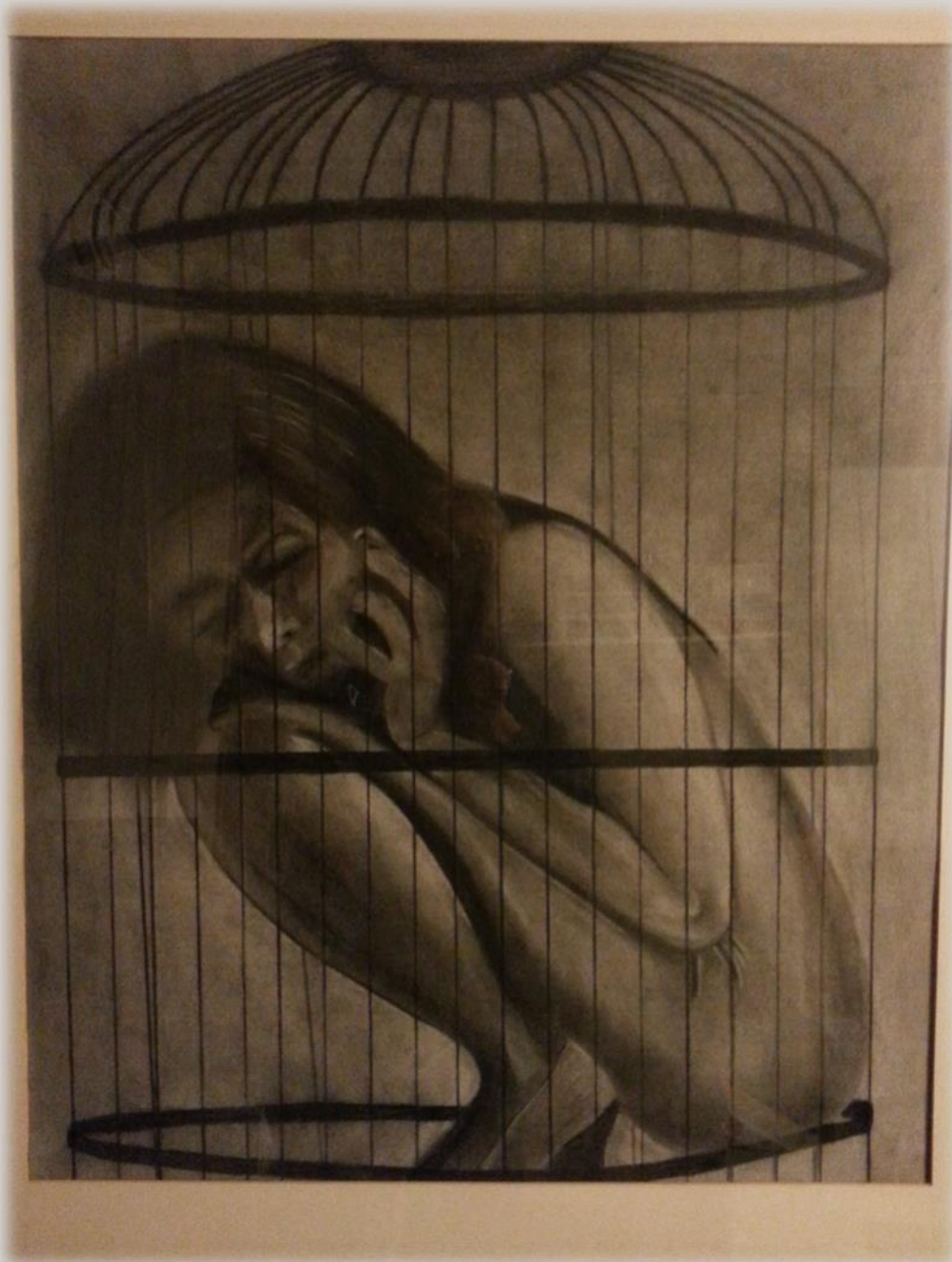
Most people who have studied the brain and how memory develops do not believe that many children as young as three are able to retain much memory. But these same researchers have found that ironically, trauma changes the way memory is captured in a person. Many significant events filled with violence and terror were imprinted in my mind at a very young age. I captured them as pictures or movies and tucked them away in my head, in parts of my subconscious, and only began to recall them much later. I never wanted to remember these events and certainly didn't want to recall the details of such brutal attacks. I remembered them in more frightening detail than most of us can recall those years. I remembered them as if they were happening in the present. As a

blessing, these same mechanisms of memory allowed me to also capture the kindness of others outside my home. I know now that this ability to remember the good in people helped to counter my experiences of the worst in people.

Some people in my childhood figured prominently as guardians of my humanity – preserving for me a sense of self-respect, dignity, ambition, compassion, and humor for when I was later ready for it. They model for us the surprisingly innocuous and simple relationships and connections we make with others that make their survival possible.

Some people in my childhood figured prominently as guardians of my humanity – preserving for me a sense of self-respect, dignity, ambition, compassion, and humor for when I was later ready for it.

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***Untitled***

***Artist: Jeanne Suarez Del Real***

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## Smoking Out the Shadows

The bone-chilling life-or-death events that some never survive.

### Excerpt

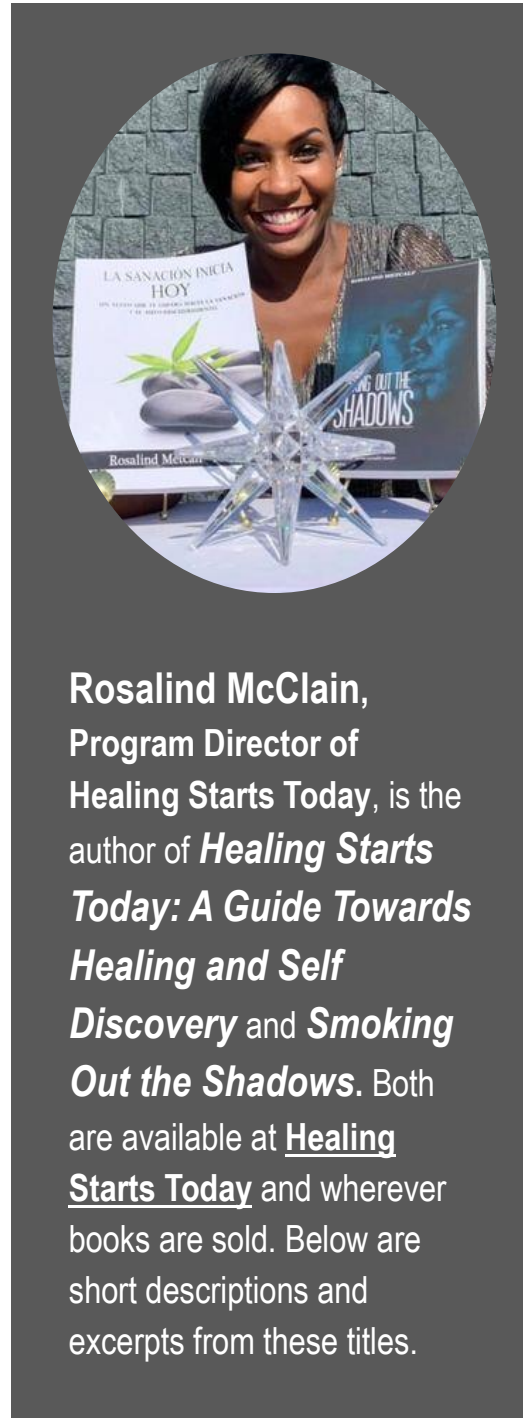
Zoe shows up at her next appointment ten minutes early, prepared for this session to go the way she wants it to. She's brought along pictures (more like evidence of her luxurious life) to prove to this Ms. Know-It-All doctor that she really did come from a beautiful family and treatment for the past wasn't necessary.

She says to herself, "Hopefully, she gets the point and we can focus on what matters—like my future."

Her attitude lightens as Dr. Brooks eagerly engages in conversation about the special events captured in each photo. Before Zoe realizes it, she is babbling. Some of the excitement is definitely due to the memories, but part of it is her overt attempts at trying to prove a point. Then she notices Dr. Brooks is no longer participating, watching Zoe with another one of those studying looks. Her voice dwindles to a mumble, then to silence.

Dr. Brooks can see Zoe is desperately fighting to keep something hidden. It is like there is a quiet tenant in the neighborhood no one has ever seen harbored deep down inside her.

"As a counselor, I'm sure you've learned and developed unique tools that are powerful catalysts for the healing process of your clients. Are you familiar with the inner child method?" Dr. Brooks asks.



**Rosalind McClain**, Program Director of **Healing Starts Today**, is the author of *Healing Starts Today: A Guide Towards Healing and Self Discovery* and *Smoking Out the Shadows*. Both are available at [Healing Starts Today](#) and wherever books are sold. Below are short descriptions and excerpts from these titles.

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"Yes, I'm familiar with it."

"That's great. Well then, you know, even as adults, we have an inner child concealed beneath layers of maturity and sophistication. Could you tell me about your inner child?"

Biting down on her bottom lip to keep it from quivering, she weighs up how much of herself she should share.

"Look," she says soft and calmly, "I hate it and I try hard to block out my inner child. Whenever I've acknowledged it, I've found myself in some kind of trouble again. I refuse to form a softness for a weak, ill-behaved child who wants to kick and scream at the drop of a dime. I don't ever want to feel vulnerable again, nor do I want to re-experience my childhood feelings, except the good ones."

Taking a moment, she scans the floor as if the words she is looking for might be there. Then, clamping her lips in a stubborn line, Dr. Brooks clears her throat, repositioning her body in the chair, and with a firm voice, she says, "I would like to know what made you leave home so young."

Zoe, choked with emotions, says in a whisper, "Because I hated living there."

"So, you decided to just pick up and leave?"

"It wasn't totally my choice, but I did choose not to return."

"Did your parents put you out?"

"No."

"Were you kidnapped?"

"No . . . kind of . . . umm, I don't know."

"Who were you with?"

"This man."



## **Healing Starts Today: A Guide Towards Healing and Self-Discovery**

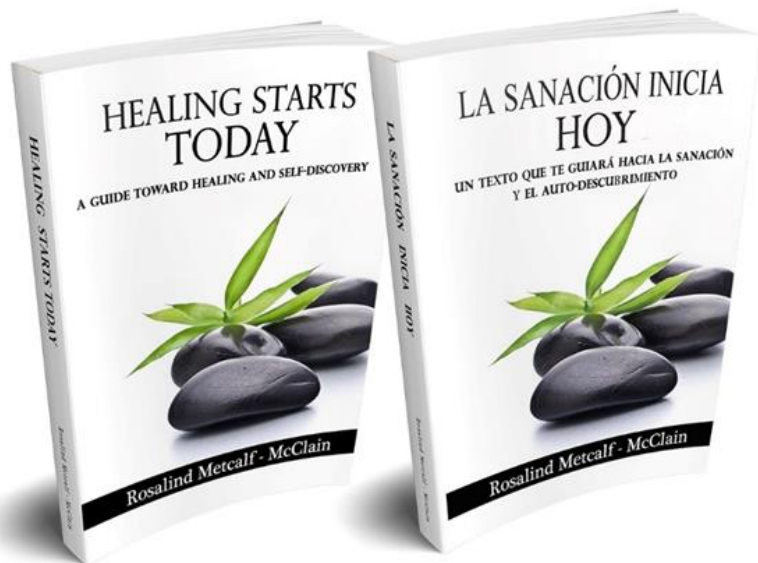
Reap the benefits of this life-changing guide to achieving inner peace and the quality of life which you deserve.

### **Excerpt**

We are all born into this world as sweet, fragile little babies, full of love, curiosity, and trust. As we travel through our lives, most of our innocence is stripped away. The people we love and the people who are supposed to protect us, in some way, end up abusing us or failing to meet our needs. However, this is life. Every human being on this earth will fall short of the expectations of others.

We all make mistakes, but some things are not mistakes; they are just horrible decisions. (In no way am I minimizing or dismissing traumatic events that anyone has experienced.)

What I am saying is, by stepping outside of our emotions and focusing on the facts of life, it will help us to move into a place of Forgiveness. Our freedom and happiness is in Forgiveness. In order to overcome obstacles and symptoms that were a result of a traumatic experience(s), we must find a way to let go of the resentment and anger. Forgiveness is not about whether the other person deserves it or not. Forgiveness is about giving yourself what you deserve by taking back your power, your confidence, and your peace.



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## Community of Care

There have been numerous initiatives in Wisconsin over the years that address human trafficking. Beginning in 2020, the Office of Crime Victim Services has convened four meetings per month facilitated by **Shira Phelps**, who worked for many years as an advocate with people who experienced trafficking. The primary participants have been advocates for victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse as well as those who have worked more exclusively alongside those who have experienced trafficking.

The gatherings evolved quickly into a space known as the **Community of Care**, where advocates connect to support each other, share resources, and identify needs and barriers they encounter alongside those they serve. Some notable distinguishing characteristics of this group include a deep understanding of the nature of trauma both caused by trafficking and preceding victimization, a clear vision of the kinds of assistance that truly centers the victim's needs and supports sovereignty of the whole person, and a focus on outcomes that do not prioritize prosecution as a goal.

Many people shared their expertise during 2021 Community of Care meetings, some of whom are featured elsewhere in this publication. Only one meeting—a panel discussion—was recorded (see page 18 for more information and a link to the recording).



After seven years with WI DOJ OCVS, **Shira Phelps** has taken a new position with the Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center to provide anti-trafficking technical assistance to tribes across the country. During her time at OCVS, Shira was instrumental in furthering victim services collaboration throughout the state and building bridges between funders and victim service agencies. She will be missed but she will still be in the field, focusing on building capacity for human trafficking victim services and response in tribal programs.

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## Community of Care Human Trafficking Services Panel Discussion

In a November 2021 panel hosted by American Indians Against Abuse, End Domestic Abuse WI, the WI DOJ Office of Crime Victims Services, and the WI Coalition Against Sexual Assault, expert advocates from across Wisconsin shared best practices, tips, and strategies for supporting survivors of human trafficking.

[View and listen to the recording](#) (about 80 minutes) featuring Dr. Debbie Lassiter, Namaewkukiw Rachel Fernandez, Haya Khateeb, Brenda Bayer, and Shelby Mitchell.



**Dr. Debbie Lassiter**  
**Convergence Resource Center**

“What I have found is...human trafficking survivors do need to be treated differently, because their experience is different. It's not one person who's treating someone badly, it's 20, 30 different people.”

“The first time a survivor of trafficking said to me, ‘I finally feel human again,’ it was shocking to me, because I have never had that experience of not feeling human.”



**Brenda Bayer**  
**The Women's Community**

“Our role is to elevate [a survivor's] voice and their ability to regain control of their environment and their lives.”

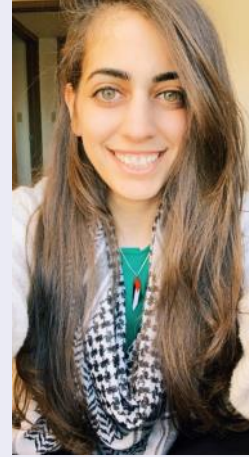
“Working in a DV shelter...we serve persons who have experienced all forms of violence. The major difference [for someone who has experienced trafficking] is they need the same one or two people, a check-in every day, lots of time spent listening and helping them sort through things. It's super important for them to be able to share their own story using their own language.”





**Namaewkukiw Rachel Fernandez**  
**Woodland Women**

“If you’re trying to walk with someone on their journey and assist them, you need to learn where they come from, where their culture is from...”



**Haya Khateeb**  
**Reach Counseling**

“I learned the hard way not to take things personally [wondering] ‘what did I do wrong?’ if someone went back to the life or chose another path. It is critical for survivors to know they can always return to advocates.”



**Shelby Mitchell**  
**Sexual Assault Crisis Center**

“Don’t just learn from a book. Show up in the community, at events, at outreach opportunities.”

“Boundaries are critical to sustainability so that the people doing this work can keep doing this work. Have conversations up front, for example: ‘You can call or leave a voicemail at 2am [and I will call you back], but I can’t be available, and it isn’t because I don’t care.’”

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## **Spotlight: Asia Jackson**

### **Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**

Sex trafficking in Wisconsin is an issue in which everyone plays an important role in keeping young people safe. As awareness grows, advocates and service providers are continuing to educate themselves about warning signs, identification, and best practices for working with these youth. Sex trafficking can happen in any community, to anyone from any background; however, some populations are particularly vulnerable. Young people who have been involved in the child welfare system, LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, particularly Indigenous and Black youth, and youth with disabilities experience increased risk of victimization. Additionally, experiences of marginalization such as racism, homophobia, or bullying that impact self-worth may put young people at increased risk.



**Asia Jackson**

Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator, WI  
Department of Children & Families

Young people need caring adults who are trained and prepared to respond and support them. It can be difficult to engage youth due to the complexity of their relationship with their exploiters, mistrust of authority created by prior experiences with abuse or involvement with systems, complex trauma, and because the help that is offered is sometimes not what the youth wants, needs, or will use. The trafficker may use physical abuse or drugs to exert control and deter individuals from disclosing or seeking help. Youth who are foreign nationals may fear deportation or separation from their family. Others may fear harm or retribution and feel a genuine threat to their personal safety if they tell anyone. Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities may not understand the dynamics of sex trafficking or the dangers of the situation, believing the trafficker is actually a romantic partner.

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Advocates working with young people who have experienced sex trafficking need to be prepared to address these barriers by meeting the young person where they are at, building trust at their pace, remaining consistent, and following through with any commitments made to the young person. [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) is a useful resource for understanding the effects of traumatic stress on youth who have experienced sex trafficking.

Particularly with younger adolescents, advocates must think about ways to incorporate caregivers if possible. Some youth who have been trafficked do not identify as victims, or have a history of inconsistent caregiver or family support and therefore may resist caregiver and family engagement. It is important to help caregivers understand these difficult dynamics. If no family is available, think about informal supports, who will understand the importance of safety and access to needed interventions. Services for caregivers should focus on strengthening the caregivers' ability to provide the youth with a safe, supportive, caring, and consistent environment.

It can be difficult to engage youth due to the complexity of their relationship with their exploiters, mistrust of authority created by prior experiences with abuse or involvement with systems, complex trauma, and because the help that is offered is sometimes not what the youth wants, needs, or will use.

DCF remains committed to combating the growing crisis of human trafficking of youth and children, and works closely with other systems to provide a comprehensive response. In October 2021, the Department of Children and Families held a series of information gathering session in which service providers from across the state discussed gaps in services and barriers to assistance. Themes included problems with access to housing, services for older youth, services for LGBTQ+ youth, training for education professionals, caregiver support services, and continued funding to support existing advocacy and support services. This information will be used to guide future policy and funding efforts.

To learn more about what sex trafficking looks like in Wisconsin, we encourage you to view [It Happens Here](#), a documentary that highlights the experiences of survivors from Wisconsin who lived through sex trafficking as children.

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## Resources: Beginning Learner

The [Polaris Human Trafficking Training](#) is an interactive, online program that includes six short modules, as well as survivor stories, and quizzes designed to deepen your understanding of the issue. This free online training can be completed in about an hour.

The [Tribal Sex Trafficking Resources](#) website provides comprehensive information on sex trafficking as it impacts Native people and Native nations.

[HT 101: Understanding Child Sex Trafficking in Wisconsin](#) is an online course (6 modules) developed for professionals who may come into contact with children and youth who are being sex trafficked. It addresses sex trafficking of children and youth in urban and rural counties and tribes throughout Wisconsin. Topics include child sex trafficking scope, dynamics, and factors that increase a youth's vulnerability; indicators that a child may be at risk or is being sex trafficked; experience of leaving the life (trafficking); and Wisconsin resources. A certificate is available after completing all modules (less than 90 minutes).

[Human Trafficking in WI: Overview, Resources, & Listening Session](#) (June 2020, about 18 minutes) This overview featured UMOs Latina Resource Center's Wisconsin Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Program discussing trafficking dynamics and sharing a case study. Staff of the Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center introduced their program, outlining how they can coach interested organizations and strengthen human trafficking service networks in Wisconsin.

[The Facts Of, The Myths About, And The Solutions For Child Trafficking – 1A](#) This 46-minute podcast asks: Who are the children being sex trafficked in the U.S., and what is being done to support survivors and hold traffickers accountable? Advocates say it is more common for law enforcement to target trafficking survivors than their abusers. The Polaris Project recorded 14,597 likely victims of sex trafficking, with 17 being the average age of entry. Guest experts include Tina Frundt, trafficking survivor, Founder and Executive Director of Courtney's House. This radio program aired on December 16, 2021.

## Resources: Continuing Learning

The Asha Project publication, [Developing a Culturally Relevant Response to Domestic Violence](#), was released in 2003 and remains as valuable to the victim advocacy community now as it was nearly 20 years ago. The [Asha Project](#) (formerly Asha Family Services) is the first recognized culturally-specific family violence intervention and prevention program in Wisconsin. They began providing sex trafficking victim services in 1988.

[Human Trafficking in Indian Country](#) was presented to Wisconsin advocates in July 2021 by the [Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center](#) (the Center), who traced the historical roots of trafficking, including boarding schools and missing and murdered indigenous women. The Center outlined how they can work with organizations and tribes to start, sustain, or grow their anti-trafficking work.

[Seeding Our Future: History, Issues, and Solutions for MMIWG2S in WI](#) (October 2020, about 55 minutes) featured members of the Wisconsin Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force telling the story of how the Task Force developed, and examining the many issues that lead up to the larger problem of MMIWG2S (missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and 2-spirit persons), such as human trafficking. They also shared examples of good allyship, collaboration, ways to engage, and current grassroots solutions.

## Assistance for Persons Who Have Been Trafficked

[National Human Trafficking Hotline's Referral Directory](#) is made up of anti-trafficking organizations and programs that offer emergency, transitional, or long-term services to victims and survivors of human trafficking as well as those that provide resources and opportunities in the anti-trafficking field.

The [Tribal Resource Tool](#) is a searchable directory of services available for all American Indian/Alaska Native survivors of crime and abuse in Indian Country.

[Crime Victim Rights and Enforcement](#): These slides are from a presentation to advocates in June 2021, in which the Office of Crime Victims Services outlined the components of the [Victim Resource Center](#), as well as avenues and mechanisms for exercising specific victim rights.



## Assistance for Youth Who Have Been Trafficked

[Advocacy Services for Young People](#) ages 11-25 at risk for commercial sexual exploitation outlines when and how to contact different advocates for youth in the Milwaukee area. This chart was produced by [Collaborative Rapid Advocacy for Youth \(CRAV\)](#), a partnership led by Pathfinders of Milwaukee community and system-based advocates to provide after-hours emergency medical and legal accompaniment and improve our community advocacy response for youth 11–25 who have been commercially sexually exploited. Contact information in this chart was current in July 2021.

[Department of Children and Families Anti-Human Trafficking Program](#): These slides, presented to the Community of Care in July 2021, offer an overview of DCF anti-human trafficking initiatives focused on minors, including links to training, contacts in each region of Wisconsin, relevant legislation, and more.

[It Happens Here: The Reality of Sex Trafficking in Wisconsin](#): This excellent documentary by DCF includes 5 short segments: Sex Trafficking Happens Everywhere; Four Stories of Sex Trafficking; How it Happens; Stuck; and Finding Help. Total viewing time is about 35 minutes. DCF also created [It Happens Here Professional Content](#), and a [Public Facilitator Guide](#) that can be used in community awareness or staff training. A *Youth Facing Facilitation Guide is available only by attending DCF training - contact asia.jackson@wisconsin.gov for more information.*

[Resources for Runaway & Homeless Youth](#): This interactive map from the Department of Children and Families provides contact information for Wisconsin Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs offering a variety of services to runaway and homeless youth and young adults. The [Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services](#) is another source for information and resources.

[Resources to Reduce and Respond to Sexual Violence in Schools](#): This list of resources from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is for school personnel assisting students who may have experienced sexual violence.

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## Spotlight: Julie Braun

### Wisconsin Department of Justice

In late 2021, Julie Braun reflected on her work to eliminate human trafficking in Wisconsin during an interview with Colleen Cox. Here are Julie's responses to our questions.

*You've been with the DOJ Office of Crime Victim Services for some time. How would you describe your current role in anti-trafficking work?*

As a policy advisor, I provide analysis and recommendations to shape and advance the public policy goals of the department. I work with experts and stakeholders across disciplines. This could involve research, preparing white papers, legislative analysis, projects with internal or external partners, and making recommendations based on data and input from the field. I also regularly interact with professionals who work nationally and globally on anti-trafficking initiatives to stay informed and engaged with a wide-ranging community.



**Julie Braun**

Policy Initiatives Advisor,  
WI Department of Justice

Operations Director,  
WI Crime Victims Rights Board

*Over the years, you've worked on different trafficking related initiatives. What are some of the high points of that work?*

The high points of the work for me have been when people or disciplines that don't frequently work together create a new partnership. I've especially enjoyed building anti-trafficking public-private partnerships. I come from a family of entrepreneurs and know firsthand that business philanthropy is not as easy a lift for a business as people might assume. It has been my experience that industry involvement in anti-trafficking work springs from business owners who want to be part of the solution and are willing to sacrifice time, talent and resources to

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do so. They deserve a lot of credit for doing it and it's inspiring to work with industry leaders of that mindset. I've worked with industries positioned to help disrupt trafficking such as hospitality, malls, transportation, convenience stores, tech, and casinos. We very much need private industry to stand with us in this fight. When that happens, it's a great reminder that there are many important allies out there, sometimes in unexpected places.

*Anti-trafficking work is highly collaborative; in your work you have connected with people in a wide range of occupations and disciplines. What are some lessons you've learned about building effective collaborations?*

There are a lot of different roles and missions among stakeholders in the criminal justice and anti-trafficking fields. Although we are all working to respond to the exploitation of human trafficking, our missions and strategies don't always align perfectly. That can cause some friction but should not be a deterrent to collaboration. Traffickers win when we stay siloed. The biggest lesson I've learned is that we don't have to agree on everything. If we really listen and respect our different roles, we will find opportunities to row in the same direction without diminishing the individual roles we hold. We can find new ways to do our best work whether a collaboration is a temporary alignment or more long-term. Each collaboration is an opportunity to move the ball forward, to see how our work impacts the whole, and to consider if there are adjustments we might make to be more effective in our work.

Our missions and strategies don't always align perfectly. That can cause some friction but should not be a deterrent to collaboration. Traffickers win when we stay siloed. The biggest lesson I've learned is that we don't have to agree on everything. If we really listen and respect our different roles, we will find opportunities to row in the same direction without diminishing the individual roles we hold.

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### *What promising developments are on the horizon, from your viewpoint?*

There is a strong and widespread desire to engage with, and learn from, survivors. I see an important paradigm shift from the concept of “rescuing” individuals to one of providing accessible paths to self-determination, healing and thriving. Funding often drives service provision, so the question I am glad to hear nationally is: *How do we ensure we are funding what survivors need rather than just directing survivors to those services that happen to be funded?* I see significant efforts being made around the country to elevate the voices of survivors when exploring that question.

Another very promising development I see nationally is attention to understanding and disrupting the money flow that motivates human trafficking. As a global crime that crosses jurisdictions, every jurisdiction will benefit as financial tracking and disruption strategies get more sophisticated.

Policymakers struggle with the lack of data about human trafficking. Criminal justice data captures just a part of the picture with significant limitations. Programs have the power to create a more nuanced understanding about the dynamics of human trafficking by collecting and reporting non-identifying, aggregate information about incidents, experiences, and service needs.

### *If you had just one message or piece of advice (for DV and SA programs who work with people who have experienced trafficking) what would it be?*

Policymakers struggle with the lack of data about human trafficking. Criminal justice data captures just a part of the picture with significant limitations. Programs have the power to create a more nuanced understanding about the dynamics of human trafficking by collecting and reporting non-identifying, aggregate information about incidents, experiences, and service needs. Information about the experiences of survivors, *from survivors*, is needed to develop and support appropriate and effective interventions, adequate resource allocation, and policies that are truly protective of survivors. Programs that work with people who have experienced trafficking are bringing those voices forward and I hope they will continue to do that.

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## Legal Assistance

[Legal Services for Trafficking Survivors](#): These slides from a June 2021 presentation outline legal needs of Wisconsin trafficking survivors and resources that can assist with different needs, including the organizations listed below.

**End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin Legal Technical Assistance:** Advocates can receive technical legal assistance, including information about legal options, processes, and referrals to attorneys. Email [LegalTA@endabusewi.org](mailto:LegalTA@endabusewi.org).

**RISE Law Center:** RISE attorneys can assist with restraining orders, family law, and immigration. RISE serves statewide clients, with no immigration status requirements. Call 608-256-1015.

**LOTUS Legal Clinic** can assist with vacatur/expungement, immigration, and other civil legal needs such as name changes. LOTUS serves statewide clients, with no immigration status requirements. Call 414-885-1469.

**Legal Action of Wisconsin Anti-Trafficking Project** can assist with vacatur/expungement, T visas, etc., and serves statewide clients from several offices. There may be immigration restrictions for legal services not specific to trafficking survivors. Call 855-947-2529.

**Wisconsin Judicare** assists with family law and other general legal services, serving the northern half of Wisconsin. Call 715-842-1681.

[Removing Barriers for Trafficking Survivors through Decriminalization](#) (July 2021, about 80 minutes)

This presentation looked at how survivors of trafficking are criminalized, the barriers created for trafficking survivors with criminal records, options to remove barriers and decriminalize trafficking survivors, and how advocates might help survivors in this process.

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## Labor Trafficking Assistance

**[Framework](#):** Framework aims to increase the capacity of service providers and their partners to identify and provide transformative services to survivors of labor trafficking. They work with survivors, service providers, and other experts to create resources, and to provide in-person and remote assistance—including case consultation, webinars, e-learning modules and online materials that respond to needs identified by the field. [Learn more about Framework](#) or explore their [Multimedia Library](#).

### **Polaris's Visas H-2a:**

#### **[Guía Esencial para las y los Trabajadores Esenciales del Campo](#)**

El siguiente recurso está diseñado para que los trabajadores con visa H-2A conozcan sus derechos y también estén al tanto de detalles importantes para el respeto a sus derechos humanos y laborales. A pesar de que esta información está diseñada para individuos que trabajan en Estados Unidos con esta categoría de visa, mucha de la información también es relevante para otras personas con visa temporal de trabajo o, incluso, sin regularización migratoria.

## Policy and Systems

**The Polaris Project State Report Cards:** While some states have attempted to provide relief by giving trafficking victims a path toward having criminal records cleared, many of the laws don't work for survivors. Polaris offers [detailed report cards for each state](#), assessing how well existing laws work and providing clear steps for improvement. [Wisconsin ranked 30](#).

**Healthcare Collaborative Against Sex Trafficking:** Starting in January 2020, [this Milwaukee-area project](#) was funded for 36 months. Project partners, assisted by those with lived experience, develop protocols, workflow changes, treatment guidelines, and community referral processes. To improve access to quality support and care for adult victims of sex trafficking, they are developing a vetting process of community resources by those with lived experience.

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## Assisting Human Trafficking Survivors in Wisconsin: Statement of Support, Intention and Expectations

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (End Abuse), and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), (hereafter 'We') are coordinating our efforts to offer a consistent message and guidance for domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy agencies who are funded by DCF and/or DOJ.

We are aware that survivors of human trafficking are sometimes unable to access supportive services from Wisconsin domestic violence and sexual assault programs, that some programs may believe that DCF or DOJ funding prohibits them from serving these survivors, or that they are not qualified to provide services. Survivors of trafficking seeking shelter have at times been told that shelter is full only after they have shared the story of their victimization, increasing risk and trauma for these survivors.

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*During the summer of 2021, staff from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, developed this statement to offer a consistent message and guidance for domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy agencies funded by DCF and/or DOJ, who face challenges presented by serving people who have survived human trafficking.*



We recognize the many intersections of sexual assault, domestic abuse, and human trafficking and acknowledge that each survivor's situation is unique, requiring an individualized approach that addresses the different ways they may have been harmed.

We recognize the challenging environment in which domestic violence and sexual assault programs operate as they strive to meet the complex needs of diverse survivors, with limited resources. We are committed to support Wisconsin domestic abuse and sexual assault programs to serve survivors of trafficking.

- We stand behind best practices and expectations for advocating and providing supportive services to survivors of trafficking. DCF and DOJ funding does not prohibit shelter programs from providing services to survivors of labor and/or sex trafficking.
- Per Wis. Stat. 48.9875, shelter programs can provide shelter services to survivors aged 17 and older, independently if they meet statutory requirements ([see Wis. Stat. 48.9875](#)).
- Domestic and sexual abuse is prevalent among survivors of trafficking. Intake questions can and should open doors to providing services. For example:
  - Are you being hurt?
  - Where do you eat and sleep? (In the same place as the person who hurts you?) Can you decide when to come and go?
  - Is this person the parent of your child (or any of your children)?

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- Agencies will assess the level of services they can provide for survivors of trafficking (i.e., crisis response, short-term support, long-term healing) and develop the community partnerships necessary to provide survivors with appropriate services. Directors and Advocates should:
  - Engage in training that develops skills and tools to effectively address the needs of trafficking survivors.
  - Engage in partnerships with other organizations that are experienced in providing effective and appropriate assistance for trafficking survivors.
  - Strengthen relationships and cultivate trust with other agencies to build trauma-sensitive warm transfers and wraparound services to address survivor needs. This includes eliminating the need for survivors to repeat the story of their victimization during screening or intake.

We will work together to provide ongoing support, training, and resources to help domestic abuse and sexual assault advocacy agencies meet expectations for providing services. [View human trafficking information and resources](#) and please reach out to our statewide coalitions, End Abuse and WCASA, for additional resources, assistance, and guidance for best practice when serving survivors.

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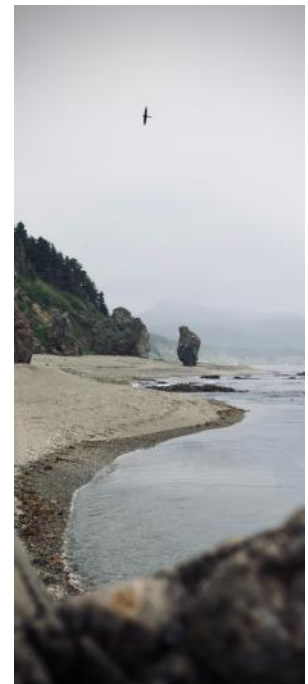
# Unimaginable

**Hannah Lenzo**

CONTENT WARNING: contains profanity as well as descriptions of police terror, gun violence, and sexual violence, including child sex trafficking.

*Dedicated to everyone who has said to me, "I don't know and I can't imagine what you went through, what you're going through." I wrote this list (in 2018) to help you imagine.*

1. You don't know this, but they used to lock me in a metal box and sometimes I was so exhausted that I could sleep somehow, even with a gun in my mouth. And you know I wake up tasting metal now, and I know exactly why I can't settle down, I know exactly why I'm still not better now. I know exactly why my head is still down. And I'm sorry if I sound repetitive now, but in my mind, I'm still stuck in fetters, unfound. In my brain it is cluttered and bitter and loud; it's crowded, riddled with questions, littered with sounds, full of commotion, full of unfinished poems whose endings flit and flutter around like little lost tattered clouds full of emotion, while all kinds of lines and rhymes disappear alongside brain cells like cypress trees lost to coastal erosion, and I try to find a new mind that shines like a sea with no microplastics; some boastful new ocean. And I'd find time to write more journals and rhymes if I could also find the right pill or potion. I'd write about all the crimes committed against me, I'd be venting non-defensively, detailing my feelings extensively, if I could just get my thoughts to stop always restlessly being in motion.



I try to find a  
new mind that  
shines like a  
sea...

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2. You don't know this, but they used to make me get on my hands and knees in front of them, so they could rest their feet on me like I was an ottoman, and after all these years I still haven't forgotten them. I was inundated with fear, but still I thought I could soften men. If I could understand it, make it clear, I thought maybe I could stop it then. But then morosely I'd regain consciousness, and there were the cops again, and I was a ghost I was so shaken up but mostly I felt there was no stopping them.
3. You don't know this but sometimes I'm still hopeless, endlessly seeking a remedy to rescue me, a cleanser to clean out the trauma that festers in me. When you look closer, you'll see that lonely friendless me, begging it not to bring stress to me or mess with my sleep or sequester me. But when I try to sleep, I still have these heart-stopping hypnagogic hallucinations which tonight if I'm lucky won't lead to suicidal ideation. You know, I'm feeling like my suffering is of my own creation, and in the context of healing it's just feeling like stagnation; my peace perpetually stolen, replaced by fear and agitation and I'm frozen, counting the seconds, trying to reconcile myself with my desire for self-annihilation. And it's usually the same bullshit, very terrifying but there's very little variation, and then I'm lying in bed thinking WAIT, why didn't my imagination come up with some kind of cover story? Why didn't my mirthless merciless mind even attempt to fucking cover for me??

...if I sit  
alone and  
hide it, it's  
just  
hidden, it's  
not  
subsiding,  
it's still  
living  
within me  
whenever  
I'm alive  
and it's still  
sickening  
to me  
even  
though I  
survive it  
because  
it's wicked,  
it's  
looming,  
and it  
won't allow  
me to fully  
thrive yet.

(Continued from page 34)

Yes, the self-blame slithers in the same way every time; the unhealthy shame I live in sends shameful shivers down my spine. And I can live with it, I can sit with it, I can name it, I know it's mine. But if I sit alone and hide it, it's just hidden, it's not subsiding, it's still living within me whenever I'm alive and it's still sickening to me even though I survive it because it's wicked, it's looming, and it won't allow me to fully thrive yet.

4. You don't know this, but one of the men who paid the cops to rape me (yes, the same cops who still get paid today to stop the raping) once held me by my ankles over the edge of a hotel balcony and asked me "do you want to fucking die?" and I just held my breath and dangled there like go ahead let go, i don't care. Drop me. Watch me. I'll fucking fly.



Drop me. Watch me. I'll fucking fly.

And the only thing I remember actually feeling when I was hanging there, upside down, alternating between dissociating and estimating the space between my head and the ground, was the blood snaking down my back, slow red trickles from fresh rectal tears, silently making their way towards my neck. I felt no pain, no stress, no disrespect, I didn't care, didn't look below me, didn't think about death.

And here's how it goes: because I buried it then, it finds me in dreams now, gives me panic attacks. And here's what I know: as it was, I couldn't carry it then, but I carry it now. It is here. It is back.

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5. You don't know this, but I've been raped thousands of times, and now I'm late writing thousands of lines about it, trying to reprogram my mind about it, trying to reclaim my pride around, trying to refrain from the lying that surrounds it. I'm trying to stay sane, bear the daily trauma that compounds it—it confounds me, but even when I'm drowning in it I never quit. You know, I still see a shrink every other week for almost an hour, and I ask him why do you think I'm still so afraid of my personal power? And how can I start healing from it when I feel like I'm still reeling from it, I'm still so hypervigilant and feeling quite like a hypocrite for withholding forgiveness as I sit here getting older yet I can barely bear to live with this?? I'm still scared to confront it, regressing to a place where I can't face it so I just try to outrun it. But it's always there, I'm never done with it. It's in my breath, I feed my lungs with it.
6. You don't know this, but when you tell me “your trauma doesn't define you” I want to invite you to visit the hell inside me and let my physiology remind you that you really have no place in crafting the complexities of someone else's definition, and you really could show some grace and respect by not trying to define someone else's condition. I genuinely don't need anyone to teach me about what it's like to be in my position, or to decide for me what defines me—how about you let that be my decision?

I genuinely  
don't need  
anyone to  
teach me  
about what it's  
like to be in my  
position, or to  
decide for me  
what defines  
me—how  
about you let  
that be my  
decision?

7. You don't know this, but I'm confused about justice. I don't know how to view it as something I must get. And my feelings about it are inconsistent, ranging from rage to indifference, from bravery to resistance. Yep, some days I'm like fuck it, I'ma get on twitter and tweet it to the fucking FBI! And other days I'm like fuck, I should've kept it inside me until the day I died. Damn, I should've hidden it forever, I'm so stupid, I should've lied.

8. You don't know this but some days I am all *scraped soul* and *enervated essence*. I've got this gaping hole of escaping light and my spirit's so weary from losing luminescence. I've got a weighty growing list of waking nights, and lately I'm growing sick of faking politeness. I might be



...if all I have caused is discomfort, then I apologize zero percent.

great at showing grit, though I show up late and I feel like shit. I let my mistakes show, but I still show up despite this. So if you don't fucking like this, or you don't think I wrote the right list, or if you're averse to curse words or terse words or disjointed unrehearsed words, then you're probably pissed about this recursive list and every verbose verse you've heard, every single subversive word. And if I've caused you harm, I'm sorry—that is never my intent. But if all I have caused is discomfort, then I apologize zero percent.

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***Below and on the final page, the executive directors of agencies who developed this issue of the Coalition Chronicles together offer their concluding messages.***

American Indians Against Abuse Tribal Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Coalition stands in unity with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Department of Justice to strengthen our families and communities throughout Wisconsin and Indian Country in ending violence. Contending with an environment that also includes Human Trafficking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, our tribes, programs, and service providers need all the support and access to effective trainings that can be provided. We will continue our efforts together because it is vital today and for generations to come that we all have a chance to thrive in a safe and healthy world.



American Indians Against Abuse  
PO Box 1617  
Hayward, WI 54843  
[Contact AIAA on Facebook](#)

***- Pam Johnson, Executive Director, American Indians Against Abuse***

We stand together to support people across Wisconsin who have experienced trafficking, and their advocates. To create the social change necessary to end sexual violence, we must eradicate the attitudes, values, and beliefs that contribute to sexual violence, including human trafficking. We must also challenge systems that for too long have criminalized and incarcerated sex trafficking survivors rather than providing them services. This is particularly true for survivors who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). In Wisconsin, the case of Chrystul Kizer, a Black girl who is facing life imprisonment for defending herself against her trafficker, illustrates how systems have failed survivors like Chrystul. It is critical that we continue our work to ensure that sex trafficking survivors have access to services that can address their complex trauma histories.



2801 W Beltline Highway,  
Suite 202  
Madison, WI 53713  
(608) 257-1516  
[www.wcasa.org](http://www.wcasa.org)

***- Pennie Meyers, Executive Director, The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault***



I personally see the abolition of trafficking as central to the work of this organization because we are reminded every day that all oppression is connected. Many people who are trafficked experience a kind of domestic violence, and repeated sexual assault. Local domestic abuse programs in Wisconsin see trafficking victims who are also victims of domestic violence.

There are important distinctions to be made between these different experiences, but we know that our liberation is bound up together. This is why, as we serve survivors of domestic violence and center the lived experiences of those most impacted by all forms of oppression, we keep human trafficking as a central component of our coalition's anti-violence work.

**- Monique Minkens, Executive Director, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin**



1400 E Washington Ave #227,  
Madison, WI 53703

(608)0255-0539

[www.endabusewi.org](http://www.endabusewi.org)

OCVS is committed to working across systems to improve the overall response to individuals who have been trafficked. At OCVS we are in the position to work with government and non-governmental partners to promote strategies that are protective of crime victims. Our anti-trafficking work with AIAA, WCASA and End abuse is rooted in our desire to understand, and respond to, the needs in the field. Whether it is building service capacity, understanding barriers faced by those who want services, or identifying gaps in service availability, OCVS is ready to listen, to be part of the conversation and work toward solutions with our partners. Our partnership is crucial to improving outcomes for those who have been trafficked and ensuring that services are available, wholistic, and built around the resiliency of those who need them.

**- Michelle Viste, Office of Crime Victims Services, Wisconsin Department of Justice**



[www.doj.state.wi.us/ocvs](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/ocvs)

Wisconsin Department of  
Justice  
P.O. Box 7857  
Madison, WI 53707-7857