

Jan 2018

THE '#ME TOO' EDITION

As we reflect on 2017 we have identified one of the most significant events of the year, where we saw lot of reports, articles and discussions in the media and on social media surrounding #Me Too and sexual harassment/violence from October 2017.

As a sexual violence organisation we have watched closely how every day women and men, many of whom are celebrities and politicians have come out to say #Me Too. Some have told their stories of sexual harassment and/or assault anonymously, some have named themselves as well as their perpetrator. The strength of the collective voice of every person who has said #Me Too has been both powerfully shocking and hopeful...

Shocking in that we live in a society where women and young women have and navigate sexual harassment in the workplace, social settings, and when traveling from point A to point B. Shocking in how sexual harassment becomes sexual assault so quickly and easily; Shocking in that when we take count, most of the women in our lives are part of the #Me Too

Hopeful in that maybe this is the start of the beginning of the end. Maybe this is the moment we will look back and pin point when change happened. When our collective voice said...enough. Our sexual harassment/ violence laws are some of the best in the world. What has to change, is society, and we are hopeful that this might be the catalyst for that change.

What's in the #Me Too Edition?

- Responding to comments we have received over #Me Too...
- What is Rape Culture...
- What can I do...
- Our Service provision growth...
- Facing cuts...
- A case for 'Hope'...

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE
www.rasacpk.org.uk

RASAC Response The 'Bandwagon'

"I understand that women need to say #Me Too when they have been wronged but we need to be careful that we don't put having a thigh rubbed and a sexual assault in the same basket. I think #Me Too is used too much and a lot of women are jumping onto the bandwagon".

#Me Too was started as a sexual harassment movement but what we have seen is that sexual harassment can quickly become sexual assault/rape. Also we cannot judge one persons experience with another and the resulting effects. One woman may have her thigh 'rubbed' by a powerful man who holds the balance of her being able to pay the mortgage. What might seem like a minor event can have life altering consequence.

The vast majority of men we have seen accused of being perpetrators held position of immense power in society. Movie producers, music producers, head of significant companies/organisations, politicians, A list actors and dare we say... Presidents. Harassers and abusers come in all shapes and forms, whether they are an 'A List' actor or an everyday person, what they share is a position of power and control and a decision to exert that power.

We believe that it is important to include a 'thigh squeeze' and 'rape' in the same basket as they are part of the same pyramid of abuse. To ensure that rape stops we need to ensure that the 'thigh squeeze' stops too. From toxic gender expectations and sexist jokes, to cat calling and groping, to sexual harassment and ultimately rape, we see it all as part of 'Rape Culture'. If society wants to live in a world free of sexual violence, we all need to be involved in the fundamental changes needed to shift a 'Rape Culture' to a 'Nurturance Culture'.

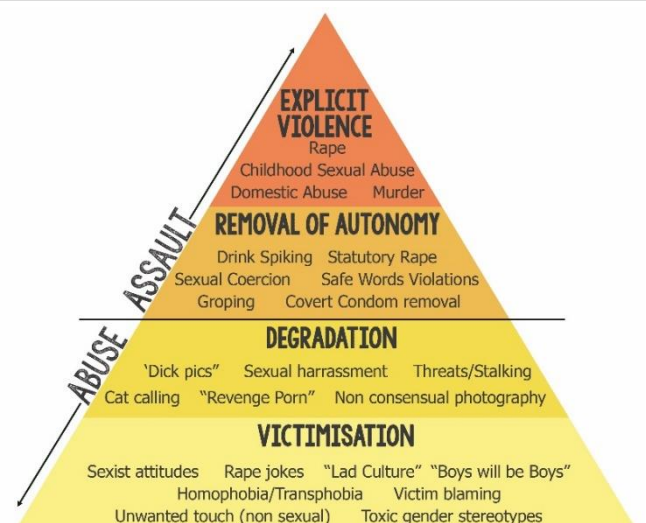
Below is a selection of comments about everyday sexism/sexual harassment and sexual assault (all part of 'Rape Culture') gathered at our 10th Birthday Celebration and Exhibition...

"I was recently followed home from a late night bus journey by a man who spent the whole trip staring at me. When I told him not to walk so close he screamed 'slut', 'bitch', 'whore' at me."

"In my local shop a man smacked my bum as he wished me a "Good Morning."

"inappropriate touching by school janitors; being groped on bus and all men present laughing..."

"Going through security at the airport and a male member of staff commented to his colleague "I wonder if the collar matches the cuffs"



THIS IS WHAT RAPE CULTURE LOOKS LIKE

Rape Culture Pyramid – adapted from:

"Rape Culture Pyramid" by 11th Principle: Consent!, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA / Adapted for Scottish Context <https://www.11thprincipleconsent.org/consent-propaganda/rape-culture-pyramid/>

"Just after this #Me Too thing kicked off I went onto my Facebook. I was completely overwhelmed by the number of women in my life that had #Me Too that I knew. As a man I didn't know what to say, how to respond."

RASAC Response Be the Change

The vast majority of men are good, non-perpetrating men. However, society as a whole has a part to play in reducing sexual harassment and sexual violence. As a collective we must not allow the few to continue to go un-noticed. It is not enough as a man to be a good, non-perpetrating man, men everywhere must start to call out the action of other men, challenge the sexist remark, the inappropriate attention, the unwanted advances.

Far too often when women challenge, we are shamed, told we are asking for it, that we are responsible, that we misunderstood or need to learn how to take a compliment.

Sexual violence is too often identified as a 'woman's issue' but it is an issue for all in society. To end sexual violence, men must be an active part of the solution, the change from within.

I'M A RASAC YOUTH AMBASSADOR BECAUSE...

I want to be an agent for social change

I want to prevent sexual violence

I want my voice to be heard

I want to make a difference

I am a feminist (even though I am male)

I want to campaign for women's rights

As a rape crisis movement maintained and developed by women, we have been fighting against sexual violence and violence against women for over 40 years. RASAC P&K, as a rape crisis centre, has been supporting survivors of sexual violence and providing prevention programmes for 10 years.

For us, the #Me Too movement has confirmed how important it is that there is a cultural shift to ensure that we see violence against women and sexual violence as not a 'women's issue' but an issue for all in society.

Another reason we do not see sexual violence women's issue is what Jackson Katz (Men's VAW Campaigner) highlights in his TED Talk (Violence Against Women – it's a Men's Issue) "Over 99 percent of rape is perpetrated by men, but it's a women's issue?"

Jackson Katz also describes how even the term 'Violence against women' is harmful and it shifts the focus on women and their behaviour rather than men and their behaviour, making victim blaming a norm in society.

We welcome men into our movement and see wonderful young men in our Youth Ambassador Programme, where young women and men come together to challenge gender inequality, gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes which ultimately leads to sexual violence.



THE BYSTANDER APPROACH

Everyone can play a part in reducing or stopping sexism, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Intervention is often called a 'bystander approach'. This approach interrupts a potentially harmful situation including stopping actions or comments that promote sexual violence. There are many different ways of doing this from calling out your friends and family of sexist and derogatory comment about women; making 'rape jokes' or victim blaming; to asking someone if they need help but a quick way of remembering what you can do if you see someone in need of support...

- C – Create a distraction (interrupt a situation)
- A – Ask directly ('do you need help?')
- R – Refer to the Authorities (bartender, bouncer, police)
- E – Enlist the support of others

To find out more check out:

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/steps-you-can-take-prevent-sexual-assault>

HOW LANGUAGE HAS CHANGED THE FOCUS...

**John beat Mary.
Mary was beaten by John.
Mary was beaten.
Mary was battered.
Mary is a battered woman.**

"John has left the conversation long ago, while Mary evolves into the active victim... This evolution of victim-blaming is very pervasive in our society... We start asking why Mary put herself into a position to be beaten by John."

Jackson Katz



RASAC Response The 'Witch Hunt'

"This 'movement' is making men feel under attack, it's a witch hunt; how will a man ever feel comfortable asking a woman on a date without being accused of being a pervert; accusations ruins lives"

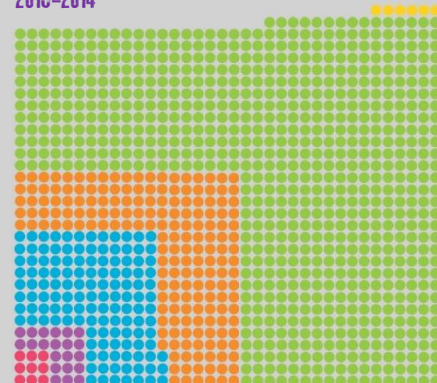
We believe that the idea that men will now be worried that they will be seen as predators next time they flirt or ask someone on a date is not reality, as Laura Bates from Everyday Sexism Project said on Radio 4, this idea "cast all men as bumbling sexual predators" who at any moment will accidentally harass/abuse someone. "Sexual harassment is the deliberate abuse of women often in subservient positions by men in (position of) power" it is not done by accident it is "deliberate and specific". Sexual harassment is not about sex and flirting. It is about power.

"Sexual assault is about violence, not sex. If someone were to hit you with a spade, you wouldn't call it gardening"

We also agree with Laura Bates when she adds that a "witch hunt...is something with no evidence... (this movement shows) millions of women who have experienced abuse over decades, (and) a tiny number of men now being brought to justice" this is not indicative of a witch hunt. We acknowledge that false allegations can ruin lives however the evidence (Scottish Government) shows that false allegation of sexual violence are no more than 3% of reported incidents which is the same rate of false reporting as any other crime in Scotland. Bear in mind that an estimated 75% of people who experience sexual violence do not report at all. (Please see graph on the right). In addition there is ample evidence that allegations of sexual harassment/assault does not necessarily harm all perpetrators as suggested, all we have to do is look at Jimmy Savile, Woody Allen, R Kelly, and Donald Trump to name a few.

Rapes and Attempted Rapes in Scotland

2013-2014



- Estimated rapes & attempted rapes (7533)
- Reported rapes & attempted rapes (1808)
- Reported rapes and attempted rapes sent to the Procurator Fiscal (1291)
- Rape & attempted rapes prosecuted in Court (291)
- Convictions (87)
- Estimated false allegations (54)

Please contact RASAC P&K for data sources

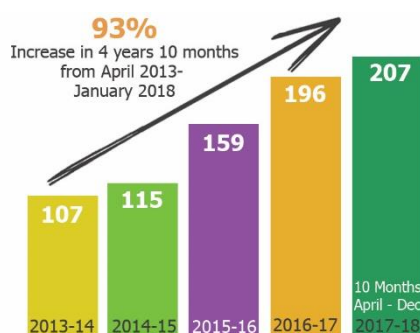
"As a survivor I am annoyed with people telling their stories with #Me Too, being called 'brave'. It makes me feel that because I don't tell the world what happened to me that I am not 'brave', that I am seen as weak..."

RASAC Response Each Survivor is Brave

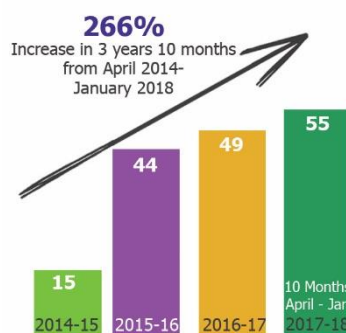
We recognise that many of the people who have disclosed with #Me Too made the very difficult choice to disclose to the world. However it is really important that we acknowledge that not all survivors feel they have the same choice. Maybe the abuser still has power over them and their ability to feed their children and pay the bills will be affected, maybe their loved ones are not supportive of others knowing, perhaps they do not want their family or children to know what happened to them. Each survivor must feel that their story is theirs to share or keep and they should not feel judged either way. All survivors are brave whichever decision they make. We see this bravery in each woman we work with in our support services.

RASAC P&K SUPPORT SERVICES PROVISION GROWTH...

Over the last 5 years we have seen significant growth in our service provision for our therapeutic support. We have consistently had a 3-6 months waiting list despite our increase in service provision and staff/volunteer.



Number of women and young people supported in ongoing Support per year



Number of young people 12-24yrs referred into the Support Service

Each year we receive more referrals and provide more support to survivors throughout P&K. In particular we have seen a steep increase in the number of young people we work with. This is partly due to the proactive work that our Prevention Team provide in Schools and in the community and partly due to society being more vocal in discussing sexual abuse and sexual violence. It is important to note that our engagement with young people has also put additional pressure on our resources as supporting young people is more resource heavy as we are more involved in multi-agency work (child protection/ social work/ education) and also engage with family/parent and school support.

RASAC P&K Services Face Challenging Ahead

We are at risk of significantly having to reduce our support services should we be unable to generate more funding beyond March. There are many funders who have supported our work to date and some of those are coming to the end of their funding term. We are therefore in a position whereby we need to source additional funding to replace these vital monies. At a time when so many cuts are taking place across sectors, demand for our services is continually increasing. Whilst we already have waiting lists of 4 months for adult survivors and 3 months for young people, we are concerned about what our capacity will be to meet demand from April.

At this time a consultation is underway in to the future PKC budget. We hope to see a continued focus on Safer Communities, Child Protection and Social Welfare if we are to ensure that there are appropriate, therapeutic responses to women and young people who have experienced sexual violence. Violence against women and girls remains one of the biggest violations of human rights across our society. Any reduction to services or resources to tackle this would lead to devastating impacts upon our communities.

WHAT WE CAN DO WITH £30,000

Provide Therapeutic Support for

48

trauma affected women & young people

Provide Prevention Workshops to

2000

Young People in schools & communities (over 12 months)

A CASE FOR GENDER SPECIFIC SERVICES

During the last few months, this movement has highlighted the need for support services who have the experience to deliver therapeutic and advocacy support for survivors with deep understanding of how gender inequality and 'rape culture' affects survivors experiences and their healing journey.

The **Mental Health Foundation's Report from December 2017** – 'While Your Back was Turned' highlights "The mental health of young women and girls is deteriorating, and the gap between men and women has widened over recent years... the last 15 years have seen an unprecedented rise in reported mental health problems amongst young women and girls. We now see their needs reaching crisis levels... Whereas 15 years ago there were specific strategies for young women and girls, now their needs are tackled within the broader envelope of children and young people."

A report by the **Women's Resource Centre**, **Women-only services: making the case**, states "There was evidence that many service users would not access support if it was not women-only. Therefore, many women in need of vital support services would not receive them. The possible consequences could include deterioration in health, missed employment and educational opportunities, ongoing violence etc."

A CASE FOR HOPE

Hope is such a crucial part of healing. The words below are part of a written piece by one of our survivors who found light and a future in hope...

HOPE

I disowned my body a long time ago
And lived from the shoulders up
Living in your head ain't easy
In fact it f***s you up

But now I've reclaimed my body
I'm going to give it some love and care
I will listen to what it tells me
And always remember it's there

It was a body that had been broken
And tainted and horribly vile
But this body doesn't feel like that
In fact it makes me smile.



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