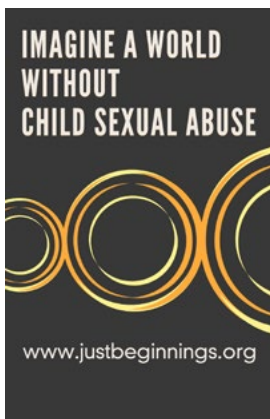


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# OVERVIEW OF JUST BEGINNINGS COLLABORATIVE & PREVENTCONNECT WEB CONFERENCE SERIES



The Just Beginnings Collaborative (JBC) is a network of national leaders dedicated to ending child sexual abuse. In 2016, JBC initiated and launched an inaugural cohort of fellows and organizational grantees from across the nation dedicated to this issue. Eb Brown, Interim Program Coordinator for JBC, explains how the collaborative began to develop a movement around child sexual abuse and support those who have been doing the work. Eb notes that grantees are chosen for the intersectional lens of their work, such as examining the intersections of race, sexuality, gender identity, religion, and others with child sexual abuse.

In this web conference series, fellows and organizational grantees from JBC join PreventConnect to share insights, lessons learned, and hopes for the future of their work preventing child sexual abuse. Guests share their experiences in creating social change and provide wisdom for how agencies within and tangential to the movement to end child sexual abuse can engage in creating safer communities free from child sexual abuse.

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# ADULT SURVIVORS AS MOVEMENT LEADERS

Lessons Learned from the Just Beginnings Collaborative

## PRACTITIONERS AND ADVOCATES FEATURED

**Eb. Brown**

[Just Beginnings Collaborative](#)

**Aishah Shahidah Simmons**

[#LoveWITHAccountability](#)

**Amita Swadhin**

[Mirror Memoirs](#)

**Sonya Shah**

[The Ahimsa Collective](#)

Adult survivors of child sexual abuse can be our greatest leaders to find solutions for ending child sexual abuse. Those most impacted are survivors whose sexual orientations, racial/cultural and gender identities have been historically and contemporarily excluded from efforts to end sexual violence. These survivors are leading prevention innovations through storytelling to break shame and stigma, and to interrupt, end and prevent child sexual abuse through viable alternatives to the criminal justice system. This web conference focuses on moving toward a culture of healing and survivor-centered accountability by centering survivor leadership.

**Centering the wisdom of those most impacted is necessary for a socially just movement and to prevent child sexual abuse.**

The survivor leaders in this session bring to the forefront the movement's historical and contemporary practices and structures that all too often dismiss, neglect, and silence survivors of color, LGBTQIA+ survivors, survivors with disabilities, and survivors with identities that are not held by powerful groups. Each of these presenters reclaims and re-centers the experiences, identities, and wisdom of those most impacted by child sexual abuse in their work, including Black survivors of child sexual abuse and LGBTQIA+ and gender non-binary survivors of color. The field can also learn from those who have caused harm through committing sexual violence to inform prevention strategies.



*Amita Swadhin of Mirror Memoirs showcases what it looks like when an organization truly centers survivor leadership. This photo was taken at the end of a survivor leadership retreat.*

**Accountability is key for both healing from and preventing violence.**

Accountability is not equated with criminalization and punishment, which places undue, unjust, and inequitable burden, stigma, and harm on communities of color. Aishah Shahidah Simmons of #LoveWITHAccountability charges others with the task of examining what accountability looks like for them. Exploring the #LoveWITHAccountability forum brings light to the many ways Black survivors practice accountability, and humanity and healing are the foundation. Those featured on the #LoveWITHAccountability forum call for a redistribution of power back to children and survivors to lead their healing and accountability process.



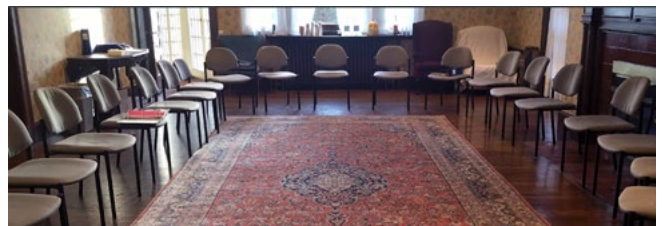
**Digging Up the Roots of Child Sexual Abuse**

edited by  
Aishah Shahidah Simmons  
Fall 2019 | AK Press  
LoveWITHAccountability.com

[@LoveAccountability](https://twitter.com/LoveAccountability) [@LoveWITHAccountability](https://www.instagram.com/LoveWITHAccountability) [f /LoveWITHAccountability](https://www.facebook.com/LoveWITHAccountability)

*Aishah Shahidah Simmons' forthcoming Love With Accountability: Digging Up the Roots of Child Sexual Abuse anthology highlights the wisdom of diasporic Black child sexual abuse survivors and advocates.*

Keeping humanity at the center of accountability includes humanizing those who have caused harm. Demonizing and pathologizing those who have caused harm disrupts opportunities for accountability and dismisses the efficacy of prevention. Sonya Shah of the Ahimsa Collective interviews those who have perpetrated child sexual abuse and sexual violence, and one of the themes that she has noticed is that to prevent violence, people who cause harm must heal from their own trauma and take accountability for the harm they have caused. Those who cause, excuse, or witness harm are not the only ones who should be held accountable, but also the systems and structures that cause harm. These systems and structures are often replicated within and upheld by agencies and organizations that serve survivors or aim to prevent violence. Amita Swadhin of Mirror Memoirs discusses how, historically and currently, the movement to end child sexual abuse and sexual violence silences survivors of diverse identities, and often agencies uphold organizational practices that do not honor, respect, and serve the survivors that work for them.



*Sonya Shah explains how the Ahimsa Collective values healing more and harming less. By listening to those who have committed sexual harm, Sonya and the Ahimsa Collective explore what it takes to prevent perpetration and heal from trauma.*

## **Survivors hold immense wisdom for preventing child sexual abuse, and organizations need to support survivors in services and in staff.**

None of the work discussed in this web conference would be possible without the leadership and knowledge of survivors. Often, organizations and agencies in the movement to end child sexual abuse and sexual violence do not promote practices that truly support survivors, nor do they support survivors of all identities. Aishah, Sonya, and Amita discuss how crucial it is to break from traditional organizational structures and processes to examine ways to support survivors on staff, such as having flexible deadlines, increasing staff to allow survivors enough space and time to engage in the work, and respecting how trauma impacts the work.

## RESOURCES

- [Conference link](#)
- [Conference slides](#)
- [Text Chat transcript](#)
- [Just Beginnings Collaborative](#)
- [#LoveWITHAccountability](#)
- [#LoveWITHAccountability forum](#)
- [Mirror Memoirs](#)
- [The Ahimsa Collective](#)
- [Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness](#)

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# CHANGING THE CULTURE OF SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, AND COMMUNITIES TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Lessons Learned from the Just Beginnings Collaborative

## PRACTITIONERS AND ADVOCATES FEATURED

**Eb. Brown**

[Just Beginnings Collaborative](#)

**Linda Crockett**

[Samaritan Safe Church](#)

**Ahmad Greene-Hayes**

[Children of Combahee](#)

**Tashmica Torok**

[The Firecracker Foundation](#)

**Meg Stone**

[IMPACT Boston](#)

Shifting culture within organizations and communities can lead to great impacts on preventing child sexual abuse. From churches and schools to community organizations and families, every facet of a community has a role to play in preventing and ending child sexual abuse. By being proactive, aligning core values with prevention, and supporting and honoring survivors, communities can change from a culture of harm, indifference, and silence to a culture of healing, hope, and safety.

## KEY FINDINGS

The movements to end sexual violence and child sexual abuse call attention to the need to be proactive when addressing harm.

This can especially be felt in faith-based communities and institutions, as Linda Crockett of Samaritan Safe Church and Ahmad Greene-Hayes of Children of Combahee highlight in this web conference. Both Linda and Ahmad share concrete steps for how churches can be more proactive to end child sexual abuse in their communities, such as giving church community members the knowledge and tools to talk about, recognize, and address child sexual abuse.

Organizations outside of religious institutions can also be proactive in preventing child sexual abuse through creating clear policies, like in the examples Meg Stone of IMPACT-Boston shares. Meaningful and specific policies are not a substitute for organizational culture change work, but policies can clearly communicate values and expectations of an organization.



*Meg Stone of IMPACT-Boston describes how organizations can change their culture to reflect their prevention values.*

**Aligning core values with prevention and vice versa is necessary to shift culture within organizations and communities.**

Examining implications of theologies is one way faith-based institutions can find agreement between preventing child sexual abuse and church values. Children of Combahee creates

anti-rape sermon workshops where prevention messages are embedded into sermons in Black churches. This requires church leadership to examine the implications of theologies and whether they endorse or deny the prevalence of child sexual abuse.

Meg Stone highlights how organizational structures can reflect the power imbalances seen in abusive situations, and provides opportunities and examples for how violence prevention organizations can align actions with values. Tashmica Torok of the Firecracker Foundation says, "You cannot hope to inspire culture shift in your community if you are replicating the harm of the violence you hope to eradicate within your own organization. As an organization, we show up in alignment with our values" Tashmica identifies ways organizations and agencies can engrain their values in their internal practices, such as practicing militant self-care, engaging in collective decision making, and by creating policies that make it safe for all survivors to participate. Organizational culture does not exist in a vacuum, and is shaped and informed by a wider societal culture. Discrimination and oppression present in a wider culture also impact an organization's culture, and organizations have an opportunity and responsibility to foster climates that actively dismantle oppression and re-center power within their organizations and within their communities.

**Honoring, centering, and uplifting survivors creates a culture conducive to preventing and ending child sexual abuse.**

Tashmica poses the question, "How do you end child sexual abuse if you create a movement that silences survivors and/or makes them invisible?"

**FROM PEW TO PULPIT:  
SURVIVORS OF  
CHILD SEXUAL  
ABUSE SPEAK**

October 29, 2016  
12pm - 3pm

The Concord Baptist  
Church of Christ  
833 Gardner C. Taylor  
Boulevard, (Formerly  
Marcy Avenue)  
Brooklyn, NY 11216

Register on Eventbrite

Organized by  
Children of  
Combahee

[/ChildrenOfCombahee](#) [@CombaheeKids](#) [@ChildrenOfCombahee](#)

*Ahmad Greene-Hayes explains how Children of Combahee hosts town halls for survivors to share their stories and for church leadership to listen to survivors.*



*Tashmica Torok shares this photo from the Firecracker Foundation, where they embody the name of the foundation and set off firecrackers at every gathering.*

Centering survivors of child sexual abuse to create a culture of prevention requires creating spaces where survivors can show up as their whole selves and can work through challenges and trauma that they may experience while engaging in this work. Samaritan Safe Church centers survivors by supporting their development as leaders in changing the culture of their churches, offering circles of empowerment and healing within its core program. Centering survivors also requires organizations to evaluate their structures, policies, and culture that can inhibit survivor leadership and survivor safety. In Black churches, for example, Children of Combahee challenges church leadership to transform the pulpit from being a phallic symbol of rape apologizing to one that amplifies survivors and values community healing. One way Children of Combahee does this is through organizing Pew to Pulpit town halls, where church leaders take to the pews to listen to survivors share their experiences at the pulpit. Communities have a responsibility to meet children and adult survivors of child sexual abuse where they are and to promote environments conducive to long-term healing and that are trauma-informed and survivor-centered.

## RESOURCES

- [Conference link](#)
- [Conference slides](#)
- [Text Chat](#)
- [Just Beginnings Collaborative](#)
- [The Firecracker Foundation:](#)
- [Samaritan Safe Church:](#)
- [Ahmad Greene-Hayes](#)
- [Children of Combahee](#)
- [IMPACT-Boston](#)



*Linda Crockett shares this image from Samaritan Safe Church's five buckets of cultural change.*

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# MOBILIZING & ORGANIZING COMMUNITIES TO END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Lessons Learned from the Just Beginnings Collaborative

## PRACTITIONERS AND ADVOCATES FEATURED

**Eb. Brown**

[Just Beginnings Collaborative](#)

**Ignacio G. Hutia Xeiti Rivera**

[The HEAL Project](#)

**Strong Oak Lefebvre**

[Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition](#)

**Suguet Lopez**

[Lideres Campesinas](#)

Community organizing and mobilizing to promote child safety and end child sexual abuse takes many forms. Guests on this web conference discuss how they engage in holistic sexuality information sharing, promoting child safety in HUD communities, and preventing multiple forms of violence and community harm with farmworker families. Just because a strategy has been used in the past does not mean it is effective or is not hurtful, and communities hold immense knowledge in what prevention strategies work for them. It's up to prevention practitioners to listen openly and to honor and appreciate all of a community's wisdom.





*Strong Oak shares about the Musica Franklin after school program in Leyden Woods, Greenfield, MA., which exemplifies the importance of relationship building in the community organizing process.*

**Community organizing and mobilizing gives way to community-grown, community-led strategies that are most effective at creating safe environments.**

When solutions arise from the community, they are often more effective and better received than those brought in by someone outside the community. Strong Oak Lefebvre of Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition discusses how the community circle process is used in Housing and Urban Development (HUD) communities to promote child safety. Adults are actively engaged in finding solutions to child safety, and youth are trained to be circle leaders to continue the process. HUD communities face unique challenges with child safety, often with a history of losing housing or with families of color being torn apart from punitive correctional measures that add another layer of family trauma. The solutions that arise from circle process come from a community deeply engaged in listening to each other and coming to a truly democratic consensus for promoting child safety.

Suguet Lopez of Líderes Campesinas shares her organization's mission to strengthen the leadership of farmworker women. Farmworker women create their own fotonovelas, brochures, illustrative novels, and art exhibits to teach their communities about the negative impacts of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Farmworker women share their stories, and youth lead storytelling and community art events to promote youth safety.

**Communities are complex and are often facing more than one form of violence or harm.**

Embracing the intersections beyond child sexual abuse allows community organizing and mobilizing to reflect the overlapping concerns within a community and move forward to creating holistic systems of prevention. Ignacio Hutía Xeiti Rivera of the HEAL Project explains how, when discussing a broader sexuality framework, it is impossible to impart this knowledge on adults and youth without also talking about systems of oppression that intersect with sex and with child sexual abuse, like sexism, racism, fat phobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and others.

Historical trauma also intersects with and amplifies systems of oppression to impact the contemporary. In order to heal and to envision prevention within an equity lens, Strong Oak discusses the value re-indigenizing processes have on community-led efforts. Re-indigenizing is inclusive of many indigenous cultures and gives communities space to build a foundation of equity and respect for all beings and the environment that supports them.



*Ignacio compares holistic sexuality information to a mama bird feeding her baby birds: adults have a responsibility to consume and digest knowledge and feed it to youth in ways that nourish them and support their growth.*



*Suguet Lopez of Lideres Campesinas shares images of farmworker women and girls' community mobilizing through art and storytelling.*

Child sexual abuse often is not the only harm or challenge a community faces, and community mobilizing and organizing gives an opportunity to address multiple community issues. Suguet explains how farmworker women organize and educate others around not just child sexual abuse, but also its connections to domestic and sexual violence, and other harms farmworker families face, like pesticide exposure and wage theft. Similar power, oppression, and discrimination that cause child sexual abuse also impact the health and equity of farmworker women and their families. By mobilizing around the many injustices they may face, farmworker women challenge their communities to think about solutions that impact the overlapping root causes.

**Engaging in community change work begins from within, and practitioners must embody the work and allow space for communities and individuals within them to engage as their whole selves.**

Ignacio stresses the importance of bringing one's whole self and identity when embarking on a lifelong learning process with holistic sexuality information. Adults hold tremendous power in what children and youth learn, and the more adults learn and understand holistic sexuality information, the better prepared they are to transfer this knowledge to the youth in their lives. Adults must challenge their biases and grow through reflective education in order to set up the youth in their lives for exploring and embracing their own holistic sexuality. Suguet explains how in order to educate the community, farmworker women must start the work with themselves and their families. Any work that Lideres Campesinas and the farmworker women do is centered in the culture and traditions of the

people in their communities. Artistic expressions and storytelling are valued, and often much of the organizing work of the farmworker women centers around art and storytelling. Centering culture, connecting to other community concerns, and leading from within are just a sampling of the ways that Lideres Campesinas and the farmworker women show up as their whole selves in their work. Community members learn from each other, and Strong Oak discusses the deep listening and spiritual practice communities elicit to find community solutions to promote child safety without recreating traumatic practices, like child removal or disqualification from HUD housing. Strong Oak also calls on prevention practitioners to bring their social justice work outside of what they do within their careers and to truly embody these principles in their everyday lives.

**RESOURCES**

- [Conference link](#)
- [Conference slides](#)
- [Text Chat transcript](#)
- [Just Beginnings Collaborative](#)
- [Ignacio Rivera's website](#)
- [Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition](#)
- [Lideres Campesinas](#)
- [Community Accountability and Transformative Justice for Survivors](#)
- [Guiding Principles for Healing Circles and Principles of Consultation](#)
- [Mi'Kmaw Spirituality – Talking Circles](#)
- [The Talking and Healing Circle](#)
- [Ignacio's Resources](#)
- [Scarleteen](#)