



**Changing the Culture of Schools, Churches, and
Communities to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse: Lessons
Learned from the Just Beginnings Collaborative:
January 9, 2018 1:00PM – 2:00PM**

AKJ: Hello everyone! Thank you so much for joining today. We will be getting started at the top of the hour.

AKJ: The PowerPoint slides can be downloaded here: <http://www.preventconnect.org/2018/12/changing-the-culture-of-schools-churches-and-communities-to-prevent-child-sexual-abuse-lessons-learned-from-the-just-beginnings-collaborative/>

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AKJ: For audio by phone, please call: 866-866-2244, passcode 9053509#

AKJ: Learn more about Linda: <http://scclanc.org/safechurch/meet-our-safechurch-team/>

AKJ: Berkeley Media Studies Group and Raliance report "Where we're going and where we've been: Making a case for prevention. https://www.raliance.org/report_posts/where-were-going-and-where-weve-been-making-the-case-for-preventing-sexual-violence/

AS: Do you ever talk about purity culture in churches and the connection to rape culture?

AKJ: @Ali I will ask Linda

AKJ: What are the core values, narratives, belief systems and norms of communities/organizations you work with?

AVB: welcoming, ethical, confidential, accessible, respectful, empathetic

CH: empowerment and self-care

MV: There's a big "it doesn't happen here" narrative in my community.

BN: Each person is created in the image of God and therefore has inherent dignity

CB: Each person has a voice and a right to be believed and trusted and to receive the care and help that they need.

BN: There is sometimes a variance between what we say we believe and what our actions actually show about our true values

KS: Our culture here is that we are a small community so it doesn't happen here.

AKJ: @Mandy hear that a lot in all sorts of institutions!

AS: From churches - yes it happens - but it happens "out there"

MPW2: Ethical, confidential,

TR: From the schools I work with, I hear "It doesn't happen" and "We have such a great reputation" and then I also hear "This is what our school is known for". Viewpoints are very different.

NB: Still battling the idea that strangers are the biggest threat to children's safety, overlooking trusted adults in their lives - especially adults well-connected and well-regarded in community

ST: Often schools address the topic after an incident occurs instead of prevention & education.

TR: Also, hearing the long standing view that it doesn't happen in families but from strangers so many of my clients aren't believed by their families.

AKJ: @Stephanie yes, I love how Linda said we need to move from reactive to proactive!

KM: Unfortunately, silence is a core value in my faith community.

CG: Change is difficult. What (policies, behaviors, etc.)is familiar is seen as what is best.

AC: My personal church is very open and supportive in regards to difficult topics like this. However, the area I serve as a victim advocate tends to have that same, "it doesn't happen here" narrative as well.

EB: @Natalie yes I think accepting those who do harm as intimate community members is a huge cultural shift. What ways do you find it helps to have people accept this reality?

LGM2: I see a lot of victim blaming in this area - community and faith sector

SM: I was a sex offender probation officer for 4 years and sexual abuse is still taboo and not talked about enough and most people respond with denial even with facts to crimes actually happening.

EB: @Connie yes change is hard especially on the policy and procedures level. Normally when i work with groups, I like to manage expectations to talk about policy and procedure change as an 18 - 24 month process how about others?

AKJ: Learn more about

T: <http://thefirecrackerfoundation.org/about-us/yourstaff/>

EB: @Lorry Yes, victim blaming I think with clergy is huge. As the clergy person is seen as the "holy person". Any thoughts about how you could work with this!

AKJ: This is where you can access the paper Linda mentioned: Centering Culture Change in Social Justice A #MovementMoment paper: <http://scclanc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Role-of-Culture-Change-in-Communities-and-Movements-0417SL-with-copyright.pdf>

EB: @Kymberly are there natural trusted places within your faith community? Growing up we had church mothers and deaconesses that could be a safer space of disclosure of CSA

AKJ: I love that picture!

KM: So very cool.

NB: @Eb I've found that it helps to normalize and explore the reasons folks find it so hard to believe and validate those assumptions while introducing stats and individual stories that contradict it. It also helps when I illustrate the direct harms of those assumptions, eg. children not being believed.

AKJ: Best roller derby name!

KM: @Eb - I'm a survivor so my trust tolerance is pretty low.

KM: But people do come to me for resources...more than I think they go to other church leaders.

EB: @Kymberly yes I think we see survivors becoming the trailblazers in the community. The great thing about Safe Church and Children of Combahee who both work in faith communities, is that it often provides those survivors with additional support and connection.

EB: What are ways people see survivor experiences cultivated in o all levels of an organization?

SG: In my work with the faith community, I've found a lot of their victim blaming comes from not understanding trauma and wanting to teach their young people moral behavior. So if you can educate them on sexual trauma while upholding the importance of teaching their morals to young people, it can help them see that sexual assault is not connected to the survivors morals.

KM: @EB - I've worked with Linda and Ahmad. :-)

EB: @Kymberly GREAT!!!

EB: What are other practices people have found help reinforce the consent of children?

AKJ: I think talking about consent outside of just sexual violence is so helpful in creating a foundation that consent is a norm for all things

NB: Always asking before giving hugs (not just to kids, but encouraging adults to model it)

EB: Latest from the #MeToo Movement #SurvivinRKelly Viewer Guide <https://www.ggenyc.org/survivingrkelly/>

LP: How can we integrate the conversation about CSA with recognizing the presence of survivors of sexual assault during adulthood who are present in most circumstances?

EB: @Natalie yes! Parent Toolkit has a great short article <https://www.parenttoolkit.com/health-and-wellness/news/holidays/how-the-holidays-can-teach-your-kids-about-consent>

BN: Yes! Survivors as leaders is a very important concept I think

NB: @Eb thanks for sharing this!

LD: Yes! Power and Control drives it!!!

EB: @Tashmica Torok for President.. I would vote yes!

MPW2: thanks for sharing

KM: Say that!

TR: Yes, thank you so much for sharing. Tashmica for President 2020!

BN: Thank you!

KM: I'd vote YES!!

KM: Very insightful!

LC: Hey Ali, We find we can get a foothold with churches that place a high value on "purity" culture by focusing on the sexual abuse children as a sin (as well as a crime) and something we are obligated by our faith to stop. We also emphasize the deep spiritual wounds of adult survivors as we talk about the bio-psycho-social impact of trauma, and the church's role in healing. We do not bring in other intersectional issues until we have completed the core curriculum over a multi-month process, establishing a relationship of trust with leaders/ congregants/our team. They are far more open once they trust us AND when adult survivors in the congregation start coming forward. Then, they know this is REAL.

EB: What practices are you implementing or could you suggest implementing in your prevention work to ensure alignment with your values?

BN: I like what Linda said about building trust, there are really no shortcuts to that, taking time and lots of listening are so important

BM: We have been revamping our program values. What has come out of it has been a really cool matrix, where we look at how are values are being met on three different levels: does the theory/practice being used match our values; do our values guide the way we interact with participants; and do we match our values in the way we are supporting ourselves as practitioners/an organization. Then when we evaluate our work, we can look at the way we are addressing each of those values in those three different categories. Helps us get at some of the nuance and conflict that living by our values brings up!

AKJ: I've always been interested in what a trauma-informed organization would look like. How are paid-staff, interns, volunteers treated? I think that says something about how we show up with communities and partners.

AKJ: Learn more about Ahmad: <http://childrenofcombahee.org/2016/04/30/ahmad-greene-hayes/>

BN: Thanks Brenna, really important that our practice matches our values.

KM: Got it.

ARM: the family is the base of society we can building with values between parents and children trust, faith, adults we need to improve to be a good listeners and children and youths to express their emotions

SM: Changing vocabulary is very important.

EB: @Ana how do you reach parents in your work? What has been successful ? What has been challenging?

BN: I love the idea of the sermon workshops - sounds wonderful

TT: Absolutely! We cannot assume that our leaders have done their own work or have the capacity to have these conversations.

AS: This all sounds so cool! I love the idea of sermon workshops too.

EB: @Bonnie and @Ali such brilliance to really getting it across the pulpit!

ARM: love it #5

BN: Name it in the church - that's good!

TR: #5!!!!

AKJ: Ahmad also presented on a previous PreventConnect web conference. You can view the recording to hear more from Ahmad here <http://www.preventconnect.org/2017/08/powerinprevention-ending-child-sexual-abuse-survivor-leadership-its-relevance-to-child-sexual-abuse-prevention/>

AS: Unfortunately, often when I see orgs trying to include survivors, it's not respectful and it is almost like they are tokenizing them and putting their trauma on display to gawk at.

EB: @Ali this is a big reason why all the grantees of Just Beginnings are survivor lead.

TT: @Ali, I agree. Which is why it's so important for survivors to lead and not be "included".

LC: Ali, so true! Most of the nonprofit that work on sexual violence issues are NOT trauma informed. We really need to change this.

AS: Definitely!

EB: Who do you need to partner with in your community to have the biggest impact on preventing child sexual abuse? I would add both traditional and non-traditional?

MCS: Our schools, however, in our area we have gotten alot of resistance from our school board.

CP: Schools and churches

JH: can you talk about the amount of time and relationship building, trust etc. that enabled this project to get going

Eb Brown:@Ahmad @Julie is wants to hear from you about time and relationship building

AKJ: Meg presented on a prior PreventConnect web conference as well. You can access that recording and information here: <http://www.preventconnect.org/2017/12/powerinprevention-ending-child-sexual-abuse-updates-on-child-sexual-abuse-prevention-with-elementary-school-ages/>

CG: We've been very fortunate (as a result of our Board) that we are school board approved in all 3 local school districts in our area. WE are routinely scheduled (every year for 30 years+) to go in to grades K, 3, and 5 and in each district's middle and high school health classes. In additional, I coordinate special needs programs with individual teachers. There are about 6 of us (3 full-time) that provide over 900 school programs locally each year.

BN: Challenging power is a difficult issue in so many contexts

AKJ: @Connie that is an impressive long-term relationship with the school districts!

BN: Aligning prevention with Core Values is a good strategy for working in faith communities as well - including using sacred texts to support prevention values

EB: @Connie and others I love this conversation about taking CSA work to the school board level!

AKJ: @Bonnie finding that shared language and those shared values is so key.

CG: @eb brown - there were the expected challenges early on, but now we get very few concerns from parents, teachers or admin. It did take work to get to this place, but it has allowed us to make our programs more 'primary'. We can be consistent.

EB: @Connie the generational time frame feels like a clear understanding about how CSA works. And I can imagine having the school board backing helps move through resistance at other levels

LD: @Meg, is the twitter handle listed on your presentation correct? Nothing seems to be coming up.

MS: Try @IMPACT_Bos

MS: As you can see, I am not the social media person.

LD: @meg still nothing

MS: Feel free to email me at mstone@impactboston.org and we will figure it out

MS: Thanks for your persistence

LD: Sounds good!

MC: Great training

AGH: Thank you for that reminder, @Eb.

MS: An important point, Julie. Not every school system is willing to invest time and heart in this process

ST: Thank you for this, it's true it hard to have self care every day..