

 WEB CONFERENCE

# Adult Survivors as Movement Leaders

Lessons learned from the Just Beginnings Collaborative



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# How to use this technology

## Text Chat (Everyone)

ASHLEIGH KLEIN: Use this text chat box to respond to our questions, ask your own, and connect with others!

ASHLEIGH KLEIN: You can also send private text chat messages to the host, presenters, and other participants.

- Text chat & private chat
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- Polling questions
- Phone
- Closed captioning
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# PreventConnect

- Domestic violence/intimate partner violence
- Sexual violence
- Violence across the lifespan, including child sexual abuse
- Prevent before violence starts
- Connect to other forms of violence & oppression
- Connect to other prevention practitioners





# Adult Survivors as Movement Leaders: Lessons Learned from the Just Beginnings Collaborative

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019**

**11am-12:30pm PT; 2pm-3:30 pm ET**

PreventConnect is a national project of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault sponsored by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The views and information provided in this web conferences do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. government, CDC or CALCASA.

# Meet the PreventConnect team



**Ashleigh Klein-Jimenez,**  
*she/her/hers*  
Project Manager



**Tori Vandelinde,**  
*she/her/hers*  
Training & Technical  
Assistance Specialist



# Objectives

- Identify strategies to cultivate a culture of survivor healing and leadership as a prevention strategy
- Learn why its important to center the voice and expertise of adult survivors who are LGBTQIA people of color
- Learn about adult survivors who work with other survivors and people who have committed sexual harm while centering healing and accountability
- Engage in a discussion about the possibilities and pitfalls of centering adult survivors
- Discuss key breakthroughs in the movement to end sexual violence that have come about thanks to survivor leadership





# Our guests



**Eb. Brown**  
*He/Him*  
Just Beginnings Collaborative



**Aishah Shahidah Simmons**  
*She/Hers*  
#LoveWITHAccountability



**Amita Swadhin**  
*They/Them*  
Mirror Memoirs



**Sonya Shah**  
*she/her/hers*  
The Ahimsa Collective



# Hear Eb. Brown's overview of the Just Beginnings Collaborative

WEB CONFERENCE

## Changing Culture to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Wednesday, January 9, 2019  
11:00AM PT | 2:00PM ET

**PC PreventConnect**  
A NATIONAL PROJECT OF CALCASA



<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/>



# About our guest



**Aishah Shahidah Simmons,**

*she/her/hers*

Creator, #LoveWITHAccountability



# NO!

THE  
RAPE DOCUMENTARY

<http://notherapedocumentary.org/>



**#LoveWITHAccountability**





**THERE  
ARE**  
**42** **MILLION**  
**SURVIVORS**  
OF CHILD  
SEXUAL  
ABUSE  
**IN THE**  
**U.S.**

**#LoveWITHAccountability**





**#LoveWITHAccountability**



# Text Chat Question

What does love WITH  
accountability mean  
for you?

Text Chat (Everyone) 

**ASHLEIGH KLEIN:** Use this text chat box to respond to our questions, ask your own, and connect with others!

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# The #LoveWITHAccountability Forum

The first #LoveWITHAccountability gathering is an online forum that was hosted on the online feminist publication, The Feminist Wire from October 17, 2016 - October 28, 2016. Over twenty-five diasporic Black cisgender women, trans men & gender non-conforming people, and cisgender men child sexual abuse (CSA) survivors and/or advocates were invited to share their experiences and perspectives about what accountability looks like when tackling CSA. You can read each piece below.

**Content Notice:** The purpose of the #LoveWITHAccountability forum on The Feminist Wire and project is to prioritize child sexual abuse, healing, and justice in national dialogues and work on racial justice and gender-based violence. Several of the featured articles in this forum give an in-depth and, at times, graphic examination of rape, molestation, and other forms of sexual harm against diasporic Black children through the experiences and work of survivors and advocates. The articles also offer visions and strategies for how we can humanely move towards co-creating a world without violence. Please take care of yourself while reading.



“

I now know I am exactly  
who I was meant to be.  
In spite of, and because  
of my father.

- Chevara Orrin

#LoveWITHAccountability



#LoveWITHAccountability

LOVE MAKES SPACE FOR  
TRUTH, AND TRUTH IS THE  
ONLY WAY TO  
RESTORATIVE  
RECONCILIATION.

DR. DANIELLE LEE MOSS



#LoveWITHAccountability

UNTIL BLACK CHURCHES ARE HONEST  
ABOUT HUMAN SEXUALITY AND OUR  
COLLECTIVE DISCOMFORT WITH IT,  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE WILL REMAIN  
UNCHECKED AND ACCOUNTABILITY WILL  
BE NOTHING MORE THAN A GOAL TO BE  
OBTAINED IN THE AFTERLIFE.

AHMAD GREENE-HAYES



#LoveWITHAccountability

I BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO TURN PAIN  
INTO POWER. AND THIS IS NOT A  
METAPHOR. I BELIEVE PAIN UNSPOKEN  
CAN NEVER BE TRANSFORMED INTO  
POWER. AND TRUE POWER CANNOT BE  
HELD INSIDE THE SAME HANDS AS  
SECRETS.

-E NINA JAY







“

AS A QUEER BLACK TRANS PERSON, THE STATE IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ERASURE OF MY EXISTENCE. I CAN'T RELY ON THE STATE TO SOLVE THE ISSUES MY COMMUNITY IS FACING. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE ABUSE I'VE EXPERIENCED COMES AT THE HANDS OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS? HOW DO WE HOLD THE JUXTAPOSITION OF WANTING ACCOUNTABILITY BUT KNOWING THAT THE STATE CAN'T ACTUALLY PROVIDE THAT?

- QUI DORIAN ALEXANDER

**#LoveWITHAccountability**







WE CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE POLICE  
AND WHITE CITIZENS "STOP KILLING  
BLACK PEOPLE" BEFORE WE ADDRESS  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, ADULT RAPE,  
AND ABLEISM IN OUR COMMUNITIES.  
- AISHAH SHAHIDAH SIMMONS

**#LoveWITHAccountability**





LOVE WITH  
ACCOUNTABILITY™

## Digging Up the Roots of Child Sexual Abuse

edited by Aishah Shahidah Simmons  
Fall 2019 | AK Press  
[LoveWITHAccountability.com](http://LoveWITHAccountability.com)

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/LoveWITHAccountability



# About our guest



**Sonya Shah,**  
*she/her/hers*  
Director, The Ahimsa Collective

# Survivorship and a Restorative Approach to Sexual Harm

Sonya Shah

Director, The Ahimsa COLLECTIVE

[www.ahimsacollective.net](http://www.ahimsacollective.net),

sonya@ahimsacollective.net



# Restorative Approaches to Sexual Harm

- As a survivor, why is restorative approach to people who have done sexual harm a part of my healing journey? Why is it important for the movement to end sexual harm?

# Why Did I Commit a Sexual Harm

## **What are the causes?**

### **Why did I commit a sexual harm?**

- The wisdom of directly impacted people to end sexual harm, even if it's hard and painful wisdom;
- Trends named by men who have committed sexual harm captured in last three to five years;
- The next slides are all trigger warnings



# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

- 1. Socialization by Authority Figures:** Uncles, fathers, men in authority positions teaching younger men either by words or actions that rape, child sexual abuse, domestic violence or violence to women is normal and *“it’s just what we do.”*

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

**2. Power and Privilege. Entitlement:** *“I did it because I could.”, “I took it, and did whatever I wanted.”* Some men talked about having power and privilege as a man, or a white man who could do no wrong. The kind of power to do whatever they wanted that was reinforced by the broader culture, their wives, other family members.

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

- 3. The Learned Objectification of Women:** How does a young boy learn to objectify women? Objectification doesn't happen overnight and probably has several roots. It could be useful to trace that step by step for yourself if that is a part of your crime.
- Some men about how social awkwardness, bullying, or being an outsider as a young person led them to more reliance on pornography than to real women as friends or romantic partners. This feeling that “they couldn't get girls while their friends could” was expressed. This distance from girls or young women in childhood with pornography and objectification reinforcement in the broader culture led some men to state these connections as their causative factors.

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

- 4. Lowest Life Point:** Being at the highest point of addiction and at the lowest life point i.e., feeling suicidal— *“I had been high for 48 hours. I hadn’t slept. I was either going to drive off a bridge and kill myself or commit this sexual assault.”*

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?: Exposure to Inappropriate Sexual Experiences

## **5. Exposure to Inappropriate Sexual Experiences:**

While we know there is no connection between being a male survivor of sexual abuse and committing sexual harm, many men talk about how early, inappropriate sexual experiences — being subjected to child sexual abuse, child-on-child sexual touching, exposure to pornography, or being made to witness sex acts — was a complex hard to pin point cause.

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?: Exposure to Inappropriate Sexual Experiences

- 5a. **Revenge:** Some male survivors of CSA talked about wanting revenge. They were extremely jealous of children that they had access to or had a relationship with: *“I had my childhood stolen from me by CSA, so committing an act of CSA was out of revenge, jealousy or to take away another child’s happy childhood.”*
- *“I had the believe that abusing someone else would make me feel better versus I was re-enacting my own trauma. “I wanted someone else to suffer and feel the pain I was feeling”*



# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?: Exposure to Inappropriate Sexual Experiences

- 5b. *“**Power and control** were taken away from me as a child, and sex was the weapon. So, I did the same, thing, turned around and used sex as a weapon.”*

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?: Exposure to Inappropriate Sexual Experiences

- **5c. Validation and loss of self-identity**— one man said, “I got validation from the man who sexually abused me, so I sought that validation through inappropriate sexual acts with others”. Another one said after an early CSA experience that was then validated by an uncle and constant exposure to pornography, he started to seek out inappropriate sexual experiences and was drawn to getting away with it. It made me feel validated, and being a sexual person gave me a sense of identity.

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

## 6. Man box, and male culture:

- Being taught not to ask for consent;
- Dehumanization of women in the culture;
- Deep fear of rejection;
- *I'm supposed to know all the answers/Not being allowed to ask for help:* These men connected that knowing that something was wrong and not feeling like they could ask for help (because they were socialized to know all the answers) was a factor in *repeat violence* or abuse.

# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

7. **Sexual Addiction:** For many, sexual and/or romantic experiences have an addictive quality and folks find themselves using it in a compulsive way to quell anxiety, stress, shame and insecurity. The powerful charge that comes from intrigue, fantasy, the sense of getting away with something, seducing others and from the sexual act itself can become a drug that is pursued despite more and more negative consequences, often leaving people with a sense of shame and despair. *“Before coming to Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us never knew that our problem had a name. All we knew was that we couldn’t control our sexual behavior. For us, sex was a consuming way of life. Although the details of our stories were different, our problem was the same. We were addicted to sexual behaviors that we returned to over and over, despite the consequences.”*



# Why did I Commit a Sexual Harm?

- 8. Exposure to pornography and witnessing inappropriate sexual acts at an early age.**

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 1. People: mothers, psychiatrists listening, not silencing me and being trained to help:

- *“When the abuse happened by this big guy – my mother’s boyfriend, I told her. The first thing she did was say, we can’t even talk about that again. She silenced me. Because we had nowhere else to go, we needed him for a place to live. She passed that on as a coping skill. And then what did I do, I stuffed it all down there. Until one day I committed the same crime.”*
- *“When my uncle raped me, I reported it to the police. I even went to the police station. But when I came back, nothing happened. He was still there. The next month I raped my victim.”*

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 1. People: mothers, psychiatrists listening, not silencing me and being trained to help:

- *“After my first attempted rape, I looked up who to call in the yellow pages. I found this rape crisis # to call but the person on the other end didn’t know what to say, how to process what I was telling her, they didn’t understand. After I told my first psychologist he said, man I wish I was on your first call, I could have really helped you.”*
- *“When I told my first psychologist he looked at me in horror. He was just a paper pusher and didn’t know what to do. So I was silent after that, I didn’t tell anyone for decades.”*



# What would have helped me stop the harm?

## 2. A safe place to say I really messed up when I first did the act” and Creating a Central Hub

- *“By telling my whole family would be taken away — this led to the big secret that could never be talked about that turned into the monster.”*
- Telling = going to jail and mandatory reporting.
- Germany example— having an anonymous place to get help.
- Not knowing how to reach out, how to find the resources. We need a central hub, and everyone needs to know about it.

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 3. Professionals focused on your behavior as a kid as opposed to the underlying causes

### — Punishing the survivor:

- *When I was in elementary school, a boy in my school touched my private parts and so then I just turned around and beat him up. The next thing I know, I am put in handcuffs and taken away, and then a psychologist makes me draw. None of them knew or asked what was happening to me, that this boy touching me triggered my survivor story.”*
- Sexual abuse to prison pipeline. The need for the trauma informed and infused lens:
- When you are raped in prison they put you in isolation. You are punished as the victim “for your own good”

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 4. Caregivers going to bat for me/ Adults healing themselves:

- caregivers not being healed and were also survivors so can't hear the story when you disclose. Caregivers doing their own work on themselves, everyone healing their own survivor story.
- *"If we are unhealed what are we passing down"* Faith Tait, Nisga'a Nation
- *"We need to heal our elders"* Elaine Henderson, Navajo Peacemaker

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 5. Transforming rape culture and the degradation of women

- From early childhood to adulthood teaching about patriarchy, objectification of women, the Manbox, unhealthy masculinity, internalized homophobia and then on the other side, healthy male identity, healthy sexuality, healthy relationships and intimacy.

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 6. Healing Male Survivorship AND Taking Accountability for the Sexual Harm I Caused:

- *It is belittled and normalized— “which is another way to groom men into male culture.”* Breaking down the myths about male survivors:
- *Put each statement on flip chart paper and tape up around the room. Then walk around the room gallery style, and discuss how these myths are true for you and in our culture:*
- Myth 1 - Boys can't be sexually abused
- Myth 2 - It was his fault
- Myth 3 - Sexual abuse is less harmful to males



# What could have helped me stop the harm?

- Myth 4 - Only gay men sexually abuse boys
  - “its gay sex when men sexually abuse boys”
- Myth 5 - Being a male survivor means you're gay
- Myth 6 - Males abused by a female "got lucky"
- Myth 7 - Male survivors will abuse others  
(make it clear that there is no correlation between the two)
- These myths come from 1in6.org

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

- 6. Healing Male Survivorship AND Taking Accountability for the Sexual Harm I Caused:**  
Being allowed to have space to heal the survivorship. While being accountable to the harm we caused. We have to do both simultaneously, heal part as survivor and work on the doing harm part-- this needs a lot of education in broader culture.



# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 7. Fear of Failure and Rejection

- No idea how to deal with it or process rejection.  
Tools to deal with it and process it.

# What could have helped me stop the harm?

## 8. Creating supportive, restorative, humanistic nonjudgmental spaces

- *“I committed my crime (sexual assault) when I was the most dehumanized. So I was able to dehumanize someone else. This work is all about coming back to humanity.”*
- Emotional tools: CSA had me Frozen at 8. *“I operated as an adult from an emotional level of child. Tools to help me unfreeze and learn how to grow emotionally without judging me.”*
- Creating deep community based in relationships, built over time: *“Other programs will help us stop recidivating. Sure, I won’t commit the crime again. This program fundamentally changed who I am.”*

# Survivorship and a Restorative Approach to Sexual Harm

Sonya Shah

Director, The Ahimsa COLLECTIVE

[www.ahimsacollective.net](http://www.ahimsacollective.net),

sonya@ahimsacollective.net



# Text Chat Question

How can learning from survivors and learning from those who have caused harm advance your prevention work?

Text Chat (Everyone) 

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# About our guest



**Amita Swadhin,**  
*they/them/theirs*  
Founder & Director, Mirror Memoirs

# Mirror Memoirs



## **Presenter:**

Amita Swadhin

Founder & Director

Mirror Memoirs

[www.mirrormemoirs.com](http://www.mirrormemoirs.com)



# Who is Centered in Anti-Violence Work?

- Mothers
- Cisgender women
- Heterosexual women
- White women
- Able-bodied women
- Women who are citizens or greencard holders
- Adult women



# Which Victims Count in Public Policy?

- Some stories that led to legislation
  - Megan's Law: Megan Kanka (sex offender registry)
  - Sexual Assault Survivors Rights Act: Amanda Nguyen (rape kit testing)
- Who decides which issues are the biggest legislative priorities?

**“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”**

— [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#)



# Sexual Violence and Transgender People

- **One in two transgender individuals are sexually abused or assaulted at some point in their lives. 72% of transgender survivors experienced child sexual abuse.** [FORGE, 2005, Sexual Violence in the Transgender Community Survey]
- **15% of transgender individuals report being sexually assaulted while in police custody or jail, which more than doubles (32 percent) for African-American transgender people.** [FORGE, Sexual Violence in the Transgender Community Survey; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2009]
- **5-9% of transgender survivors were sexually assaulted by police officers.** [FORGE, Sexual Violence in the Transgender Community Survey; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2009]

# What About Children? Who Is Vulnerable?

- **Gender non-conforming children are up to 6 times likelier to be sexually abused.** [American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012]
- **40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ. 68% of these youth indicated family rejection was a major factor contributing to homelessness. 54% indicated abuse in their family was another important factor contributing to their homelessness.** [Williams Institute, 2012]
- **Undocumented children are less likely to report in this political climate** [New York Times, April 30, 2017]

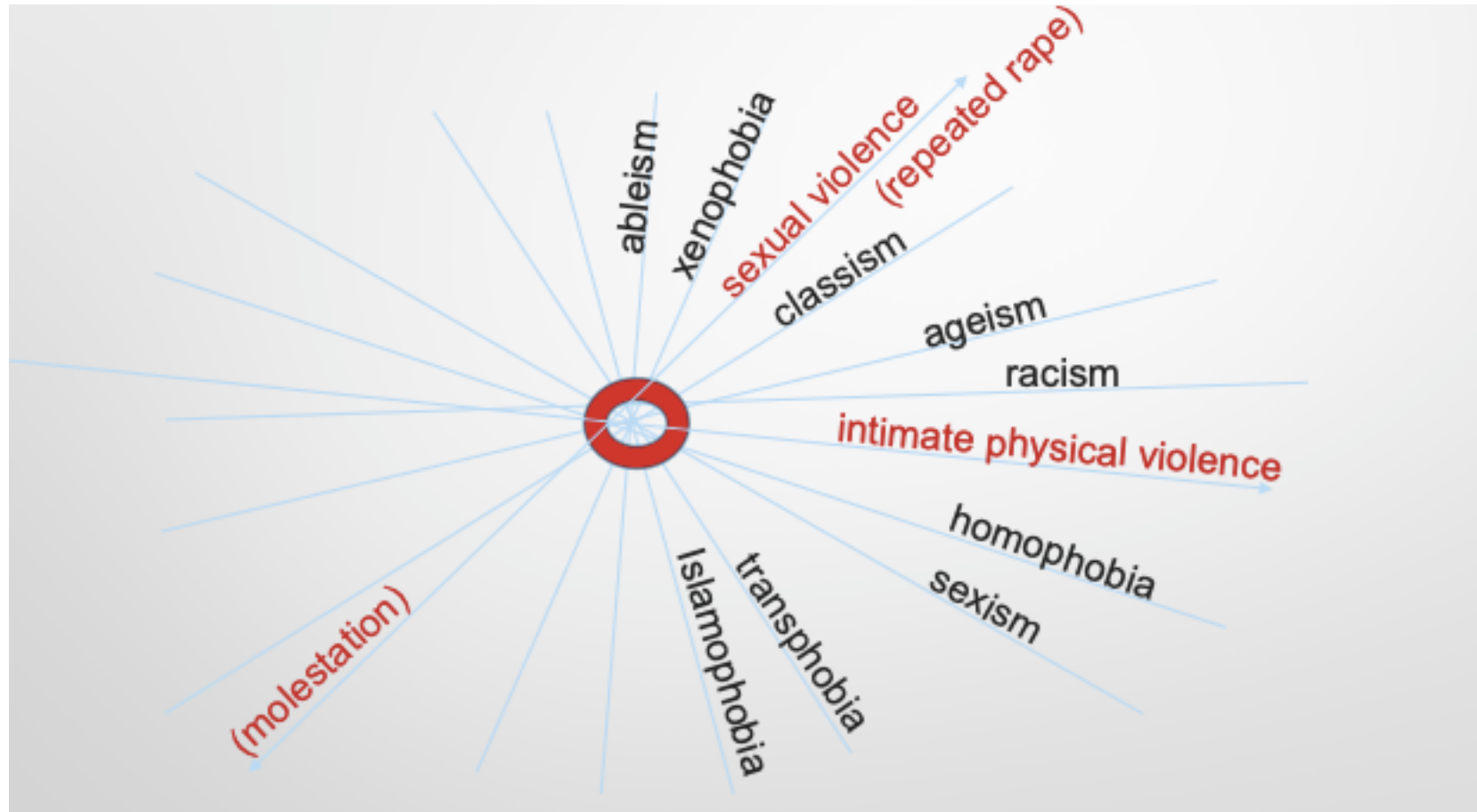
# What About Institutionalized Youth?

- **8% of youth in juvenile detention reported being sexually victimized by a staff member at least once in the previous 12 months [US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012]**
- **90% of those who reported being victimized were boys reporting incidents with female staff [US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012]**
- **In 2010, The Chicago Tribune broke a story about youth wards in local psychiatric hospitals being raped while institutionalized. The story suggested the problem is severely underreported.**

# Intersectionality and Intimate Violence



# Intersectionality and Intimate Violence





# MIRROR MEMOIRS

- **Mirror Memoirs** is an oral history project centering the narratives, healing and leadership of LGBTQ survivors of color in the movement to end child sexual abuse.
- **Since 2016, the Founding Director has:**
  - Collected 60 audio recordings from fellow LGBTQI child sexual abuse survivors of color to create an online audio archive and data source;
  - Hosted two convenings for 60 LGBTQI survivors of color to grieve, heal and strategize in community;
  - Conducted over 90 talks and trainings to help service providers understand the approach.

# MIRROR MEMOIRS

- **In 2019, the project will focus on:**
  - Training cohort members to collect more stories (goal = 100 total in archive) and to lead trainings and campaigns;
  - Disseminating stories to the public via a podcast, art exhibit and online archive;
  - Coding stories into quantitative data;
  - Releasing a report educating philanthropists, direct service providers and policymakers on the needs of survivors at the intersections of oppression.

[www.mirrormemoirs.com](http://www.mirrormemoirs.com)



# Obstacles to Survivor Leadership

- Stigmatization and Pathologization of Survivors
- Ableism
- Nonprofit Professionalization
- Survivors are Seen as Clients
- Perpetrators are Never Seen as Survivors
- Investment in Prosecution as the Sole Solution

# What Survivor Leadership Offers

- More space for the full truth to emerge
- Blind spots are decreased
- Strategies are based on reality, not theory
- Examples from other movements:
- Reproductive Justice  
HIV/AIDS  
LGBT Rights





# Additional Projects Founded by JBC-Funded Survivor Leaders of Color

- Ahimsa Collective (Sonya Shah)
- Children of Combahee (Ahmad Greene-Hayes)
- Firecracker Foundation (Tashmica Torok)
- Heal2End (Ignacio Rivera)
- Living Bridges Project (Mia Mingus)
- #LoveWithAccountability (Aishah Shahidah Simmons)
- Multicultural Efforts to End Sexual Assault (Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez)
- Reverence Project (Aqeela Sherrills)
- Supporting Survivors to Come Out (Sujatha Baliga)
- Vida Afro-Latina (Luz Marquez Benbow)
- Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition (Strong Oak Lefebvre)

**[www.justbeginnings.org](http://www.justbeginnings.org)**





# MIRROR MEMOIRS

- [www.mirrormemoirs.com](http://www.mirrormemoirs.com)
- [www.facebook.com/amitaswadhin](http://www.facebook.com/amitaswadhin)
- [mirrormemoirs@gmail.com](mailto:mirrormemoirs@gmail.com)
- #MirrorMemoirs



# Text Chat Question

How can your agency/  
organization better  
engage trans survivors  
and trans survivors of  
color?

Text Chat (Everyone) 

**ASHLEIGH KLEIN:** Use this text chat box to respond to our questions, ask your own, and connect with others!

**ASHLEIGH KLEIN:** You can also send private text chat messages to the host, presenters, and other participants.



# Group Discussion



**Aishah Shahidah Simmons**  
*She/Hers*  
#LoveWITHAccountability



**Sonya Shah**  
*She/Hers*  
The Ahimsa Collective



**Amita Swadhin**  
*They/Them*  
Mirror Memoirs

# Additional JBC Web Conferences

WEB CONFERENCE

## Changing Culture to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Wednesday, January 9, 2019  
11:00AM PT | 2:00PM ET

**PreventConnect**  
A NATIONAL PROJECT OF CALCASA



### View the recording:

<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/>



WEB CONFERENCE

## Mobilizing & Organizing to End Child Sexual Abuse

Wednesday, January 30, 2019  
11:00AM PT | 2:00PM ET

**PreventConnect**  
A NATIONAL PROJECT OF CALCASA

### Register now:

<http://www.preventconnect.org/2019/01/mobilizing-and-organizing-communities-to-end-child-sexual-abuse-lessons-learned-from-the-just-beginnings-collaborative/>



**PreventConnect**  
**1215 K Street**  
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