

PREVENT RESIST SUPPORT

Episode 1: An Introduction to Us



University
of Windsor

Sexual Misconduct Response
and Prevention Office

Prevent Resist Support Podcast **Episode 1: An Introduction to Us**

Introduction (Anne Rudzinski): Hello and welcome to Prevent Resist Support. PRS is a podcast created by the Sexual Wellness and Consent Committee at the University of Windsor. I'm Anne - the host for our little podcast. We're trying something new. In our first episode, I'm going to introduce some of the key players in sexual violence prevention and response at our University. We're going to talk about addressing sexual violence on a campus-wide scale, and we'll tell you a little bit about what we offer on campus. In the coming weeks, we'll be inviting campus partners and community members to talk with us about sexual violence, consent, and wellbeing.

Why a podcast? 2020 is a strange time to be in public education, at a university. Is this going to work? We don't know! What we're noticing is that students aren't engaging with workshops in the same way as before COVID-19. When students were on campus, it was a different game. We've noticed that some of the highest engagement is with our facebook live sessions - because students can watch them whenever they want. I think that's what works - the flexibility of timing to engage in this stuff. I don't think there are many podcasts on sexual violence prevention. I've seen a few on survivorship, experiences of sexual assault, and healing from trauma. Hopefully we're bringing something new to the table here.

What can you expect here? We're going to talk about sexual violence: prevention, resistance, and support We're also going to talk about sexual consent, sexual wellness, sex education, and more! We're going to feature experts in the sexual violence field - people who are doing this work right now.

I'm Anne - the Sexual Wellness and Consent Coordinator at the Office. I work with Dusty on the education pieces of our work - our social media, our workshops, and now, this podcast! I also help run the Flip the Script program - which you'll be hearing more about in future episodes.

Today's episode, we are focusing on folks from our team... I want to introduce you to the other two women I work closely with at the University of Windsor. Dr. Dusty Johnstone is the Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention Officer. She does all of the support pieces on our campus. She has a PhD in Applied Social Psychology and has a strong background in research, worked with the Bystander Initiative for a while and has been running our office since about 2016. Dusty is so kind and lovely and I am really excited for you to hear about the work that she does.

We also have Dr. Frankie Cachon from the Bystander Initiative. Frankie is currently running the bystander initiative on campus and teaches in the Women's and Gender Studies department at UWindsor. Frankie is so fun and wonderful and I am really excited for you to hear from her.

Before we get started I want to highlight that if you need support in terms of sexual violence or misconduct or anything surround support you can reach out to our office at svsupport@uwindsor.ca.

Anne: Let's talk about our team here at UWindsor. I know I have given some qualifications for the folks on our team, but I want to give them a chance to introduce themselves and tell us a bit about their COVID hobbies. Over here I have been learning how to quilt and make pies. Dusty, what are you up to during COVID?

Dr. Dusty Johnstone: I'm trying to find time alone by myself which is something a lot of people with COVID are saying they have too much

time by themselves but I have a one and a half year old and so I am spending COVID trying to hide from him sometimes and get some quiet. I am reading a lot more which has been lovely, and I also feel like I am practicing wii [inaudible] like it is a meditative pursuit

Anne: Oh my goodness, that's hilarious. Frankie, what are you up to?

Dr. Frankie Cachon: Well, epsom salt baths and podcasts are my retreat. I love that. And long walks with my dog. Those are definitely my go-tos for some self care.

Anne: It is the best time to have a dog right now.

Frankie : I have two, my partner has the little white dog and I have the big brown dog. The little guy doesn't want to walk anyway.

Anne: That is amazing. I am so excited to be here with you both chatting about sexual violence prevention on our campus today. So, our first question is why are we giving our attention to sexual violence on campus? Dusty?

Dusty: Sexual violence has been on the radar for researchers and activists for decades, we're talking more than 30 years. Folks have been working on the topic, but it has only come to a broad cultural awareness in the last few years, between 2014-2017 when MeToo happened there was a significant change in awareness and now people are recognizing that this is a problem that affects so many people on college campuses and so we are just trying to contribute to the public conversation and continue the work we have been doing for over a decade at the University of Windsor, expanding it as much as we can.

Anne: Absolutely. I guess one of the questions is that the rate of sexual violence on campus is high. Why?

Dusty: Right. There are probably a number of different variables that factor into this. One is that the age at which many people are in college or uni falls into what we consider the red zone in terms of people's developmental life span. Between the ages of 14 and 24 is when people

are both more likely to experience sexual violence and perpetrate it. That's a big factor and if we look beyond schools this is happening at high rates within this age group, generally speaking. But, on college campuses there's other variables. For example, you are in a new place and are meeting new people, you don't have the same established relationship, meeting new people and hooking up with new people, and may be in new situations that may be riskier because they don't quite have their social bearings yet. And, another factor, alcohol, sometimes there is an increase in alcohol consumption at this point in life and again alcohol increases risks for both victimization and perpetration. That's not an exhaustive list but those are some contributing factors that are happening during this life stage, and it is why we need to be thinking about it

Anne: Thank you for that. I think it is just a really complicated problem and it is happening in a broad community, and so one of the important questions for us is how do you address sexual violence on a large scale like at a university? Frankie?

Frankie: Absolutely. So I think the very first thing we need to talk about is acknowledging the issue. We know that despite more broad based conversations, sexual violence remains a socially taboo subject; we are ill equipped as a society in many cases to talk about and to adequately address sexual violence because there are so many misconceptions about sexual violence. In our work we often emphasize that you can't change what you don't acknowledge. So the very first thing to acknowledge that sexual violence is an issue on campuses and to have a level of open dialogue about that, and to empower community stakeholders to have these conversations and the skills to be open and honest, to demonstrate that we are proactively dealing with the problem.

Anne: Awesome. I know one of the things we do is use a specific framework to think about sexual violence. Dusty, can you run us through that framework?

Dusty: Yes. One of the things we think is really important is understanding sexual violence in context. It's not just this thing that randomly occurs

between two people, because one person just so happens to be a bad person. Violence in any form exists within a particular social context and the cultural norm and the structures of power influence how these direct incidents of violence occur. We think of it as representing a triangle: direct incidents of violence is one point, and the other two are cultural forms of violence that represent our social norms and widely held beliefs and attitudes that are widely shared, and the third point is the structural piece, which are systems of oppression that can be based around gender, race, class, and so forth, that manifest in the way our institutions exist and the policies that we use, and so forth. Cultural and social pieces always influence the direct acts of violence. We think it is really important when we are doing work to prevent sexual violence and to respond to it that we are always thinking about the broader social context. If we don't, we will miss the big picture and we are not ever going to get to the root of the problem. We are always trying to come up with responses that are tapping broadly into the underlying issues. Frankie is in a good position to talk about the cultural aspects of violence because that is where she puts a lot of her time and effort.

Frankie: Absolutely. So it is interesting when you think about sexual violence in this way. There are so many misconceptions and myths that inform the way people think about sexual violence. For example, on campuses, the tendency was to not talk about it. We won't acknowledge it or talk about the issue because we don't want parents or students to be afraid. The reality is that we need to talk about it and challenge the misconceptions. Traditionally a lot of violence prevention focused on risk management for women, women as potential victims and men as potential perps. What we want to do is get at the larger cultural context that produces sexual violence. What are the cultural contexts in which sexual violence happens? As Dusty was saying, we know that environments where there is a lot of alcohol consumption can contribute to the perpetration of sexual violence and risk. In the past we might think about a fear of walking late at night, and a fear of stranger danger. Those are good examples of the lack of knowledge that we have about sexual violence because the reality is that we are far more likely to experience sexual violence by someone we know and trust and love, in our dorms and apartments than we are in the streets or a dark parking lot. Those are two good illustrations that speak to the necessity

of having open dialogue to educate people about sexual violence and also think about the cultural context where we may say it is unfortunate, but these conceptions still happen, that it is because of what someone was wearing or what they had to drink. Being sexually assaulted is not a logical consequence of being drunk. We need to challenge those misperceptions and create long term cultural shifts in those ideas that do in fact rape supportive attitudes - those need to be challenged and that's where a lot of our work is focused on unlearning those myths.

Anne: Yeah, and I think when you're talking about like rape supportive attitudes we are getting at that idea of rape culture. Could you give us a definition of that?

Frankie: I think the best way to talk about rape culture is that it is when we think of rape of something that is pervasive and normal in our culture. It is something that we come to accept. Victim blaming is a large part of rape culture. So when people say things like "well what did she expect, she went to his apartment" or "what did they expect, they were wasted?" Those are examples of myths that are victim blaming perpetuate this normalization of the prevalence of sexual violence as opposed to understanding that this is an act of violence that is perpetrated and should be seen as violence.

Anne: I would love to also talk about the structural piece because I think we do a lot of cool advocacy on that. Dusty?

Dusty: When we are talking about structural violence we are talking about the institutions and the way that they reinforce systems of power and oppression and how this relates to sexual violence. Within our institution we wrote a stand alone sexual violence policy and that was the mandate of the provincial government several years ago. Prior to that point it was uncommon for universities to have policies that address sexual violence. This has been a positive change which really gives us guidelines for how we respond thoughtfully and in a trauma informed way to sexual violence. That said, writing a policy is a good start. But that is not the end. There is a lot we need to continue to do to think about and refine that process and to advocate for how it is

applied in practice. It is one thing to have a good policy on paper, but to translate it into practice that serves the needs of survivors in a day to day way, that takes so much effort because it requires a lot of behaviour modification and challenging assumptions for how you handle situations of sexual misconduct. When we think about structural violence, I encourage people to also think about structures like the criminal justice system, the way it functions and how it often does a disservice to the needs of survivors. We are trying to change the things we can within our own institution, but also how do we support survivors that are navigating other institutions. The final point on the triangle about the direct incidents of sexual violence, while we are trying to do the higher level work and prevent sexual violence by challenging social norms and engaging more people, caring for the issue and advocating for better policies and practices, the reality is that there are still students on our campus that have experienced sexual violence, and some that will experience it while they are here, so we still need to be really responding sensitively and immediately to those concerns as well. That is the role the Sexual Misconduct Office plays. We are a place for people who have been harmed by sexual violence to come for support, whatever that might look like, sometimes it is really just listening, or problem solving or what other things are going on in your life that we could potentially help with and being a place to offer compassionate perspectives. And to mitigate feelings of self blame. We want people to understand that whatever has happened is not their fault.

Anne: I love that we have such a thoughtful way of approaching it. There are also so many pieces to the puzzle. I know that social change can be really slow. When we are trying to change these social norms I think sometimes we are thinking about a really long term strategy because it does take a while. And for a lot of folks this can be frustrating because we want these changes to happen quickly. Could you speak to that a little bit?

Dusty: Social change is slow. And that is hard. I think the social problem it is most useful to compare is drinking and driving. 45 years ago drinking and driving was so pervasive and a huge social problem and led to unnecessary deaths, and within the matter of 10-20 years, significant progress had been made. It continues to be a problem, and it still

requires active education still, but there are so many public health initiatives that now respond to that problem. Most people have this general understanding that this just isn't a thing you do. And if you see that your friend has had too much to drink you don't think too much about offering a ride home or telling them not to drive. We are more adept at problem solving situations now where people who have been drinking and may potentially drive than we were 40 years ago. People would've been hesitant - If I say something I am questioning their judgment and who they are as a person. Now, we are a lot more comfortable with that. Similarly, we are dealing with a social problem that is on the same kind of scope. People need to get comfortable getting involved with it. That will take time, but I don't think it has to take centuries. We are starting to, at least I hope, reach a bit of a critical mass - enough people are understanding the issue and aware of it that you start to see some shift culturally, and the number of people who are talking about this issue now has changed a lot, even in the last 10 years. I see progress already and I try to hold on to the hope of that. In my own life, I do the day to day work that allows me to see incremental small positive change. That is an important part for maintaining hope.

Anne: Maintaining hope is so important. Frankie, what are your thoughts?

Frankie: The idea of rape culture, it helps us understand the pervasiveness of sexual violence and how it is normalized, and the social attitudes about gender and sexuality that can contribute to the perpetration of sexual violence. Incremental unlearning is so important. In our workshops, for example, we often say if someone walks in at a zero and we can bring them to a two. They may have normalized the belief that if a woman is dressed in a provocative way she was quote on quote asking for it. If they are able to problematize it and see that it is not acceptable [after taking a workshop] that is progress. Sometimes people will come in and say obviously the way someone is dressed does not justify blame for the assault but they might have attitudes about drinking and if a victim was excessively drinking they make think well what did they expect. And [through the workshops] we might be able to move them to a four. So that incremental piece is so important. We are not going to get everyone from a zero to ten, but we can begin to unlearn the ways we have been socialized around sexual violence to normalize these

attitudes that do in fact blame victims for their assault. The only person responsible is the perpetrator. But we also want to analyze the cultural context in which sexual violence is normalized. For example, in a party culture young people could say something like “a drunk girl is a hot girl”, this normalization of the use of alcohol to facilitate sexual violence. Those are the things we see in our social attitudes that when challenged and unlearned we can begin to create a culture where we have zero tolerance for all forms of sexual violence. Of course that takes time because we have all been socialized to think about sexual violence in this way, that is part of the culture. I like to say that culture is to humans like water is to fish. It seems invisible to us and we are unaware of its impact on us. But when we develop those skills to look at it critically and to analyze the impact of those beliefs we begin to feel empowered to challenge that culture.

Anne: I love that. Thank you for walking me through and sharing your thoughts. So I think one of the cool things we do on campus is we take a purposeful approach to the direct, cultural and social, and we have translated it into this framework for how we are addressing sexual violence on campus. Frankie, can you walk through the Prevent, Resist, Support framework?

Frankie: As I was saying before, traditionally we talked about prevention on campus by responsabilizing women and thinking about don't go out at night by yourself, don't drink too much, don't talk to strangers, that kind of idea. Our focus with Bystander intervention in terms of prevention is to create a culture where everyone on our campus sees sexual violence as their issue, they need to take personal and social responsibility for the prevention of sexual violence. Traditionally, sexual violence is thought of as a women's issue. Changing that perspective and saying that everyone on campus has a role to play in being prosocial and to prevent sexual violence. Prosocial meaning that they are going to look out for one another. We live in function in a campus community where we look out for each other and we all take responsibility in making sure we have a respectful campus for everyone. That is really important in terms of thinking about the issue and getting that broad based stakeholder idea that everyone is stakeholder in this issue. Then thinking through the strategies that can be developed for people to

intervene at all levels: before, during and after a sexual assault. We need to emphasize that most of our bystander intervention work is not with direct violence. We may have opportunities to intervene in a high risk situation, like someone being highly intoxicated and being let out of a party can be an example where violence could potentially happen, but the reality is that most of our work is at the cultural level that Dusty was talking about. When we interrupt demeaning jokes and talk about women as sexual conquests or the use of alcohol to facilitate sexual violence, shutting down victim blaming, it wasn't what she was wearing, it does not matter she was flirting, she did not invite an assault in her life. I think that is really important as well. So the prevention piece is about building the campus community's capacity to prevent on all levels and the last level is how to support a survivor. We know that most survivors will disclose to their friends and peers and we want to be able to offer support that is effective, that will not victim blame, that will validate, and will give survivors the support they need to facilitate their healing journey.

Anne: That's awesome. You have told us a bit about the prevent piece, Dusty do you want to cover resist and support?

Dusty: When we were thinking about the PRS framework, we were influenced by a public health model where you prevent an illness from happening. Get ahead of it and stop it before it occurs. In situations where you can't necessarily prevent it or you see it is happening you intervene to prevent it from getting worse. In some situations an illness has already run its course so what are some of the things you can do to mitigate its long term impact after the fact. This is a conceptual model we are working with. So what Frankie was speaking to, our first goal is prevent sexual violence, we don't want it to happen at all. But that is a long term goal. As we are all working to facilitate that social change and contribute to widespread prevention, the reality is that there are going to be situations where people are still going to choose to act in sexual violence. We believe that in those situations that the people who are being targeted, women primarily, have the right to resist and fight back. They should be given the tools to do that. I am actually going to turn this back to you Anne, this is the work you put your heart into. Why don't you tell us about the resist part of our framework?

Anne: I do love Flip the Script. I think it is one of the hardest parts to talk about because we have a really strong narrative of, let's put the responsibility on the perpetrator and teach men not to rape rather than teaching women how to resist, and I think that comes from all of the really bad advice that women get on how to resist - don't park next to a big van and carry your keys when you walk alone at night, which might be effective for preventing stranger violence, but is not really effective for the type of violence that's the most common, which is acquaintances. So I think it is hard to talk about because when we talk about resistance it sounds like we are saying that women need to be responsible for protecting themselves but at the same time we just don't have any programs that effectively teach perpetrators not to rape. There's been a bunch of research on it, it's just not effective, and I think if we have the tools to empower women to trust their gut and leave a situation when they feel uncomfortable or to even fight back and if they need to. Women should have those tools and we should not keep those from them. Flip the Script is super important and it is really easy to look at a program from face value and assume what is in the content, but the program itself is so anti-victim blaming and places the responsibility squarely on perpetrators, and is really about trusting your gut and empowering folks to do what they need to do. It is really empowering for young women. I can't wait for us to get back to that program in the future. Dusty, did you want to close this section off with the support piece?

Dusty: Sometimes instances occur that we were not able to prevent, it was impossible to resist, and so harm has been caused and people deserve to be supported after the fact. We do that directly through the Sexual Misconduct Office. I offer direct one on one support to anyone in our community who has been harmed. We are also trying to build the capacity of our community through a survivors and supporters group that focuses on building a social community for people who have been harmed or people that support them, as well as expanding the disclosure training that we offer so more people feel prepared to respond if someone discloses to them. These are the other ways we are building up support. We have tried to develop educational

programming at each level, prevent, resist, support, in order to address this as comprehensively as possible.

Anne: Amazing. And I know our work has changed a lot during the pandemic. Frankie, can you share with us a little bit about how things have changed?

Frankie: And, even before talking about that, one of the things that the global pandemic has provided is a really good illustration for the ways in which we can think about bystander prosocial behaviour in this context of a public health framework. We know, for example, mask wearing can significantly reduce transmission and we know that social distancing is another piece that we all have a role to play in contributing to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. This is exactly what we mean when we think about prosocial bystanders, we all have a role to play, we need to do our part to create a larger context where we are mitigating the risk of this harm. I think that's interesting to think about, those parallels, wearing a mask is a prosocial behaviour, and that's why we want our students, faculty and staff to think about their role in terms of sexual violence, they have a contribution to make. When we think about sexual violence in the context of this pandemic, we have to remember that sexual violence is a form of gender based violence and that rates of all forms of GBV have increased so much so that it is being called the pandemic within the pandemic. We are seeing increased rates of service provision, women shelters, sexual assault crisis centres, reporting increased demands for their services. It is important for us to recognize that this is a growing social issue and this is not a women's issue but a social issue that we all have to be aware of and responsive to. For us in terms of the Bystander program, we've had to meet the challenge of pivoting our prevention education to an online context, which was quite challenging, we are still in the process of initiating that campus wide programming, it starts next week. From there, there have been additional challenges in making sure that our curriculum is able to create the collaborative and connective learning community where that true social transformation can happen. In an online learning environment that can be challenging. So, working to make sure that people feel that the learning environment is one that is validating and affirming, yet still challenging and the unlearning can happen. We also

know that prevention education is most effective when our scenarios reflect students' lived experience. One of the things that make our workshops very unique is that they are led by student facilitators. We know peers are more receptive to the learning if it is facilitated by someone they can relate to. The same is true for the scenarios that we illustrate - we wanted them to reflect the current social situation where young people are negotiating intimacy in an online dating environment or hooking up in more intimate spaces because you cannot go to a club or out with a group of friends, we are at home. That creates new challenges in terms of negotiating intimacy or hooking up. Negotiating sexual experiences is challenging. There are new parameters around dating and intimacy, new sociality that is being negotiated in online environments, and we know prosocial behaviour is really important there too. That's essentially the ways in which we have shifted to think about how our prevention can translate to the online environment and how we give young people the tools to negotiate coercive behaviour, for example, that they are experiencing on a dating app, and to make those scenarios robust so that young people can see the usefulness of those examples to their own lives.

Anne: That's amazing. I know we are also still doing support online. Dusty, can you talk about how support has shifted to the online realm?

Dusty: Normally, I've met with people in my office, occasionally phone calls, but most people come to hangout in my office, we get to know each other in that context. That is not possible now so I have switched over to using Zoom to meet with people, occasional phone calls too. I don't think it is quite the same, I'll be honest, I miss being in my office with people in part, because I try to make my office a lovely space where we can have a cup of tea together and hangout. I do think it is working better than I expected it to. I can still help sort out what is going on in people's lives and hopefully the folks I am working with feel they are in a compassionate space where someone really cares about them and wants to help. It's not ideal, but we are making it work and I am grateful for the folks that have chosen to reach out and manage to do this online even though it is not optimal in some ways.

Anne: Amazing. So I think this is a good place for us to leave off. In a few minutes I will give you folks the info about how to get involved in all of these different initiatives if you are interested. First, thank you Dusty and Frankie for taking the time to chat with me today and being really thoughtful about the topic and laying out the way you think about it for folks because I think it is really interesting.

Dusty: Thanks so much. It was really lovely talking with the two of you. I mean, I know I do it all the time anyway but it was nice to do it in this context.

Frankie: Yes. Thanks Anne for facilitating the discussion.

Anne: Thanks folks!

Getting Involved:

If you're interested in the Bystander Initiative, visit the Bystander website:

<https://www.uwindsor.ca/bystander-firstyear/>

You can also follow Bystander on social media at:

Bystander Instagram: @bystander_uwindsor

https://www.instagram.com/bystander_uwindsor/

Bystander Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/BystanderInitiative/>

To learn more about the Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention Office at UWindsor, visit:

www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault/

To get support, email Dusty at: svsupport@uwindsor.ca

Or follow us on social media:

Instagram: @wecareatuw

<https://www.instagram.com/wecareatuw/>

Facebook: Flip the Script UWindsor

<https://www.facebook.com/FTSuwindsor/>

Note: The Flip the Script (™) Program is currently on hold due to COVID-19.