



PREVENT. RESIST. SUPPORT.

Episode 7: Remembering the École Polytechnique Massacre

with Julie Lalonde



University
of Windsor

Office of Sexual Violence Prevention,
Resistance, and Support

Prevent Resist Support Podcast

Season 2 Episode 7: Remembering the École Polytechnique Massacre with Julie Lalonde

Anne Rudzinski: Hi everyone, I'm Anne and you're listening to Prevent Resist Support, a podcast by the Office of Sexual Violence at the University of Windsor.

Music: I got your back my dear and I know that you got mine. I feel that hope and fear but I know we'll hold the line. Keep your head up. Keep your hand out when your breath is feeling short. Prevent, Resist, Support

Anne: Today we have a special episode to commemorate the December 6 events at the Ecole Polytechnique from 1989. And we have a wonderful expert Julie Lalonde visiting with us to speak about these events. So this might be a heavier episode than we typically have on our podcast. So I'd like to encourage everyone to engage in self care while you're listening today. As always, you can reach out to us if you need support through our website, or through our email, we are at www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support. Or you can email us at svsupport@uwindsor.ca SV, like sexual violence. And then we'll put all the links to the things that our guest Julie talks about today in our episode description, and we'll also provide an accessible transcript on our website in case you are looking for any of those resources. And as always, if you're not in our UWindsor community, and you're feeling the need for support, you can reach out to the Ontario coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, you can access their website, [sexualassault +support.ca](http://sexualassault+support.ca) to find support in your community. So thank you so much for joining us

for this conversation. As you'll hear with Julie today, showing up is really important. And even just showing up by listening to this episode is really meaningful and important. And I hope you get as much out of the conversation as I did having it with Julie. So let's jump right into it.

Alright, so we're here with Julie. Welcome, Julie.

Julie Lalonde: Thanks for having me.

Anne: I'm so excited for you to chat with us today. You've done so much awesome work in Ontario. And I feel like the work you do is also like, very cool. And kind of like freeform, you do a lot of different things with your career. And so I would love if you could tell us just a little bit about yourself and how you got into the work that you're doing. Because I think there's a lot of students that would love to do the same kind of stuff that you do so

Julie: Well, that's very flattering. Yeah, so my name is Julie S Lalonde. And I am Franco Ontarian, from Northern Ontario based in Ottawa, and I've been working for close to 20 years to address violence against women in Canada largely through prevention work. So I'm super passionate about preventing this stuff from happening in the first place. So things like bystander intervention, love teaching that. I work with groups ages 12 and up. So I really have the privilege of hearing from everyday folks about their realities and how we can address it. I also work with the University of Windsor to on the EAAA program. So I'm one of the lead trainers, which is really exciting. And I also do work around stalking. So I was unfortunately stalked by an abusive ex partner for over a decade. And as a result, I wrote a book about my experience called Resilience is Futile. And I created a free art based informational campaign called Outside of the Shadows, which has resources for victims of stalking and further allies. So I'm super, yeah, I'm just really passionate about having these conversations and really grounding them in practical tools, not just talking about it at a theoretical level, but like, Okay, now you're bummed out, because I just told you this thing happen. So like, here are four things you can do to stop it from happening to someone else. That's really my jam.

Anne: I love that prevention is so important. And you've been doing this on a really big scale, because you just got back from Dubai.

Julie: Yeah, so I gave the world's largest anti street harassment training at World Expo Dubai, which was a wild time.

Anne: Which is so cool. And then the other thing I just like, feel like I want to flag all the super cool stuff that you do. But you had you've been working on this bystander training. And you had some real big names involved with that, like Celine Dion promoting this bystander training that you were running.

Julie: Yeah, so I am the lead for Stand Up Canada, which is a project funded by L'Oreal Paris. So back in the day, L'Oreal Paris is tagline, because you're worth it was considered really provocative because it was kind of the first time that they were saying you can wear makeup for yourself. You can treat yourself, you can look pretty because you want to look pretty not to for the male gaze. And so when Me Too happened, they really started kind of went back to that idea that those original principles of, you know, let's be feminist, let's kind of push the agenda a little bit. And so they decided to put their weight behind, supporting Hollaback in doing bystander training around ending street harassment. And yeah, the spokespeople are like [inaudible] and Ellen Mirren and Eva Longoria. It's pretty bananas, and to be part of a project that has huge names like that, promoting it. And it's been really encouraging honestly, like, for so long, I mean, pre Ghomeshi, like pre 2014. We were doing this work and nobody cared. Nobody talked about it, it was this taboo like Shush, shush, thing. And I know that we haven't made as much progress as we would like, but it's so important for me to drive home to people how much progress we have made, and how just mainstream this conversation has become, versus even just, you know, 10 years ago.

Anne: Yeah, I love that. So clearly, for our listeners, like Julie is super cool. I'm going to put all of her social medias in, in the comments and like some links to some of the things that she just talked about, so that you can find them and access them. And yeah, you should read her book because it's really good. So I'm just like, super excited to have Julie here today, because we're doing this special episode on December 6, and

this is an event that we memorialize every year at the University of Windsor through a vigil. And so I would love for us to talk a little bit about why is December 6, an important date. You want to kind of like break that down for us.

Julie: Yeah, December 6 1989. A young misogynist entered the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, which is known as a technical school. So an engineering program, they had recently allowed women into the program. He was denied entry into the program because his grades were crap. But instead, he had deluded himself into thinking that he was not accepted into the program because a quota prioritize women over him. And so he arrived at the Ecole Polytechnique literally separated, the women from the men started spouting all this anti feminist rhetoric, killed 14 women, eventually killed himself and left this lengthy manifesto, as well as a lengthy hit list. And the hit list were feminist journalists, were prominent feminist activists across Canada, particularly in Quebec. And what's important to note is that now December 6th is recognized as the day of remembrance and action to end violence against women in Canada. But it took years for people to accept that what happened in December 6 was misogynist. And that feels very real to me today. Because when we look at so many of the things that are happening, that are so clearly born from misogyny, and we have these endless conversations about but is it really, it's just one guy. So I think it's important that we recognize December 6th for what it was. But it's so important for me, that we contextualize it. And we really connect the dots between December 6, and so many other horrific things that have happened in this country. And just recognizing like, like, a mass shooting in Canada in 1989. Like this was pre Columbine, this is pre like, these things just didn't happen on campuses in particular, right. This was pre Dawson College, like so many things. It was absolutely shocking at the time. And I think it's shocking, even now, to think about it happening.

Anne: Ya I think it's something that folks are kind of when I talk to folks that are not in the same field as us, Julie, like, folks kind of know a little bit about it, but don't always know a lot about it. Or sometimes folks don't know about, you know, this, this event that really shaped I think our

field and the ways that we talk about violence against women in Canada.

Julie: Yeah, I didn't hear about until I went to university.

Anne: Ya.

Julie: And and what on a personal level, December 6 really is like a heavy but really important day for me. It's the year I started school, and I think about that a lot. Like I started kindergarten in Windsor, actually, I started school and in Windsor. I started kindergarten 1989. So I was like starting my education when we were seeing women being murdered for trying to access their education. And that is just a very theory connection that I think about a lot.

Anne: Yeah, and I also think it's very radical to think about, like women studying engineering in 1989. Because I think that's become more commonplace now. And like 2021 we have lots of women, you know, in our engineering program at the University of Windsor, but back in 1989 that would have been like a very different landscape for them.

Julie: Yeah, and an important note, is that the shooter very clearly tried to discourage and terrify women into not taking it. In the following year, they actually had an increase in registration from women who wanted to study engineering at Polytechnique. And I also think about that a lot and the badassery of women saying, You will not deter me from living my life. I think that's also an equally important part of the compensation is the resistance to misogyny and not just the misogyny itself, getting all the focus.

Anne: Wow, I didn't know that. And that's absolutely incredible.

Julie: Right? It gives me chills just thinking about how brave that would be, right? This is December. So you know, the following September, it hasn't even been a year and you're like, I'm going, and I'm going to live my life and you are not going to stop me. And I will walk down the halls where these women walked. Yeah, I just think it's a really powerful reminder that people have been trying, I mean, you know, we are

what's that expression? Right? And you're the granddaughters of the witches who didn't burn, right? Like we're, we're doing? We're doing it? Yeah.

Anne: Yeah, I think that's so important. And I think another really important piece that you raised about it when we talked about this episode a while back was the difference between talking about this event in relation to misogyny and anti feminist violence. And I think you had some thoughts on that, that were really interesting. And I would love for you to kind of get into that for our listeners.

Julie: Yeah, I mean, we cannot deny that misogyny was at the heart of what happened that day. We can't deny that, that his manifesto was very clearly, women are the source of all evil in this world. But there was a nuance to it that got lost, which was that it wasn't just women that he hated. It was feminists. It were it was prominent, mouthy loud feminists that he hated all of the women on his hitlist were very vocal feminist activist. And he was very clear. And you know, when he was, in fact, one of the women before he shot her right was screaming, he was screaming, I hate you feminists, you're all feminists. And she was like, I'm not a feminist like. So it was, it was very clearly about gender. But we can't separate that it was also about feminism. And I think that link is important, not just because it's the historical accuracy of it, but because I don't just get hate mail and death threats because I'm a woman, I get it because I'm a woman who does feminist work. And it's my work as a feminist that puts me in the crosshairs of misogynists. I have many of the things that misogynists love about right like that. I'm a blonde white lady who dresses very feminine, who is presented as a very traditional woman. And so that's the ideal to many of these men. And it's when I step out of line and dare to challenge the patriarchy, that I become a target. And I think we need to make that distinction, right. It's not just I think, you know, looking at things like the 45th president, for example, and people being really confused as to how this person could be so misogynist, and yet his daughter's number one fan, right, but it's because his daughter belonged to him. His daughter was an extension of him, but also his daughter toed a line that he was comfortable with, right she had she subscribed to a lot of traditional views. And so that distinction is important to make, right? If you are a woman who fits the

ideal and who toes the line, then yeah, that can be a comfortable, safe place to be. But it's when you dare to challenge those structures that you are no longer liked, and are targeted, and are seen as not, yeah, not toeing the line. And if you don't want to be a foot soldier for the patriarchy, that's when you live under siege. And the fact that we've deduced December 6th to one misogynist, just hated women, I think is really doing a disservice to the broader conversation that needs to be happening.

Anne: 100% And I think that links in really well to one of our questions, which is, you know, how does this event compare to more recent events like this, like the 2018 Toronto van attack, or the 2014 Isla Vista killings? Because those were both instances of like, misogynistic violence that happened more recently. And so when we when we want to say like, yeah, this was an awful thing that happened a really long time ago, like these things are still happening.

Julie: Absolutely. And the I remember I did an interview with The Current where after the Toronto van attack where I was, Anne, I was so full of rage. Like I truly couldn't remember the last time I had been that it was like I was buzzing. I was furious. I was so furious because we as feminists, as feminists online in particular, had been calling attention to misogyny to the growing way of using this label of incels. These like involuntarily celibate man, which is basically just the new label for misogyny. And we had been railing against this and people wrote us off as these paranoid, like, not only just paranoid, but like you're purposely making them out to be bigger than they are, so that you can give yourself more attention so you can justify your work, like these very sinister arguments were used against us. And then here's a man who again, like in this case, didn't die. So like he didn't just leave a manifesto he like went on hours long tirades to the police about how women were the source of all of his problems. And we literally had columnist and talk radio shows and panel TV shows being like, what happened, is this misogyny, was it because of?, It's like, they're literally spelling it out for us, like in the case of what happened in December 6. Like he literally left pages and pages and pages where he said, This is why I did this. Here's a man being interviewed by the police, not once denying that he did it. And in fact, feeling like he was the savior that he was like the patron

saint of incels. I mean that that's enough to drive you crazy. Like it is enough to drive you crazy to be a woman saying they kill us because they hate us then the killer saying we kill them because we hate them. And then the culture saying, but what really is the cause here?, like, it will make you go crazy. And I don't use that word lightly. Like it's genuinely a form of psychological manipulation to dull women into thinking that we're just being paranoid. And in both the case of December 6, and what happened in the Toronto van attack, these were not white men, was not a white man that killed women in Polytechnique it was on a white man that killed women and men in the streets of Toronto. And so again, then the idea became all these racialized men. So if we did, even if we did agree, it was misogynist. It was because they were racialized men. Right, like so then it's like, we're still constantly trying to live in denial of the fact that both of them were young. They were men in their 20s. Right, they were young men of the time. And you know, what happened at the mosque killing in Quebec City, similar, right. This was a young man who was involved in, in Islamophobic Organizing online, but was also actively involved in misogynist hate groups, like identified as an incel like this is someone who was radicalized, because he hated women, and also people of color, and oh, while I'm at it, I also hate these people like these men exist, and they live among us. And it is so profoundly insulting for our concerns as women and as feminists to be discredited, when in my lifetime, we've had four major mass killings, that were directly linked to misogyny. And how dare the culture tell me that I'm making stuff up?

Anne: Absolutely. Do you mind real fast for our listeners, just talking about like, what is an incel? Where does that term come from? What does it mean?

Julie: Well, what's really unfortunate is that a woman created the term incel, from a very good place, which was talking about her experiences being a woman who wanted to be in relationships, but couldn't find anyone because of a variety of reasons. And then her, that word was co opted by misogynist groups and sort of the dark corners of the internet, who believe that they are the good ones, they are the nice guys, and that they are unable to get laid by top tier women, it's important part to understand is they're not just looking, you know, when people say, Well,

why don't you just hire someone to sleep with you that's below them, right? So they are they feel entitled not just to women, writ large, but to top shelf women that are beautiful, in a very traditional sense of the word that are not demanding, that are subservient to them, etc, etc, etc. And so they've now use this as sort of an organizing tool to say, we are entitled to sex with beautiful women who will shut up and put out and then make us a sandwich. And because we are not able to access those women, then the problem is society, I don't need to change myself in any way, shape, or form. And it builds up this resentment that then turns violent. And in the case of what happened in Toronto, instantly, he was made a folk hero in dark corners of the internet for what he had done, and really used his experience as a recruitment tool. And I want to say shame, shame, shame on the Toronto Star that published his transcripts of his interviews with the police, which were absolutely misogynist manifestos that were absolutely used as a recruitment tool.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. And I think that just reminds me so much of the like, do you remember the Roosh V. events that were planned, like, globally, a few years back where this man had kind of written this, I think he had written some stuff online that was like, like pickup techniques...

Julie: Yes, yes,

Anne: like it was waiting to have sex with women, which I think a lot of them were really like ways to have sex with women that don't really want to have sex with you. Like it was very, like, manipulative, and was like, kind of subscribing to these same ideas, I think as this, like, incel piece, and then he was planning these events, these meetups, you know, across, you know, they were in Canada, they were in the United States, they were all over the place. And then that was, I think it just kind of fizzled out like the, the meetup didn't really happen. But the idea that you know that somebody would try to get folks together that have these views, recently, like within the last few years is pretty horrifying.

Julie: Absolutely. And the links like the Venn diagram of the pickup artists world and the incel world and misogynist, and like Gamergate, like all of these things are just one big old circle at this point. And I know, I know,

men, and I went on a date with a man who told me that he got his start in the pickup artists world, I was like, you are what and like, now identifies as a feminist and like now is, but like, just was very nonchalant. And it just threw me for a loop because I was like, what, but it's a reminder that these again, these like, men walk among us, right? And that this stuff is all connected, and that it might have a new flavor, right, like so when I was in my undergrad, like you said, like a few years ago, it was pickup artists, that was kind of the flavor that women had to be on the lookout for things like negging was, like, widespread because everyone was learning. This was like a great way to chip at women's self esteem, like all of these tactics that women would see at bars that are like, hey, clearly these guys are getting organized, because they're all using the same lines. And they're all trying the same approaches like coercion. So that was the thing. And then ever, you know, they're all these think pieces about P ways, like pickup artists, and they're all of these, what is this about? And like, should we, you know, but our men looking for a space and who should fill that gap. And then and then we kind of forgot about that. And then it became incels. And again, we acted like, this is some brand new phenomenon. I'm like, No, when the pickup artistry did not work, they just shifted to being bitter, and not wanting to change anything about themselves. So like, it's the same nonsense, just with a different label. And again, that's what makes it so difficult not to lose your mind as a feminist. Because you like, I'm not old, I'm in my 30s. And I feel like I've had the same conversation 500 times in my lifetime. Whenever there's a new label or a new, y eah, like a new flavor to misogyny. Instead of just saying, yes, misogyny. Let's use the same tactics. We've always used to dismantle misogyny. It's like, no, we need to strike a committee to do some research. And we need to sit down with these men and talk to them and we need to do woman's like, we know the answers. Like, you know, they feel entitled, it's entitlement. That's it. That's the whole thing. Period move on.

Anne: I love that you're kind of, this was one of our questions. We were gonna talk about what you're kind of isolating that like the misogyny the entitlement, the like culture around like Incels, pickup artists like this is all part of the cause of this type of violence, rather than some of the other causes that we see in the media, like, you know, it's video games,

violent video games, it's music. It's really violent music that's causing people to enact this kind of violence. And so

Julie: Porn is the big one right now that like Gwyneth Paltrow, and Jada Pinkett Smith, and all of these women are talking about how like porn is the problem. Yeah, yeah, we're always pointing fingers instead of just being like, or it's the misogyny we've been living with since the origin story of Adam and Eve, like, I don't know, it's, it's not that exciting. And I think that's kind of part of it. To be frank. It's like, it's not sexy to be like, Oh, it's because they hate women. Oh, but like, no but, like, it's just because they hate women. Like, it's, it's almost like people want to believe that there's some new dynamic to it, because then it makes it. I don't know, it's trendy or something. I don't know what's going on there. But it's like, no, it's boring. It's actually just like real boring. It's the same crap that we've been dealing with for literal generations. Like, I'm sorry, I don't have a cooler answer for you.

Anne: No, but I feel like also when we talk about video games, or music or pornography, like a lot of the elements that people will critique and those things like violent video games where you can like, harm women and kill them or you know, music that talks about like sexually assaulting or murdering women or, you know, the pornography industry, which has like quite a bit of violence against women, like, built into it. Like the root of that is all still misogyny and hatred of women like these things all come from the same root. So yes, there might be problems in these things, right. Like there might be issues with, you know, with video games or with music or with pornography, but it's all coming back to that cause which I love that you're just kind of highlighting. It's just like, not a sexy or fun thing to talk about. It doesn't feel like very compelling sometimes when we've been talking about it for so long. So do you have any thoughts on kind of like the burnout on this topic, because I think that kind of comes and goes in waves, right? Like, we get really excited about the topic of violence against women. And we, we talk about it a lot, we throw a lot of resources towards it, and then it kind of like dies down for a little bit. And no one really wants to hear about it, and then builds up again, right, like there's this I'm sure you've kind of experienced that wave. So do you have any thoughts on

the like, I guess the desensitization around the topic of violence against women?

Julie: Yeah. And my theory has long been that it's because we don't give people tools. And so the example I think of all the time is the fall of 2014, you had rape threats leveraged against the president of the Student Union of the University of Ottawa, you had her giving media interviews where she used the word rape culture. And I remember where I was when I saw those interviews. And I thought, What a bad ass woman saying the words rape culture on the news, and of course, they use scare quotes around it, that we had the Dalhousie dentistry students situation, we had Ghomeshi. And then there was this like, explosion, you know, we were really talking, you know, what's his name, Hannibal Buress, called out Bill Cosby. And then Bill Cosby was in the news again, and there was all of this stuff. And so this was the fall of 2014. Like this was quite a while ago at this point. And, and there was massive, like nothing I have ever seen before unprecedented levels of interest in this work. Those of us who do education work, we were booked solid for workshops, trainings, talks, panel discussions. And then we were talking about harassment on the Hill than harassment in the military. Like we just pop this thing off. So for there was maybe like a five to not even maybe four to five month period where people were hungry for this information. Like everyday people, it was on social media, it was on the radio, it was on TV, it was in movies, it was everywhere, everybody was talking about it. And I'm going to audiences and people were buzzing in their seat, like Julie, give me the thing I need to do. I can't even think straight, I'm so furious. This is happening. And then 4,5,6 months later, I would go back to those same places. And people's eyes were just glazed over. And there was no energy, there was just like, you could feel the heaviness in the space. And I realized it's because we did that like as a sector, we failed to run with the opportunity. And we really falsely believe but I think again, a few years later, when Me Too happened in 2017 reaffirmed that we falsely believed that just telling people stories would compel them to act. We falsely believed that if people just knew how bad it was, and they will move sky and mountains to make something happen. And that's not actually what happened. Because we didn't give people tools. We just gave them depressing statistics and depressing stories and heavy disclosures. And we thought that would

compel people to act and instead of just felt like a huge weight that they had to carry. And additionally, because we didn't give them tools, they didn't see a way out. People just thought every institution is failing survivors. So I'm just going to tell survivors, or I'm just going to tell young women to take self defense and don't leave the house. And don't date and don't go online. And don't do this. Don't do that. And if we do that, then we'll protect them. Because clearly, there's nothing we can do this problem is too big. And that is how we get in this problem, that it's not inevitable that we're going to have these waves of interest that died down. It's not inevitable. It's because we don't maintain the momentum by saying, yeah, here's a horrific story. You're pissed now? Right? You're sad now. Right? Okay, here's four things you can do about it. Look at this story that's caught in the news, you know, Kyle Beach coming forward about being sexually assaulted as a Chicago Black Hawk, and nothing was done for over a decade. And now everybody's talking about sexual violence in sport. Awesome. Here's three things you can do if you suspect it's happening to your teammate, oh, we don't do that pivot. We just let people sit in the heavy feelings. And of course, they're not compelled to do anything. They're bummed out. Like they're bummed out, because it's depressing to think about and so people just turn away. And that is what we as a sector have failed to do. We failed to move people to action. And so that's how we get these spikes that then immediately plummet because people are immobilized. And frankly, I think the pandemic has been proof of that, that like people are burnt out from just being alive in a world in which they're hearing every day that it doesn't matter what you do, we're all gonna get COVID. Like, that's not inspiring hope. Right? And we're getting conflicting information about how to keep yourself safe from COVID. So then people are giving up right this is similar thing with sexual violence and violence against women. We give people conflicting information, or no information at all. And so they just give up and think, Okay, well, I'm not gonna bother this thing is too big, and it is big. But we can absolutely break it down into bite sized pieces. We just choose not to

Anne: I love that so much. And I think that's something that you are doing really well. So you are working with all these bystander approaches, to empowering folks to getting involved when somebody else is at risk of harm. You also work with SARE Centre and the Flip the Script program.

And so do you want to talk a little bit about those things as we kind of like wrap up our conversation? What are the things that you know, that you believe are really useful for mobilizing folks and for making those changes and for, for, like getting involved.

Julie: If you're a woman struggling with misogyny and the reality of that, find your community, find other feminists who will give you that space to vent and to remind you that you're not losing your mind, that it's the patriarchy trying to convince you that you're paranoid. So find community super, super important. And bystanders get trained, like get trained, it is so easy to get trained. If you're on a campus, there's trainings happening all the time, if you are in the broader community, you know, my trainings that I offer, for example, they're free, they're on Zoom, your cameras and your mics are muted, like you literally are a passive participant, you're never going to be put on the spot. But if you can't find an hour to learn bystander intervention, then you're not actually an ally, like full stop. So get yourself trained. It's not hard. It's not arduous. And it's actually a really empowering process, frankly. If you have disposable income, like donate, donate money to groups like the SARE Centre, I mean, the SARE Centre at the University of Windsor runs a program called Flip the Script, which is the most effective rape resistance program in the world. And it's a nonprofit with a tiny budget. That's not okay. Like we know it works. So why don't we support what we know is actually effective instead of, you know, just spending god knows how much money on creating more posters for example, so supporting places like the SARE Centre, your local shelters, your local sexual assault centres, they're all working on a shoestring budget, but they're saving lives. And then yeah, just like getting involved with groups like Flip the Script like Flip the Script is so powerful, because, you know, yeah, it's 12 hours of self defense, but only two of it is physical self defense. It's 10 hours of deprogramming all of the nonsense that we're told that we need to prioritize relationships over our safety, we need to be scared of strangers instead of the men in our own beds. Like, it's such a powerful program that doesn't get the level of support that it needs because people, yeah, if people either don't know it exists, or they think, well, the onus shouldn't be on women, it should be on men. And it's like, okay, but while we do that work with men, can we also give women the tools to be able to defend themselves? Like it's not an either

or situation? So? Yeah, like you said, that's the work that helps me get up in the morning, honestly. Because when I'm teaching someone bystander intervention, I'm like, okay, there's 500 people in the Zoom webinar, if you know, 10% of them, remember how to intervene if they witness harassment, I've done something, you know. EAAA, I get to travel the world and train people on how to then train young women for years to come on, like, your life matters, and you're worth defending. And if you are assaulted, it's not your fault. Like these are incredible life skills that every time I do work with the SARE centre in EAAA, I get emotional because I think about how different my life would have been if that information had been put in my hands when I was 18. Maybe I wouldn't have been in an abusive relationship, maybe I wouldn't have taken so long to leave. Maybe I wouldn't have blamed myself for so long. You know, like this is that powerful, like it's corny, after school sounding kind of stuff. But it's legitimately life changing work that feeds me, because yeah, when I pull my head back and look at the broader society, I'm being gaslit all day long about the severity of the problem. And so that's why my work is so important to me. But it's also why December 6 is such an emotional day for me, because it's a reminder that our lives are at risk. And it's a reminder that as a mouthy feminist that gets a lot of death threats, I have reason to be afraid.

Anne: Yeah, I think that's so important. And I love just like the highlighting of the risk that we take doing this work. Because I think you do take a lot of risk, right? And all of us in this field, like take a lot of risk to do this work and to challenge you know, our cultural norms to challenge the things that are not okay in our society. And I think just like bringing more folks into that through things like bystander training is so important. And so I love that you've highlighted all of that for us.

Julie: Thank you. And you know, importantly, I'm a white lady. And I am not straight, but pass as straight, I'm not able bodied, but I pass as able bodied. And I fit norms, like beauty norms. And I still can't speak in public without a security detail. My inbox is like, I've actually asked people like, I've offered to pay people to go through my emails, and they weren't willing to do it, because it was so harmful to them to have to read those messages like, and I'm a super privileged person. And so I'm acutely aware that if this is my reality, as someone who's very privileged,

you know, there's a reason why women of colour are targeted so often, but there's also, there's a reason why so many of them are not willing to come forward because they see other people being brutally targeted. And they think, why would I want to sign up for that, and that vacuum of not, you know, you and I not being replaced? Because young women see what we go through and think I don't want to sign up for that, are you kidding me? So then it adds to our feelings that we can never quit, because who's gonna replace us but then contributes to burnout? Like, it's just such a vicious cycle? And so I think it's important for those of us who are privileged to highlight the risks because it speaks to those who can't, because it will just exacerbate the risk that they're under.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. And I love that you brought in like the intersectionality piece, because I think it's so important for us to acknowledge that there are so many things that contribute like race and sexuality and ability and, and all of these other factors that contribute to the way that we are viewed as women and how we are treated in this work and outside of this work. And so thank you for bringing up that piece. We're almost at the end of our time. So I just wanted to kind of end off with like, is there one takeaway or like final message that you would like to give to our listeners?

Julie: Yeah, I would say, show up on December 6, if it's an in person vigil in your community show up to it, if it's something happening on social media show up to it, I think it is an act of resistance, to show up every year, and to force people to pause and think about what happened that day. And every year there are columnist who try to argue that enough time has passed, we need to move on. There's no need for this anymore. And so I think it's a true act of resistance to say, No, I'm going to wear you know, I have a button with a rose because a rose sort of became the symbol of December 6, bring a rose to the vigil lay the rose down say those the names of those women, you know, in my community every year, we say the names of the women who've been killed just this year in our community. And there's always a handful of names. And I live in a city of you know, that just hit a million people. So show up really, really important because it sends a message to survivors that we see you. But I think it also sends a message to misogynists, which is that, like we were still here fighting against you, and there will always be resistance

to misogyny. And so please, please show up to a vigil on December 6. Get involved. And like he said at the beginning, right. Like there's a lot of young people who don't even know about December 6, so show up to educate people on what happened that day. And to, yeah, show the women in your life that you're willing to take an hour, one day out of the year to mourn with us.

Anne: I love that so much. And I know like there's so much that goes into like, leaving your home during a pandemic coming out to an event. I know there's like, you know, always there's always a lot of stuff that goes into that for folks. But I also think we just never, we don't highlight enough the importance of just showing up. Even if you just show up and stand on background or you like stand really far away or, you know, you're there for part of the event. And not the whole event like just turning up in any way has such a big impact. And so I love that you highlighted that for us and have kind of just see that the importance of that I think we need to talk about that more often.

Julie: Thanks. And I think as progressives, we try to be really accommodating. And we try to, which I think is beautiful. But there's a reason why the right wing is incredibly organized because they show up every Sunday, and they recommit to their work. And so I think we need to think in our own sort of nondenominational ways about how we can show up and recommit to the work. And for me when I go to December 6, and I look through the crowd and all I see are the women and feminists that I know. I'm sad, because I shouldn't know everybody at the December 6, it shouldn't just be me and my colleagues, I want to see faces I haven't seen before. And I want us to bear witness to the fact that 14 women in Canada, were denied an education because they were women. And that is a legacy that we all have to sit with.

Anne: That is very beautiful and so important. And just like thank you so much for spending the time to go through this with us. I think this is just a really important piece for folks to be able to access and listen to and sit with. And so because like thank you so much, Julie for spending time with us today and for you know, kind of like walking us through the different pieces of this, of this event and what we can do to kind of positively impact things in the future.

Julie: Thanks for having me.

Anne: That episode was so incredible to record with Julie. I always really love chatting with her. And I hope you all are feeling inspired to take action to end gender based violence and especially violence against women as we remember the important events of December 6. If you're in Windsor, I hope you come out to our memorial and our vigil on December 6 at 11am outside Dillon Hall on our campus, and if not just thank you so much for engaging with this event through listening to our episode today. And as a reminder, if you need support, we are available at www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support or by email at svsupport@uwindsor.ca or you can check out sexualassaultsupport.ca for resources in your community. Thanks so much for joining us, everyone. And if you enjoyed this episode, remember to like and subscribe to see what we're up to for the rest of the semester. Take care folks.