



PREVENT. RESIST. SUPPORT.

Episode 8: Reporting to the Police

with Dr. Laurie Samuel



University
of Windsor

Office of Sexual Violence Prevention,
Resistance, and Support

Prevent Resist Support Podcast

Season 2 Episode 8: Reporting to the Police with Dr. Laurie Samuel

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: Hi everyone. Today we have a really important episode on police reporting and sexual violence. We have with us Laurie Samuel from Cupid Sting. Laurie is absolutely amazing. I can't wait for you to hear our interview with her. Laurie has a background in criminology and has worked in the criminal justice systems, specifically around homicide and domestic violence. She has been inspired to create social change around sexual and domestic violence against women and has started Cupid Sting which is a really amazing organization. So from their website Cupid Sting is a nonprofit interpersonal violence reduction program, whose mission it is to teach women tools to prevent victimization. Cupid Sting teaches skills that women may employ in potential altercations or attacks inside or outside their home. They do all sorts of things like self defense classes, safety assessments, talks about dating abuse, interpersonal violence, all kinds of workshops on domestic violence, sexual harassment, and then they do all kinds of things relating to data resources and media contributions. So you can learn more about Cupid Sting on their website, which is

www.cupidsting.org You can find them on Instagram at @cupidsting on Facebook at Cupid Sting Interpersonal Violence Reduction Program are on Twitter at cupidunderscoresting. We'll make sure to put all of that in the episode description for you so you don't have to worry about writing it down. Let's hop right into our interview with Laurie.

All right. So welcome, Laurie, we're super excited to have you here with us today to chat about police reporting.

Dr. Laurie Samuel: Thank you, happy to be here.

Anne: So I always like to ask and start out with you know, could you tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into the work that you do? Because I think we have a lot of students on our campus that would like to know how people got there very cool jobs, and I think you have a very cool job. So yeah, if you could tell us a little bit about that. That would be great.

Laurie: Sure, sure. So I am a criminologist by training. I have a PhD in criminology, but I've always had this love and desire and this fight for justice. I consider myself a justice fighter. And I think that this just worked for me in terms of the education, getting degrees in criminology, learning more about the system and trying to figure out ways to fight it. So I always knew I wanted to do something where I would be investigating or solving some kind of problem, which is, you know, like solving a crime. So again, I just really tailored my schooling and all my jobs. My background is law enforcement, working in some employee relations, internal affairs, homicide, all kinds of different things. But that's what brought me to today in terms of the work that I do with violence against women.

Anne: That is amazing. And I know that we are very inspired by the work that you're doing. And so excited to hear about it. And I think we're, we're hoping to have you back on our podcast again, like this might not be the only time that you visit.

Laurie: Oh, okay. Sounds good to me.

Anne: Yeah. So today, we're going to talk about police reporting. And I think this is really important, because the way that we think about reporting to the police, in terms of sexual violence is varied. I think there are some folks who feel an interest in reporting to the police and see benefits to that, there are some folks who feel that there are a lot of barriers to reporting to the police.

Laurie: Mhm.

Anne: And so I think you are the perfect person to come in and kind of discuss with us, you know, what are the pros? What are the cons? What are the things to consider? But I'd like to start with, why do people who have experienced sexual violence choose not to report to the police?

Laurie: So I mean, just think about the action itself. It's so personal, the violation is so personal. And the reasons will vary. But one of the main things is just like this embarrassment about being exposed. And that could be a number of things. It's the questions that may be asked that you might feel that you're being judged that maybe I should have been here, or I should have been there with this particular person, but it's a process of re victimization. Imagine going through that trauma, and now you have to sit down in front of a man that maybe is decades older than you, maybe seems like he's a little disinterested and isn't using the language that you're used to using, and you just feel exposed. And a lot of times women will shut down at that point and just say that they're not going to go further. Because once you explain what the steps are, it's scary, it's a really scary process, it means you're going to be exposed, it means that they're going to speak to the abuser. The assailant I should say. It means that maybe your family is going to find out, it means your friends are going to find out, perhaps the assailant is something somebody that was part of your friends circle. So it means somebody is going to take sides in terms of either believing you are believing him. So it's hard. It's really, really hard. And if you don't have support, it's even harder.

Anne: Yeah, I think that it's so important to think about all of those factors, like I love that you highlighted, you know, is the person that you're reporting to, you know, a man or a woman is that somebody that has the same

training that somebody in like one of our types of roles might have, what language are they using, and then all the pieces about, like, you know, that information being shared, right, being shared with the person who has caused harm and being shared with the family and the friends? And yeah, I think there are so many barriers. Are there any other barriers you hear about that we should kind of touch on before we move on?

Laurie: Sure. Sure. So um, I think a lot of it. And again, it depends on the person is this whole idea about believability. If I go to the police, maybe you don't go right away, maybe it's a week later. Are they going to believe me? Is the first question going to be why didn't you call the police when it happened? Which is not something a victim needs to hear at that point. So and then, of course, there is this overall distrust in the police from certain communities. From certain people, I would probably say that women distrust police more than men. And then when it comes to racialized women, there are some additional complexities and challenges when it comes to going to the police, because generally the police are seen as an oppressor, and why would I go to my oppressor for help? So very, very, very complex issues.

Anne: Yeah, I love that you're highlighting the intersection of the identity of being a woman and also a woman of colour.

Laurie: Mhm.

Anne: Because I think one of the things that I have read a little bit about is the idea that when we think about police violence towards like folks of colour.

Laurie: Right.

Anne: we often think about men. And we don't always hear the names of the women, as much or hear the stories of the women as much. So I love that we're highlighting that today. So on the flip side of that, I would love to also talk a little bit about why would folks decide to report to the police, what are some of the reasons why somebody might decide to do that. And you know, what kind of justice could be accessed that way.

Laurie: So I think the word that you use is justice, justice is the reason. They want some justice, they want somebody to be accountable for the crime, or the trauma and the pain that they have experienced. And then there there is a certain portion of the population that believes in the system that believes that if you go to the police, they're going to do their due diligence and properly investigate your crime. And then that that crime, that case will now move through the system, so that somebody will then be held accountable in a court of law and then sentenced. And yeah, there, there are a lot of people that feel that way. And I think that that's great, because that's what the system is for. But of course, we're trying to capture those that don't really believe or trust the system. But I think justice is really the number one reason. Holding somebody accountable for what they went through. And then secondly, I think people are have good intentions in terms of they do not want this to happen to somebody else. So you think about your friends, you think about your family, maybe you have children, I would not want this perpetrator to be out and be free to do this again to somebody else. So the justice, it's not just individual, it's for the community. And it's a little more systemic.

Anne: Yeah, I'm wondering if we can talk more about that, that desire for reporting to prevent violence from happening to other folks, because I feel like I hear about that a lot in a way that feels almost like a burden that survivors carry the feeling that like, it is now my responsibility to to report or to share this information, so that it doesn't happen to other folks, or sometimes that is leveraged against survivors, you know, you have to report so it doesn't happen.

Laurie: Right.

Anne: to other folks, and I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that.

Laurie: So let me speak to that last piece in terms of you know, anybody trying to convince a survivor that they have to report, you know, it's their role and their responsibility. You don't have to do anything that you don't want to do. You don't have do anything that you're not comfortable doing. The women that I work with, again, these are all the questions,

you know, should I call police? Do I go to the courts? You know, how do I get a restraining order? All of these things. You have to do what you're comfortable doing, because that's really going to impact how your case goes through, excuse me, through the process. So what some, I guess for some, it can be a burden. But what I'm thinking for women that normally think that way, they have a huge amount of support. So it's either maybe they went to an office such as yours, and you are going to help them walk them through that process, or they have friends or family that are like, girl, I'm going to be with you every step of the way. And it gives it empowers them, and gives them the additional confidence to go through this process, which is very, very difficult. I'm not going to sugarcoat this. Even if, we're talking about sexual violence, but even if let's say your car's stolen, that's traumatic in and of itself, you have to deal with the police, the insurance companies, maybe getting another car, things of that nature. And let's face it, we know when you're driving down the street, and there's a cop behind you, they haven't pulled you over, you haven't necessarily done something wrong. But you automatically, your heart starts racing and get butterflies in your stomach, because there's this level of fear or deference to this system and this symbol and what it represents. So imagine now something the most personal type crime that you're having to invoke the system. But I say this all the time. I kind of hate the term that you know, women are strong, we know that we know that we're strong. But we're resilient. And I think that it's those resilient women, that once they sit down and really think that this is not just about me, this is about my community of women. And I need to do this. But again, those women really have that support. And that sister circle that really helps them through that.

Anne: I love that I love talking about like strength and choice and resilience. I think those are all really important messages. And I love that you've kind of highlighted, you know, you don't have to do anything you don't want to do, you absolutely don't have to report. I hope that if you're listening to this podcast, it's just like, informational. It's information that you can add, right, to your to your like exploration of your decision. And you could listen to it and decide like, yes, I want to report or you could listen to it and decide, I don't want to or I'm not sure, right? And all of those things are fine.

Laurie: Absolutely, absolutely. And if you do go to report, don't be pressured by the police to do anything further. If the information you receive about the process is overwhelming, and really just not for you. And it's okay to say thank you for the information, let me think it over. No one should be pressuring you. Because like I said, it's not going to be an easy process.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. So let's talk about that process a bit and what it looks like. In Windsor, we have an online reporting tool for the Windsor police. So you can either submit your initial report through this online database, or you can reach out directly to the police by phone or by you know, turning up at the at the station. What happens after folks make that initial first step?

Laurie: Okay. Sure, sure. I find it so interesting. When you told me about that Online Reporting System. I thought the crimes that they only allow to be reported online would be like property. So I find that very interesting that in Windsor they do that. So I can speak to GTA, Toronto, Peel, even, you know, when I was living and working in the States, but in terms of your your first entrance or introduction into the system, it would be with that uniformed officer. So a number of ways you can call 911. Let's suppose the sexual assault just happened and call right away, and they will send a car to that location, or wherever you are, you could be in the hospital and sent a uniformed officer. So I want to be very clear that the first point of entry is going to be this uniformed officer. And that uniformed officer is going to take what you tell them and do some kind of assessment in terms of whether or not will be escalated to an investigation, or whether it will just be a report. And that is very, very difficult to hear because they're going to make a determination based on the information and perhaps some evidence that you have presented. And I know for some women that I've worked for in the past that this is where it stopped, and then that was not good enough for them and they felt re victimized because, look, I, I mustered up the courage to report this or even go into a police station, and then they told me that I was not victimized. It's, it's hard. So then you'll get the the uniform officer will do a report. And let's say for the sake of this argument, it is escalated up to an investigation. So you'll get a report

number, it may depend that if you're in person out of a police station, it may depend about on as to whether you speak to a detective right there and then or if a detective will follow up with you. And if you you know, you'll sit down with the detective, they'll go through your your story, ask again, for some additional evidence, they will ask questions about witnesses. And that's the information that they're you going to use to build their case, and start contacting witnesses, and of course, the perpetrator. Now, for police departments that are more aware of these issues, and the impact of this trauma has on the victim, they will have access and information to on resources, they will like, for example, in Peel, they will give phone numbers and pamphlets for places like Embrace, or a 24 hour sexual assault hotline, maybe some social workers that they work with, recognizing that this type of crime brings with it and an ordinate amount of trauma. And knowing that, as police officers, they can only do so much, which is to investigate the crime. So I know in the region of Peel, say for example, Peel police and Toronto, they will do things like that, because they have standalone units that will investigate sexual assault and domestic violence. So there's specialized units. And once the investigation is done, like I said, they're going to speak to witnesses, they are going to speak to the assailant, they're going to look at the evidence. And then a determination is going to be made with the Crown. They will sit with, we say Prosecutor Crown, the Crown Attorney, and they will go over the case. And then they are going to determine whether or not there could be an indictment. Let me back up based based on what the officers and detectives find, they will make a determination as to whether or not somebody will be arrested. And sometimes they are, a lot of times they are not. And then sometimes it might just be that they're having one of those talks with that person just to let them know that, hey, we might not have enough evidence now, but you know, we're watching you and we're building a case, so you know, just know that, you know, you're on notice. And then if the case goes through the court system, there is an indictment, and then there's a case. Now this, in my mind, in my opinion, is one of the most difficult processes. First being is that it takes a lot of time, it might be 3,4,5 years before some cases go through the court system where you have a trial, and some kind of determination and sentence. So that really takes some time. And that's hard. That's hard, because a lot of times, survivors, they, you know, start the process,

going to the police and there's an arrest, and then they start really working on healing. And it gets to a point where maybe they're not crying every day, maybe now they're leaving their house and resuming normal activities, like hanging out with friends or going to the gym. And then they get noticed that, you know, in three months, your case is going to trial. And these wounds are now open and fresh. And there may or may not be, you know, some kind of setback. So that's, you know, generally the process and then if there is a conviction, then of course the person will be sentenced and then put in jail, but probably not for that long of a time period. But again, the more and more these cases go through the system, and we're looking for systemic change. You're going to see judges more aware of the sexual assault cases, the characteristics, the characteristics of this assailants and different decisions being made, harder sentences, stricter sentences. It's a movement, I really feel like we are finally, at that place, or at that point where we're starting to see some change, where as a community, we're saying no more. And this is getting the attention of the criminal justice system to do right by victims.

Anne: I have so many things that I want to follow up on from that. If it's okay, I wrote down a couple, like follow up questions.

Laurie: Sure.

Anne: Um, so the first one that I wanted to ask about was, in terms of like evidence, I think that's really tricky, because I think in a lot of sexual assault cases, there may not be a lot of evidence, and I know that a piece of that might be, you know, getting a forensic exam. And but there sometimes isn't a lot of evidence in terms of like, text messages or witnesses. And so can you speak to that piece?

Laurie: Yes, sure. Um, and I'm glad you mentioned the text messages, because the evidence could be a lot of things. It could be something physical, it could be, you know, DNA on clothing. It could be, you know, maybe something from, you know, sheets and coat, you know, things like that even a condom, a used condom. Or it could be something that's electronic, like a text message, a video, things of that nature. Um police officers and investigators and detectives receive a lot of training in

terms of recognizing, you know, when somebody is telling the truth, and when somebody is trying to deceive them. So while they there may not be some physical evidence, you can still rely on the testimony, the story of the victim in terms of building the case, because while she may not have something that they she gives to them, they may think of some other things that they can use as evidence. Patterns, say, for example, just ask him, do you know of anybody else, and then interviewing somebody else, and they may have some physical evidence that will help build that particular case. So I do not want women to be discouraged if they feel like they do not have any evidence. Because, again, technology is so advanced now that you can pull DNA underneath from underneath a fingernail. So do not be discouraged. Be bold, tell your story. And together with the detectives, they will figure figure it out.

Anne: I think that's wonderful. And I think what I'm hearing too, is like, even if you didn't get a forensic exam, there may be ways to go forward.

Laurie: Absolutely, because what is the first thing that you want to do? You want to shower, you know, and you just get all of that off of you. So, but again, with the advances in technology, we can still get some, their cases, some DNA even after somebody has cleaned themselves out, because it could be other hairs, foreign hairs. I mean, our hair is, you know, different colors and different textures, they may be able to find find something so minute to help build that case.

Anne: Awesome. And the next question that I had was about when you said, you know that that folks will often go through a process of healing, and will will, you know, maybe not present in the same way when they get to the court date as they might have, you know, at the time when they were just, you know, thinking about the assault. And what I've seen in some of my work is, you know, the leveraging of well, you don't seem that upset, you don't seem that bothered. And so I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts about how that delay plays into that expectation that like somebody is going to be like very upset, they're going to be visibly like traumatized, you're visibly harmed. But that might not be the case, like three or five years later.

Laurie: But isn't that interesting? Just in terms of like that, that myth? And of course that question is asked all the time. Well, you don't seem upset, you know.

Anne: Yeah.

Laurie: No, you obviously were not, you know, traumatized, but there are various ways to display being upset. And you know, being in shock might just mean that you're, you know, stoic, not not crying. But I think there is also an acknowledgement of the fact that, yeah, because what I would say, oh, it's been four years, and it's been 1000s of hours of counseling for Miss X to get to this point. And just because she's poised does not mean she's not traumatized. Just because she's not crying right now does not mean because I know that these women carry this scar with them every single day, every minute of the a day. And they have just learned to cope. And there's still times where they will cry for weeks. So that would be my counter argument that because of your client, she's had to endure all of that. Just to get to this point where she's, she appears like she's okay. Yeah.

Anne: I love that. And I love that you're also highlighting that just because somebody doesn't seem upset doesn't mean that they aren't upset.

Laurie: Absolutely. I mean, I think there's so many people like right now just walking out the smiles on their face, and inside, and the world is just, you know, falling, falling apart. You know, so it's all on how you cope with the incident.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. The last question that I had, as a follow up to your really wonderful description of the process. You mentioned that, you know, if the person is convicted, then they might go to jail. And if they do go to jail, it's probably not very long, but like, probably not, it's probably not going to happen. So I was just wondering if you had any thoughts about just the difficulty that exists with accessing outcomes, or how infrequently that happens for folks.

Laurie: So this goes back to our earlier discussion about the police and when, or why, or who would invoke that process. And we very much know,

there's a really good textbook called the rich get richer, and the poor get prison. So it's really going to depend on your station in life, were you able to afford the expensive lawyer that buries the Crown in paper work, and comes up with ways to delay the trial so the victim just feels like giving up and I've been to set the sentence is really going to depend on you know, your station in life. So if it's black man, we know he's getting the max and then some, if it's a white rich man, we might get some community service. If that or maybe case, you know, little restitution, a couple \$100 here or there. So yeah, we do have to be realistic about these these outcomes. And we always know this, sometimes if you don't get your guy the first time, you know, everybody's like, you know, does things based on habit, we're going to get that, or they're going to be in jail and mess up so that their sentence is a little longer. But with the work that we are doing, once we really and truly dismantle this patriarchy in terms of how the system views women, how they view our bodies, how they feel like they are responsible for our bodies, until all of that changes, we are not going to see those real long sentences. I have seen men get life in prison for shooting a police dog, and rapists get community service. So there's a huge disparity in the system. Some jurisdictions do it better than others. But this is another area and way of place that we have to fight.

Anne: Wow. And I think that just makes me think of, I don't know if this is a little off topic, but sometimes I feel like in movies, when an animal dies, it's very upsetting. But we'll watch movies with a lot of like interpersonal violence, and not think anything of that. And I don't know, that's an interesting piece.

Laurie: Yeah and then the honest thing, like let's be real, this real talk, like if it's a young, so of course, young white, blonde hair, blue eyes, if it's a young white woman with dark hair, even the response is different. Now, when we start factoring race in, and it's a black woman, but not just a black woman, a darker skinned woman. And, you know, maybe, she's not a doctor or a lawyer, but she you know, works hard. So there now all these other judgments on her, like, why were you doing that where, you know, these, these groups of women are not going to be protected. And we know that in terms of how the system views us, we don't even want to talk about all the missing and murdered women who are victims of

trafficking and sexual assault and domestic violence. We don't even want to talk about it because it's not sexy. Right?

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. I think it really relates to like the Gabby Petito case.

Laurie: Yeah.

Anne: That has come up in the media and and I certainly think that, you know, that case deserved attention. And it's really important for us to discuss, you know, women who go missing, but there was also a lot of criticism about how much coverage she got because she was young and white and blonde. Compared to you know, countless women of colour, black women, indigenous women who go missing, and, you know, the media response, the like response on Tik Tok, the response on social media like is not the same.

Laurie: Yeah, I couldn't even believe all the magazine covers that she was on. And I was just like, wow, because when her incident occurred, there were probably dozens that day of women of colour. And then that week and the weeks that have led up, but I just thought if a proportion of those police resources went to trying to find some of these other women, what a greater place this would be. So yeah, there's still a lot, there's still a lot that we have to fight and dismantle. So we have some equity in terms of how our stories are carried. Whether or not we're believed. I mean, it's not going to make the news or not believe, you know, it's just like, you know, a 16 year old goes missing. Ah, she's 16. She's almost 18. She'll turn up, she's just at her friend's house. No, no, no, I mean, you see, ads for missing cats and dogs. So what about these women? Are they not worth that much?

Anne: And I think the important thing about this conversation, in conjunction with what we've been talking about, about, you know, what kinds of justice can be accessed, how do you how do you make that report, what is the process, I hope is just the validation of if you feel that this will not serve you or you know that it will not serve you, you just don't have to do it. And if you feel like you don't want to engage with anything that relates to the police, that that is also very valid. And so I think just bringing all these pieces together into one conversation is so important

to just lay it out, and say like, this is the landscape, right? This is a resource that exists for us, but it does not exist in the same way for everyone.

Laurie: And it wouldn't be nice if, and one of the things that I will say, and I will teach when I'm working with women is that yes, there are all of these options. And I wish that when women go to police to report a crime, whatever, it would be more, the question would be more, how can I support you? And what is it, given these options that you would like to do? And once you decide what you want to do, how can we help you through that process? And I think that that's very important, because some people don't want to go to court, some people don't even want to, you know, speak to the attorney. It may just be this happened to me, I want it reported, and now there's a record of it. And now I'm walking away because that action in and of itself was empowering, and gave me confidence. It was that first step towards my healing. So you you are quite right. I yeah women should know that there is a landscape of options. And it's not just one option. And if you don't want to call the police today, that is fine. It may not be next week, it may not be next month. But when you are ready, you always need to do things when you are ready in your own time.

Anne: I love that. We always talk about that with accessing support at our office too. If it's I think we have a poster that says if it's last night, if it was last month, if it was last year, you deserve support. So just the same energy of like, come come when you're ready, then we'll be here.

Laurie: Yeah, we'll be here. There you go.

Anne: Yeah. So I'm curious to know, when we planned this episode, we talked a little bit about some of the questions you get from survivors when they're thinking about reporting. And I'm wondering if you could share with us what some of those most common questions are?

Laurie: Sure, sure. So a lot of it, of course, has to do with with process and who they're going to be speaking to. So one of the first questions would be, what is the process like? What is the reporting process? If I decide to to, to do that and speak to somebody, what is that going to look like?

Some of that might be if I do report, can I bring somebody to me? A lot of times it's just that physical presence of somebody to come with you. Some other common questions would be, do I have to go into the police station? So, again, calling the police hard enough, but actually physically having to walk into the station where there are police officers all around, people all around, looking at you. This is the thought process, right? They're looking at me. They know what happened to me. I don't feel good about myself. I feel dirty. You start questioning it. So do I have to go to the police station? And based on that answer, it will be I get questions like, Are there female officers that I can speak to? Do I have to speak to them out in the open? You know, again being exposed. Or, you know, do we go into a room where it's private? I get questions like, will they arrest? Again, thinking about the fear, thinking about the communities that have historically had poor relationships with the police, that is real on their mind that just, you know, if I walk in based on the way I look, I want to report my crime, but are they going to arrest me? I also get questions like, Are they going to speak to the abuser, the assailant? Which is really scary. And if you are, when? So some kind of timeline so that they can put measures in place to be safer themselves. So maybe this person lives with them or lives in your, you know, residence hall. You want to make sure you're nowhere around when the police come, right? So that is also a common question. Some women want to know, can they report anonymously? And that's a tough one. Because if you want the case to move through this system, they are going to have to identify you, but that that is often a question I get. And then there are like those other questions that are a little more personal in nature. If I go to the police station, if I report my case, will my family find out, will my kids know, will my workplace be contacted? I mean, my job, I can't lose my job. If they are then I can't report. And then, um, and I'm just looking at my notes really quick. Yeah, it's about also what is going to happen to me, if I report, will I be hurt? Will I be protected if I report? But it's a myriad of questions that that women will ask, I hope, I hope those are some that are helpful.

Anne: Yeah, no, that's very helpful to just know, what kinds of questions folks are thinking about and, and some of those answers that you provide. I know in Windsor, we do have somebody at the police station. And her name is Cheryl Eastman. And she's really wonderful. And she is

somebody that you can kind of talk about the process with. And I believe she can also support you through the process of reporting. And so if you are in Windsor, and you would like to learn more about that, that option, you can find her online. Or you can, you know, you can reach out to us and we can help you get in touch.

Laurie: That's great.

Anne: Yeah, so then we only have a couple questions left, one of the last things that I'm interested to know are, you know, what are the alternatives to police reporting? We had an episode a little while back with Gillian, who is an amazing feminist lawyer in Toronto, and she discussed civil legal options for us. But what else is out there? You know, like, what are the the different things that folks could do if they want some kind of justice, but maybe don't want to go through the police?

Laurie: Sure. So I'm glad there there was somebody that educated on the legal the civil legal options, but some alternatives would be not reporting, which is what a good deal of women doing that they just don't report, and they, they suffer in silence. So that's what I don't want you to do. I don't want you to do. I want you to get linked up and connected with an office such as yours, and or even some other nonprofit or social service agency that can help you through the process. And again, the first question is going to be how can I support you through this process? What is it that you need? And then you are going to sit down and figure that out. And I'm always going to recommend some counseling. I'm always going to recommend some counseling. Some of the women that work with me because I am a criminologist. I see myself as as, as this bridge so that you know I work with you. We're going to talk about what happened, actually document it and get it on paper. Okay, get it on paper, you can do some audio as well, because this may be helpful for later. Again, we're talking about timing, it may not be right now, but that action is a really important process in or step in the process for healing. Just getting it out it can really just help. So that would be one of the first things, and then some counseling. And then I really recommend doing some other kind of work. And I think physical work is important in terms of getting this trauma out of you. So that you can, you know, be a little healthier. So

things like working out, going for walks, and then using those opportunities to, you know, work through the trauma, um, support groups, I think are another really good option, because then you get to connect with women, other survivors that understand your plight. And it's such a great way and place and space where you are going to build up that strength and that confidence that you need to get through this process. And then do some research, read up. Again, if you have questions about, you know, reporting, about the criminal justice system, start doing some some research, or, again, there's so many great organizations out there that will have factsheets and templates and videos, and start, you know, educating yourself. It's so empowering. It's so empowering about the process. But again, don't do anything you don't want to do. So whatever your comfortable comfort level is. If that's a support, group, or if that's one on one, then you do that, and then figure out again, if you will, or won't, or if you in the future, may feel like reporting.

Anne: I think this has been so helpful, and so wonderful. And I'm just so grateful for you spending time with us today.

Laurie: Absolutely.

Anne: So I would really love to know like, do you have one takeaway message you'd like to leave with our listeners, as we close out our episode today?

Laurie: You are not alone. You are not alone. I know. It can be a really lonely place, that you are not alone. And so call on your resources, which may be your your friends, your family. And it's so interesting that you will hear from friends and family that will say, I didn't know that. I didn't know that happened to you. Who did that to you? They really want to help. Don't suffer in silence. Don't suffer in silence. I'm never going to tell you to call the police. You only do that when you're comfortable doing that. But if you want some justice, then that's going to be one way to do it. And if you want that person arrested, they definitely have to call the police. But don't suffer in silence. We are here for you. And let me tell you, I believe you. I believe you.

Anne: I love that. Thank you so much Laurie for spending some time with me today.

Laurie: Absolutely. You're so welcome. Thank you for having me.

Anne: Excellent. Thanks so much. We'll share all of the resources and things that Laurie talked about in our episode description.

Laurie: Take care all.

Anne: That was our awesome interview with Laurie from Cupid Sting. As a reminder, if you want to check out Cupid Sting, all of the info about their organization is in the description to our podcast episode today, so make sure to check them out. And thanks so much for listening. The Prevent Resist Support podcast is a part of the Office of Sexual Violence at the University of Windsor. Our full Office title is the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support. You can find us on our website which is at www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support. Or you can email us at our email address which is svsupport@uwindsor.ca. So S V like sexual violence support uwindsor.ca. If you are a member of our University of Windsor community and you would like some support around sexual violence or any unwanted sexual experience, you can reach out to us at the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support on our website, which is uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support. You can also reach out to us by email at svsupport@uwindsor.ca. If you are not a member of our UWindsor community but would like to learn about support resources near you, you can check out the Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. Their website is sexualassaultsupport.ca.