

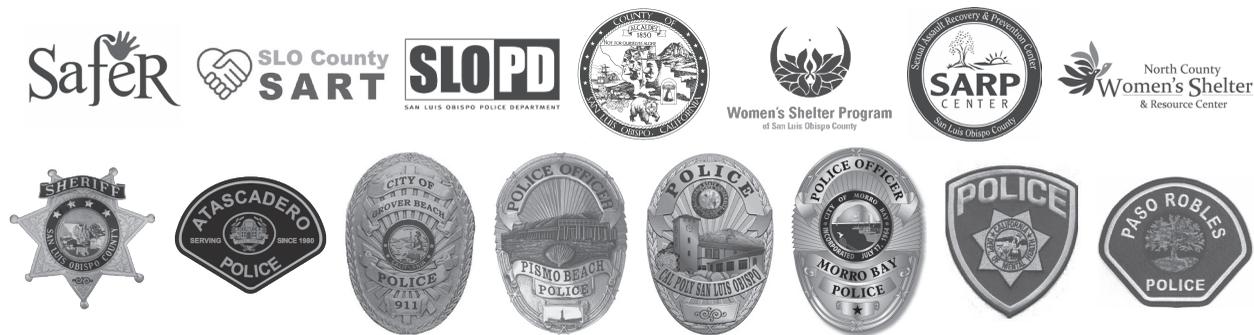
"My daughter died in a car crash."

Thank you to our sponsors & community partners:



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED, HELP IS AVAILABLE. CALL US.

"Well that's what she gets for not taking the bus."



PASO ROBLES | (805) 226-5400 | 1030 Vine Street | Paso Robles | CA | 93446

SAN LUIS OBISPO | (805) 545-8888 | 51 Zaca Lane, Ste 140 | San Luis Obispo | CA | 93401

sarpcenter.org | ncwomenshelter.org | startbybelieving.org

"I've been raped."

What will your reaction be?

PAVING THE ROAD TO JUSTICE AND HEALING

There is no shame when a loved one dies. When your car is stolen. When you're diagnosed with cancer. Friends and loved ones gather around you for support. They don't blame you for "bringing it on yourself."

It should be the same with sexual violence. Rape and sexual assault are just as unpredictable, just as devastating. But all too often, victims who have the courage to tell someone are blamed for bringing it on themselves. A terrifying attack becomes a source of shame, not support. And the pain—and shame—ripples with destructive effects on families, communities and the very fabric of our society.

Sexual violence hurts everyone.

Here in San Luis Obispo county, we are dedicated to changing the way we respond to rape and sexual assault. Our goal is to pave the way for survivors to achieve justice and healing, so the decision to come forward and seek help is a safe one. Our vision is to end the cycle of repeat offenses and assure that rapists are held accountable for their crimes. Please join us, and transform this vision to reality.

*When someone comes to you...
What will your reaction be?*

IMPROVING OUR RESPONSE

As criminal justice agencies and service organizations, we are dedicated to improving our reactions to sexual violence among professionals tasked with responding to victims and the community as a whole.

Why? Because we recognize the many steps survivors must take on the road to justice and healing. They must reach out to a friend or loved one to say they've been sexually assaulted, call the police and be interviewed in embarrassing detail and submit to a medical forensic exam that could take hours. They have to talk with advocates and counselors about their incredibly painful experience, and participate in investigations that disrupt their lives... all of this to hold rapists accountable, so everyone can live in a safer community.

There are many steps. And each step is a link in the chain of support. But like any chain, one weak link can compromise the strength of the others. Just a single negative reaction can mean the whole chain falls apart.

What's worse, this means a victory for the rapist. He remains free to rape again. And statistics show that he won't just attack once—rapists attack an average of six times. It's a frightening equation; one failed response equals five more assaults.

We must do better. And we can do better.

The *Start by Believing* campaign focuses on our individual responses, because a friend or family member is typically the first person a victim confides in after an assault. Knowing how to respond is critical—a negative response can worsen the trauma.

*One failed response equals five more assaults.
Stop the cycle and make our community safer.*

YOUR REACTION
MAKES THE DIFFERENCE



START BY *believing*
startbybelieving.org



End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the criminal justice and community response to gender-based violence. EVAWI developed the *Start by Believing* awareness campaign for communities like San Luis Obispo to use for their own local efforts.

The *Start by Believing* campaign is leading the way toward a positive community response. The goal is to inform the public, unite allies and supporters, and improve our reactions—changing the world, one response at a time.

