

### ARE YOU READY TO END THE CYCLE OF SILENCE?

Most victims of sexual assault do not report the crime to law enforcement. Many never tell anyone. Then because so few assaults are reported – most perpetrators walk free.

It's time to end this cycle. It all starts with you.

When someone tells you they were sexually assaulted, make a pledge to Start by Believing. Then spread the word. This action kit will give you the tools you need.

Ready to get started?

### WHAT IS START BY BELIEVING?

Start by Believing is a public awareness campaign designed to end the cycle of silence and change the way we respond to sexual assault. It was first launched in April 2011. Since then, thousands of people across the country have made their own personal commitment:

*I am Heather Alexander, a survivor of sexual assault, and a family member to those who are also survivors of sexual assault. When someone tells me they were raped or sexually assaulted, I Start by Believing*

*My name is Erica. I am a survivor, and the mother of an amazing young woman who trusted me enough to disclose her abuse to me last year. I am so proud of her! When someone tells me they were raped or sexually assaulted, I Start by Believing.*

But it's more than just a personal pledge. By transforming personal and professional responses to sexual assault, we can help victims pursue justice and healing.

**Failed responses... additional victims.**

**Stop the cycle and make our communities safer.**



### WHAT CAN I DO?

There are many ways you can take action. Below is a list of ideas on how to get involved – but don't stop there! Be creative and use what you know to spread the word.

**Support victims:** People often wonder what they should say when someone tells them they were sexually assaulted. The last thing they want to do is say the “wrong thing,” or make the situation worse. Don't worry! We've got you covered with these [tips](#).

### TAKE THE PLEDGE

Start by making your own personal commitment to Start by Believing.

- I pledge to Start by Believing when someone tells me about their sexual assault.
- I pledge to help survivor on the road to justice and healing.
- I pledge to end the cycle of silence.

[Pledge now](#)



Took the pledge

**Speak up:** Many people dramatically overestimate the percentage of sexual assault reports that are false. In fact, research shows that about 2-8% of sexual assault reports to law enforcement are false, far less than many people realize. Challenge these myths when you hear them!

**Take a stand:** When you hear people blame a victim for their “role” in the sexual assault, remind them that we've all made choices that decrease our safety. It is not the choice of the victim that matters – it is the decision of someone else to commit a sexual assault.



**Start a conversation:** Social media allows you to carry the message farther and faster than ever before. Use your preferred platform to engage a conversation on what it means to #StartbyBelieving.

**Make it visual:** Change your profile picture by adding a [Start by Believing](#) or, take a selfie of your [pledge](#) and post on social media.

**Tell your friends and family:** Do you belong to a social group? Book club? Knitting circle? Running group? Wherever you go, take the message.

**Engage your community:** Find out if you live in a [Start by Believing community](#). If you do, reach out and get involved. If you don't, bring people together to [become one](#).

**Give back to your community:** Looking for a place to volunteer? Check out your [local rape crisis center](#) for opportunities. Survivors need dedicated people like you to answer their call for help.

**It's time to end the cycle of silence right here, right now, starting with you.**

**Need more support?** Give us a call or send an email at [info@startbybelieving.org](mailto:info@startbybelieving.org). We're here to help. Thank you for becoming a Start by Believing ally!

