

ABOUT END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (EVAWI)

There is no shame when a loved one dies, your house is burglarized, or 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 not believed, or they are blamed. 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.**

End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) is dedicated to changing the way we respond to rape and sexual assault in our communities. With our Start by Believing campaign, our goal is to pave the way for survivors to pursue justice and healing, so the decision to come forward and seek help is a safe one. Please join us, and help transform this vision to reality.

EVAWI was founded in 2003 by Sergeant Joanne Archambault (Retired, San Diego Police Department), with the goal of improving criminal justice responses to sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence. Working with professionals both inside and outside the system, we strive to improve the way survivors are treated, pursue accountability for perpetrators, and prevent future attacks.

Yet most victims of sexual assault never report the crime to law enforcement, often because of the responses they receive from friends and family members. Our Start by Believing campaign is designed to change this. By preparing both professionals and loved ones to respond appropriately to sexual assault disclosures, we are working to improve outcomes for victims, one response at a time.

At EVAWI, we envision a world where gender-based violence is unacceptable — and the victims whose lives, families, and communities are torn apart, receive the compassion, support and justice they deserve. When we create a system that helps survivors to heal, and thrive, they will transform our world with strength, hope, and joy.



I believe you.
I'm sorry this happened.
How can I help?



Start by Believing

Start by Believing

www.startbybelieving.org



www.evawintl.org

**SEEK
THEN > SPEAK**

www.seekthenspeak.org

IT'S TIME TO START BY BELIEVING

THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TRANSFORMING THE
WAY WE RESPOND TO SEXUAL ASSAULT



WHEN A VICTIM COMES TO YOU HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

PAVING THE ROAD TO JUSTICE AND HEALING, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Start by Believing is the global campaign designed to transform the way we respond to sexual assault. It prepares both professionals and loved ones to respond appropriately to sexual assault disclosures, so victims get the support they need. The campaign was created by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI), America's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving criminal justice responses to sexual assault.

Why? Because we recognize the many steps a survivor must take on the road to justice and healing. Reaching out to a friend or loved one to say they've been sexually assaulted... Contacting law enforcement and being interviewed in embarrassing detail... Submitting to a medical forensic exam that could take hours... Talking with an advocate or counselor about an incredibly painful experience... Participating in a difficult and disruptive criminal justice process... All to hold a perpetrator accountable, so everyone can live in a safer community.

There are so 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. A friend or family member doesn't believe, and accuses the victim of "crying rape." A police officer doesn't believe, and refuses to conduct an investigation. A doctor or nurse doesn't believe, and fails to provide an exam. Just a single negative response can mean the whole chain falls apart.

What's worse, this means a victory for the perpetrator, who remains free to sexually assault again. And statistics show that rapists don't just attack once. Many re-offend, often multiple times. It's a frightening equation: One failed response can mean additional victims.

We must do better. At EVAWI, we know how. We have the expertise, the resources, the tools, and the models for best practice to help communities strengthen every link in the chain of response.

Our vision is to end the silence, stop the cycle of repeat offenses, and hold perpetrators accountable.

STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM IMPROVING RESPONSES

EVAWI focuses on connecting professionals and improving criminal justice and community responses to sexual assault. We offer opportunities for professionals from a variety of disciplines to engage in collaborative learning through national and international conferences, live and recorded webinars, online training courses, a comprehensive resource library, and other forms of training and technical assistance.

Yet most victims do not turn to professionals first. Instead, they reach out to friends and family members, when they utter those terrible words: "I was raped." Our Start by Believing campaign prepares loved ones to react positively to a sexual assault disclosure, so victims get the support they need.

But what happens next? After we Start by Believing, how do we help?

Seek Then Speak provides victims and their support people with the tools they need to gather information, explore options, and take action. Victims can even begin the process of reporting directly to law enforcement and requesting supportive services, using an agency portal called Victim Link. In other words, Seek Then Speak and Victim Link help to close gaps in service delivery and promote justice and healing.

Start by
Believing

SEEK
THEN SPEAK

VictimLink

In 2016, EVAWI began partnering with Ten8Tech, a technology company offering a cloud-based digital communication platform for law enforcement. Ten8Tech modified its patented technology to facilitate an interactive dialogue with victims of crime. With EVAWI's subject matter expertise, Ten8Tech launched Victim Link, a national platform for sexual assault reporting to law enforcement, victim services, and college campuses. The heart of Victim Link is the victim-focused portal Seek Then Speak, which allows survivors to connect directly with supportive services and reporting to authorities – but only when they are ready, at a time of their choosing. These resources form a personal technology bridge for victims to get the help they need and pursue the justice they deserve.

Together, Start by Believing, Seek Then Speak, and Victim Link equip communities with resources to empower victims of sexual assault to reach out and speak up.