

### 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 in your own community.

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 and your community all the tools to get started.

Are you ready to make your community a Start by Believing community?

### 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 and around the world have made their own personal commitments:

*My name is Marcy Hanson. I am on the Board of Directors for Galveston County Crime Stoppers and I am bringing this wonderful campaign to our community! When someone tells me they were raped or sexually assaulted, I Start by Believing.*

*My name is Amber Kanazbah Crotty. I am a Navajo Nation Council Delegate/Chairwoman of Sexual Assault Prevention committee, and a strong advocate for women and children. When someone tells me they were raped or sexually assaulted, I Start by Believing.*

*My name is Ryan. I am Criminal Investigator. As a husband, father, and male role model, I strive to become better for the people involved. When someone tells me they were raped or sexually assaulted, I Start by Believing.*

*My name is Beth Bohon. I am retired from the US Postal Service. I have not had personal experience with sexual violence, but know that believing will help all victims! 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.**



### WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

It's time to end this cycle of silence, and change the way we respond to sexual assault. The first step is to personally take the pledge. It all starts with you. Make your personal commitment to Start by Believing.

- ✓ I pledge to Start by Believing if someone tells me about their sexual assault.
- ✓ I pledge to support survivors on their road to justice and healing.
- ✓ I pledge to end the cycle of silence.

[Pledge now](#)



In our [personal action kit](#), we provide you with ways to get involved with the campaign on a personal level. The focus of this kit is to get your community involved – so keep reading for tips on how to become a Start by Believing community.

### WHAT NEXT?

After you've taken your own personal pledge, it's time to get others on board. The first critical step is a brainstorming session. You need to figure out what you want to accomplish and evaluate what resources are available in your community. To help you get started, here are a few questions you might think about:

- Who are the key community members you want involved in the campaign?
- Who will provide leadership for the campaign?
- What is the scope of your campaign – what do you want to accomplish?



- Will you use social media? If so, how?
- Will you work toward a city or state proclamation?
- Will you reach out to local media for coverage?
- How will you market the campaign?
- What is your target launch date?

## WHAT DOES A TYPICAL START BY BELIEVING CAMPAIGN LOOK LIKE?

Perhaps the most exciting thing about communities having the freedom to build their own campaign is that no two campaigns look exactly the same. We are amazed at the countless ideas communities have come up with. However, here are a few commonalities we see...

**Many campaigns are multidisciplinary:** It's important to bring a diverse group of community leaders to the table. Key players often include: law enforcement officers, victim advocates, health care providers, prosecutors, and social service agencies. Depending on your campaign focus, you may also consider local colleges or universities, military installations, local businesses, and more.

**Most campaigns use a variety of strategies:** Some campaigns have access to incredible marketing resources, but others do not. The point is this – you need to take a look at the people involved in your community and make the best use of their specific skills. And don't re-create the wheel! Hundreds of communities have already been in your shoes. Build on their successes.

**Many campaigns launch in April, as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month:** Of course, you can launch your campaign whenever you want. But, we do encourage everyone to participate in [Start by Believing Day](#), which is the first Wednesday in April. It's incredible to see the impact across the country, and around the world, all in a single day.

**Most campaigns use social media:** Social media is a powerful tool for creating positive change! Social media allows you to spread your message farther and faster, and it also allows people across the globe to see your efforts simply by using #startbybelieving! Post pictures of your events, upload your videos, and share the media coverage you worked so hard to achieve.

**Campaigns begin because someone was inspired:** After hearing about the campaign at our 2014 annual conference, members of the Denver Police Department were inspired to bring the message home. With a goal of making the campaign as inclusive as possible, a team immediately went to work to secure the partnerships that galvanized the Denver government, and the entire community to Start by Believing. You can do the same. Be the one who motivates your community to take action.



### READY, SET, GO!

After you've done some brainstorming and decided what your campaign will look like, you can draw ideas and inspiration from other communities.

**Kick off your campaign with a press conference:** Follow the example of Denver, Colorado, where their event was a true representation of what multidisciplinary collaboration looks like. Participants included Mayor Michael B. Hancock's office, the Denver District Attorney's Office, the Denver Department of Public Safety, the Denver Police Department, the Denver Sheriff's Department, the Denver Fire Department, Denver Health Medical Center, the Sexual Assault Interagency Council, and The Blue Bench (a community-based sexual assault advocacy program). Also featured was a [young male survivor and his mother](#).

**Use creative marketing to reach thousands:** In Austin, Texas, campaign organizers displayed the Start by Believing message on 13 billboards in key locations across the city of Austin in both English and Spanish. By the end of the campaign, an estimated 77% of Austin's population saw the Start by Believing message. In fact, people saw the message at least 9 times on average. Approximately one million people were reached!



The campaign message in Denver was also prominently displayed on three billboards throughout the city, as well as 50 bus shelter advertisements, and 20 Yellow Cab displays. An additional 2,000 Yellow Cabs had bumper stickers proclaiming the Start by Believing message.



**Get local policy leaders on board:** In the bi-state greater Kansas City Metropolitan area, 17 cities and their police departments officially became Start by Believing communities in April 2016, led by Mayor Sly James of Kansas City, Missouri. We have a [proclamation template](#) ready to go.

Kansas City, Missouri  
Proclamation Ceremony



**Use social media:** In Orlando, Mayor Buddy Dyer announced his support of Start by Believing by sending out a tweet with his commitment placard. We've said it before, and it's worth saying again – use social media!

Orlando Mayor  
Buddy Dyer



Here are a few of our personal favorites:

Today Rice County Minnesota let the air out of victim blaming excuses and took on #StartByBelieving philosophy...



Be Someone's hero.  
Woof. #startbybelieving



It's #StartByBelievingDay! Tweet  
us a photo with friends, family, or  
coworkers if you #StartbyBelieving

Iowa State University &  
Ames Police Department



**Reach a diverse audience:** In Utah, campaign organizers created this excellent [multi-lingual video](#) in recognition of Start by Believing day in 2016.

In Travis County, the non-profit organization SafePlace reached out to the Deaf Community in Travis County, and beyond. This [video](#) sends a message of support and encouragement for Deaf survivors in American Sign Language.

**Make a video of why everyone should Start by Believing:** The Central Virginia Start by Believing taskforce hosted a video challenge to encourage various groups to declare why they Start by Believing. [See all the videos for yourself.](#)

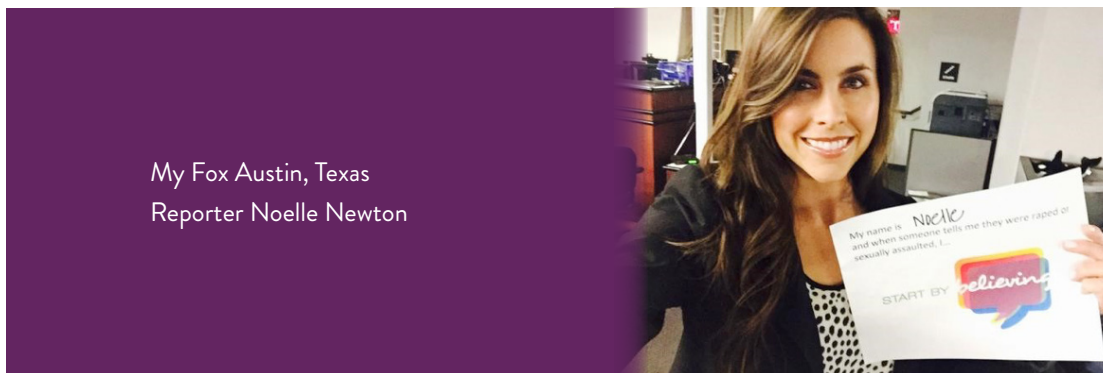
Sam Houston State University created this excellent [video](#) of students and professors banding together to pledge their commitment.

In this wonderful multi-disciplinary [video](#) from Shelby County, Alabama you will follow the powerful story of a survivor and professionals in the community.



And finally, [meet Ned](#).

**Get local media on board:** In Denver, 9 News Anchor Kyle Clark leveraged his social media platform to pledge his own personal commitment to Start by Believing and [share the stories of survivors](#).



My Fox Austin, Texas  
Reporter Noelle Newton

**Need more support?** Give us a call or send an email to [info@startbybelieving.org](mailto:info@startbybelieving.org). We're here to help your community join the hundreds of others transforming our response to sexual assault. Thank you for becoming a Start by Believing ally!



Brought to you by End Violence Against Women International, America's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving criminal justice responses to sexual assault.