Sexual assault survivors often face disbelief and blame when they disclose their abuse, decreasing the chance they’ll report to police or seek help. This is why End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) created Start by Believing (SBB), the global campaign challenging each of us to do better. In the 10 years since SBB was founded, hundreds of communities have launched campaigns, 8 states have issued formal proclamations, and thousands of individuals have taken the personal pledge to Start by Believing when someone comes to them for help.

643 START BY BELIEVING CAMPAIGNS

MY STORY: KERRIAN BEASLEY

My name is Kerrian Beasley, and I’m a survivor of sexual assault.

When I first met Detective C, I just thought he was a person coming to work just for a paycheck and I felt he didn’t believe anything I told him. It wasn’t until I seen how committed and dedicated he was with my case and myself did I feel like a fool for judging a “book by its cover.”

He conquered every sharp turn, and every steep hill that was thrown our way throughout my rape case and if it wasn’t for him that demon would not be behind bars for eternity.

So I am thankful for the sleepless nights and the time he put into figuring out my case and ensuring justice was served.

With funding from the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, EVAWI founded the Survivor Voices Project, elevating survivor stories in all our training programs and resources. Kerrian’s story is just one of these powerful voices.

Start by Believing Highlights

10,570 Total Pledges

When the first person I told believed me, it took away all my anxiety and fear to continue telling my story. I Start by Believing. — Angela

9 International Campaigns

Australia
Bahamas
Cameroon
Canada
Italy
Mexico
Nigeria
Spain
Zimbabwe

108 College Campuses

8 State Proclamations
End Violence Against Women International gives communities hands-on assistance to launch and sustain SBB campaigns that spread the message, “We believe and support survivors.” Communities use our free toolkits to educate the public through live and virtual events, teaching them what to say and do when a survivor discloses. We also offer training resources for law enforcement and other professionals, improving every facet of the community response.

Resources can be found at startbybelieving.org.

As a Special Victims Unit Detective, I have seen firsthand a great amount of fear, guilt, and shame in the eyes of the survivors I work with. Regardless of what happens throughout the criminal justice process, I want to make it clear to every survivor that I am a safe person to report to, that I will not judge them, that I will give them as much control in the process as possible, and I will support them in the decisions they make moving forward. I want them to know that I will never start by doubting them. I will be open to hearing all parts of their experience, and I will Start by Believing.

- Aaron

Celebrate 10 Years

Sergeant Joanne Archambault (Retired) reflects on the purpose, history, and impact of the SBB campaign over 10 years.

MY STORY: CECILIA RIVERIA

The details of my sexual assault are the biggest secret I’ve carried.

I was assaulted when I was a teenager and at the time, I wanted to forget. I was ashamed of what happened, and I blamed myself.

I didn’t want to shatter the perfect image that my loved ones had of me, so I didn’t tell my family or my friends.

Over 20 years later when I disclosed the details of my assault, I realized the weight I carried from that trauma.

I am thankful for a loving partner who made me feel safe enough to share my story but above all, I am thankful that he believed me.

START BY BELIEVING RESOURCES

START BY BELIEVING VIDEO

Our new video inspires people to take the personal pledge, and join the SBB movement.

When someone tells you they were sexually assaulted, how will you respond?

As a Special Victims Unit Detective, I have seen firsthand a great amount of fear, guilt, and shame in the eyes of the survivors I work with. Regardless of what happens throughout the criminal justice process, I want to make it clear to every survivor that I am a safe person to report to, that I will not judge them, that I will give them as much control in the process as possible, and I will support them in the decisions they make moving forward. I want them to know that I will never start by doubting them. I will be open to hearing all parts of their experience, and I will Start by Believing.

- Aaron