

## ABOUT END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (EVAWI)

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.



**Start by Believing**

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Explore Your Options

[startbybelieving.org](http://startbybelieving.org)



[evawintl.org](http://evawintl.org)



**Start by Believing**



## 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.

SEEKING JUSTICE TOGETHER, ONE RESPONSE AT A TIME.  
EVERY RESPONSE MATTERS.  
**YOUR** RESPONSE MATTERS.

### 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?

Explore Your Options is designed to help sexual assault survivors and support people privately gather information and explore options for medical care, supportive services, and reporting to police. Emphasis is placed on answering real-world questions survivors are likely to have, including how to access each option, whether there are costs involved, and whether they can bring a support person with them. There is also information for support people, offering concrete tips for how to respond in a helpful way to sexual assault survivors. All this helps reduce anxiety, increase accuracy, and keeps survivors in the driver's seat.

**Start by  
Believing**  **Explore  
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Our vision is to end the silence, stop the cycle of repeat offenses, and hold perpetrators accountable.