



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars”. Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter March 2016

Hi Folks,

Are you getting excited? Spring is just around the corner...and yesterday, the temperature went up to seventy degrees. There was singing and dancing in the streets...well, a bit of an exaggeration...but there were lots of birds chirping and turkeys squabbling over mating rights, a musical potpourri, courtesy of Nature.

The month of March is a time of awareness on Self-Injury & Harm, Multiple Sclerosis and Women's History. These are some of the resources shared in this newsletter. And as always, lots more, so please review the Newsletter Contents listing, scroll around and dare to be adventurous and read something you normally wouldn't peruse; expanding our horizons is always a good thing. They say we gain new neural pathways trying new things. Heck, as I get older, I'll take all of the new brain cells and neural activity I can.

And I would be remiss if I didn't draw attention to this - [Music In Our Schools Month®](#) - National Association for Music Education.

From my bully pulpit here in New Hampshire, if we had more music, arts, and play in our schools, we'd have less kids stressed out, depressed and being medicated.

Take care, Michael Skinner [MS]

FYI – ***Thoughts to share***, some recent blog posts of mine. Monday's Music, a time to share why I wrote or have performed a song or why other songs resonate for me.

[“Unity” by Shinedown – Monday's Music](#) - United We Stand, Divided We Fall

“We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.” J.K. Rowling

["PIRATES" - Monday's Music](#) - *“Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” African Proverb*

[“If I Were A Carpenter” - Monday's Music](#) - *“Where words fail, music speaks.” Hans Christian Andersen*

[Healing the Loss or Lack of Love](#) - *“In the absence of love, there is nothing worth fighting for.” Elijah*

Wood

[Finding Peace of Mind](#) - *“Life is a great big canvas, throw all the paint on it you can.” Danny Kaye*

“In the hour of adversity be not without hope, for crystal rain falls from black clouds.” Persian poem

Newsletter Contents:

- 1] 39 Messages to People Who Self-Harm, From People Who've Been There - Sarah Schuster
- 2] To Write Love On Her Arms - is a non-profit movement dedicated to presenting hope
- 3] SELF INJURY AWARENESS DAY - Research, Education, Advocacy & Support
- 4] Submit a Story - The Mighty
- 5] Self-Injury Awareness Day - Video slideshow from LifeSIGNS
- 6] LifeSIGNS - Self-Injury Guidance & Network Support
- 7] March Is Self-Injury Awareness Month - Terezia Farkas – Huffington Post
- 8] Danielle Nicole Bienvenu – Author, Singer, Songwriter, Photographer, Motivational Speaker
- 9] The 5 Qualities That Tell You If a Therapist Is Effective - David N. Elkins, Ph.D
- 10] Pediatric guidelines now urge holistic health and well being checks - PBS News Hour -You Tube
- 11] When Danai Gurira couldn't find complex stories about African women, she wrote her own - PBS News Hour – YouTube
- 12] National Women's History Project - Our History is Our Strength
- 13] Women's History Month 2016 - The Library of Congress
- 14] Black Women’s Blueprint, Inc. envisions a world where women and girls of African descent are fully empowered and where gender, race and other disparities are erased
- 15] Healing Through Creativity Festival [HTC] - Where trauma & chronic illness survivors and supporters are invited to share art, music, writing, poetry and any other creative forms
- 16] Male Abuse Survivors: Breaking the Silence – ABC News Story - Utah – video
- 17] Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month - The Multiple Sclerosis Association of America
- 18] Join a Local Support Group : National Multiple Sclerosis Society
- 19] MS-UK - Affected by MS? Need to talk? We are here for you, wherever you are in the world
- 20] How one chief tried to reverse police wrongs of the civil rights era - PBS News
- 21] Cyndi Lauper Opens Shelter for Homeless LGBT Youth - Matthew Perpetua - Rolling Stone
- 22] First-of-its-kind domestic violence shelter for all-male victims opens in Arkansas
- 23] Arkansas Online - Batesville nonprofit opens domestic-violence shelter for men
- 24] It's Time to Acknowledge Male Victims of Domestic Violence - Bari Zell Weinberger, Esq.
- 25] Recovery International - Mental Health Peer to Peer Self Help Support Groups
- 26] Why Aren't More African Americans Opening Up About Their Mental Health? - The Root
- 27] 10 Things to Remember About Toxic Family Members – Marc Chernoff
- 28] Resistance: "I Have Nothing to Talk About Today" - Steven Reidbord, M.D. - Psychology Today
- 29] How Mental Illness is Misrepresented in the Media - US News & World Report

*“Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.”
David Augsburger*

1] [39 Messages to People Who Self-Harm, From People Who've Been There](#) - Sarah Schuster @ The Mighty

Editor's note: If you struggle with self-harm, the following post could be potentially triggering. You

can contact the [Crisis Text Line](#) by texting “START” to 741-741.

In honor of **Self-Injury Awareness Day**, we teamed up with **To Write Love on Her Arms** to ask people who consider themselves in “recovery” from self-harm one question: What’s one message you want to send someone who self-harms and isn’t as far along on their journey?

Their answers bust self-harm out of the shadows, and prove if you do self-harm, you are not alone. There is hope, and people are ready to support you.

But don’t take our word for it. Here are messages from people who’ve been there:

“It’s OK to ask for help. You don’t have to handle it on your own.”

“You are worth more than the harm you do to yourself. Learning to love yourself is the start.”

“Find other ways to satisfy the urge. Call a friend. Color paper. Take a shower. Take a walk. Listen to music. Do whatever you need to do to make the urge go away. You are loved, and it will be OK.”

“I’m almost three years self-harm free. I never thought I would live to be 20, let alone happy and healthy. It’s hard, and recovery isn’t pretty. It comes with relapses, nights alone crying and fighting the urge, feeling utterly alone. But the most beautiful thing happens when you realize it’s been a week since you hurt yourself. Then a month, and eventually a year. It’s all worth it.”

“A relapse does not determine your future. The urges will go away even if you don’t act on them. It can be grueling and difficult to wait them out, but they will go away. You are not alone in this. Never forget that.”

“Realize you need people. Hiding and recoiling seems to be the gut reaction, however don’t let it take over. Find people you trust and share with them. No matter how silly you might think you sound, share it! Let others in so they can hold you up when you can’t yourself. We need other people.”

“Forgive yourself. Forgive yourself for feeling upset, depressed or angry - or whatever it is that’s driving you to self-harm. Self-harm does not make you weak or shameful; it is a symptom of something more. You can recover, although it might not be easy. Learn to be patient with yourself and others throughout the process, and always forgive, so that you can move on. None of these things will be easy, but they will all be worth it.”

“Don’t be afraid to talk to people. I promise there are so many human beings who have such a deep love for you; they want to listen to your pain... they want to listen. Conversation is key towards healing, towards recovery. We rarely talk about relapse, yet it is part of reality. And each relapse is a building block to self love. But you are strong and you are resilient. We are all rooting for you.”

“Your recovery is your recovery, but it can be a collective experience. Be gracious with your story and your journey.”

“Recovery will not happen by telling yourself you need to stop. You’ve known that all along. Recovery happens as we learn to trust this life to hold us through what we cannot stand.” [Learn more](#)

Sarah Schuster is the mental health editor at The Mighty. She thinks every day should be a mental health day. Follow her on Twitter [@saraheliztweets](#)

*“It is your ability as a creative person to envision positive change that will make a difference.”
Patricia Johanson*

2] [To Write Love On Her Arms](#) - is a non-profit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. TWLOHA exists to encourage, inform, inspire, and also to invest directly into treatment and recovery. - [Facebook](#) page

3] [SELF INJURY AWARENESS DAY](#) - Research, Education, Advocacy & Support - An orange ribbon: a symbol of hope for a misunderstood problem.

March 1 is National Self-Injury Awareness Day, a day meant for learning about self-injury and providing resources to those who need help.

In honor of self-injury awareness day, we ask, *How Much Do You Know About Self-Injury?*

[Take our online test](#) – 5 Questions

4] [Submit a Story](#) - The Mighty - a place to share your personal experiences with disability, disease and mental illness. [*If upset with their choice of verbiage, please let them know. MS*]

“Vulnerability is not winning or losing it is the willingness to show up when you can't control the outcome.” Brene Brown

5] [Self-Injury Awareness Day](#) - Video slideshow from **LifeSIGNS** UK - YouTube 2:28 minutes

Compassion • Patience • Respect

6] [LifeSIGNS](#) - Self-Injury Guidance & Network Support - We provide fantastic information about self-injury and while we never tell anyone to 'stop', we do support people as and when they choose to make changes in their lives.

“Often it's the deepest pain which empowers you to grow into your highest self.” Karen Salmansohn

7] [March Is Self-Injury Awareness Month](#) - Terezia Farkas – Huffington Post

March is self injury awareness month in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. There are two-million cases, mostly youth, reported annually in the United States. The stigma of self-injury needs to be broken.

Self-injury, sometimes called self-harm, is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical injury to your body. Self-harm by itself isn't suicidal behaviour. But if the emotional distress that causes self-injury continues, it can cause suicidal thoughts.

Self-injury is an attempt at instant relief from an emotional pain. We often think of cutting when it comes to self-injury, but self-injury includes actions like burning, pulling hair out in clumps, breaking bones, scratching, bruising, and drinking something harmful like bleach. The physical pain of self-harm is often easier to deal with than the emotional pain behind it. Self-injury is a coping mechanism. It can help you deal with intense emotional distress by creating a calming sensation or the feeling that you have control of a situation. It's also real pain. You can see the injury and know why it's hurting as opposed to emotional pain.

Self-injury happens across all genders, races, beliefs and ages. [Read the entire article](#)

Terezia Farkas is an International best-selling author, Huffington Post blogger, CNN contributor, and columnist of [Depression Help](#) for Beliefnet. She is a Director of the LE National Executive of CDRIN. Terezia was invited to attend the Global Crisis of Depression Summit offered by the Economist at Kings Place in London on November 25, 2014. Her bestseller *Heart of Love Evolution – Surviving Depression* is available on Amazon. To catch up on what Terezia is doing, visit www.tereziafarkas.com or [Twitter](#).

[Heart of Love Evolution - Surviving Depression](#): Terezia M. Farkas: Amazon.com: Books

A powerful, emotional journey through depression and suicidal thoughts. Author Terezia Farkas brings to life her own incredible story with painful, stark precision so that others can journey away from their personal pain into the brightness of love. Terezia grew up with an emotionally abusive, alcoholic father and a mother dying from cancer. When her mother died, Terezia went from grief to severe depression.

This heartfelt, stirring book provides you with a real-world guide for getting past your most challenging personal situations and emerging through the other side with self-love and hope.

Resources shared in the past:

[Self-Injury Behaviour](#) – Michelle Bentley - Tips for Families and Caregivers – PDF - #12

& [Healing Self-Injury](#) – Ruta Mazellis [*One of the pioneers for healing & awareness. MS*]
“Vulnerability is not winning or losing it is the willingness to show up when you can't control the outcome.” Brene Brown

8] [Danielle Nicole Bienvenu](#) – Author, Singer, Songwriter, Photographer, Motivational Speaker & Advocate [*& a lovely smile!! MS*]

Creativity is in my blood. Laughter. Honest words. Bare lyrics. Inspiration. Music. Ink. These are all parts of me and they are still emerging. I'm a warrior caught in a woman's frame, a sorceress with words aflame, a temptress with a voice to own, a dance to the song you've never sung. Life is meant to be lived and I live it through my voice... in novels, in music, in photography, and in advocacy.

XOXO, D

Danielle's life could almost be misconstrued for a novel itself. At 29, Danielle is a professional author

and poet. Her full name is Danielle Nicole Bienvenu, Lady of Estons, or simply known as Lady Estons. She has won international pageants. The former dance teacher has been dancing from an early age, winning awards for her choreography and dance while performing internationally. As a former French teacher, Danielle is fluent in French as well as English but she also dabbles in Spanish, German, American Sign Language, Hebrew, and Mandarin. After living abroad in Europe, traveling around the world, and teaching English in China, she decided to return to her native Texas.

Danielle is a seasoned missionary who likes beads and feathers. She enjoys playing guitar to her own beat, dancing in grocery store aisles, and singing whenever the urge strikes. She is often found with pen in hand. She has two furry babies, her Golden Retrievers: Duchess Annabelle and Toby Maximus. Danielle is outspoken about being a voice for the voiceless whether it may be human or animal, and is a motivational speaker on overcoming depression and suicide. She adamantly volunteers to help victims of domestic violence and rape. It isn't uncommon to find her in a recording studio or performing her music in her spare time. She loves to read as much as she enjoys writing.

Here are some facts about Danielle that you may not know:

- Danielle began song-writing at the age of 6 and writing stories at 10 years old.
- She became a professional model in print and on runway at 10.
- Danielle became a professional actress at 12; doing commercials, theatre, and acting in a pilot series with Haley Duff and Shelly Duval.
- She wrote her debut novel, "Against All Odds: The Ruby Princess" at 14 years old and published it at 17.
- Like the characters from her first novel, at 18 she received her Coat of Arms from France.
- Danielle has an extensive education. She has her Master's from Oxford Brookes University in England in International Law and International Relations (focus on human rights).
- She has two certificates from Harvard University in Justice and National Security.
- She has a certificate in Counter-Terrorism from Georgetown University.
- She also holds two Bachelor's degrees from Lamar University in Political Science and French with a minor in Creative Writing.

Danielle is best known for her mystery and psychological thrillers, romance novels, poetic symbolism, and works against social injustices. Her genres range from thrillers, mystery, romance, historical fiction, drama, young adult, paranormal, comedy, poetry, nouveau romain, Christian and novellas. To date, she has 16 published novels.

"The strongest people I've met have not been given an easier life. They've learned to create strength and happiness from dark places." Kristen Butler

9] [The 5 Qualities That Tell You If a Therapist Is Effective](#) - David N. Elkins, Ph.D Psychology Today

They see you as a partner not just a patient.

So you've decided to go to therapy. You're not alone: 10 million Americans receive psychotherapy every year. And there's a good reason for this: Therapy works. At least it does if you find a good, effective therapist. But how do you select a "good, effective" therapist, one who will truly help you?

Before answering, I need to debunk a few myths about how to select a good therapist.

Myth #1: A therapist attended an excellent university, so she must be good, right?

Not necessarily. Training is important, but it doesn't guarantee that a therapist is effective. Good therapists and bad therapists graduate from top-notch universities. Looking at the diplomas on the wall is not the best way to select a therapist.

Myth #2: A therapist has a doctoral degree, so he must be good.

Degrees are important, as are other credentials, but they should not be the main criterion for choosing a therapist. In fact, many marriage and family therapists, as well as clinical social workers, have a master's degree—and yet they are highly effective.

Myth #3: A therapist has written numerous books and scholarly articles on counseling and therapy. Surely, she is an effective therapist.

Writing books and scholarly articles is important, but does not an effective therapist make. Just because someone is a prolific writer does not mean that she's an effective therapist.

Myth #4: A therapist uses only "scientifically validated" techniques, so he must be effective.

This is probably the biggest myth of all. Actually, the research shows that techniques have relatively little to do with effective therapy. Many people think that if techniques work in medicine, then they should work in psychotherapy. However, what many do not realize is that psychotherapy is not a medical procedure. Instead, it's a relational endeavor, an interpersonal process. So when a therapist claims to use only "scientific" techniques, it really doesn't mean much in terms of whether or not she's effective - and it's not a good reason to select a therapist.

So how can one select a good, effective therapist?

Extensive research on how psychotherapy works can help answer this question. The evidence shows that the primary determinants of effectiveness in psychotherapy are the human and relational elements. In other words, a good, effective psychotherapist is not a "junior physician" wielding medical-like techniques. Instead, an effective therapist is a warm, caring, empathic, and knowledgeable person who knows how to interact with a client in a way that is healing. If you want to find a good, effective therapist, look for that kind of person. Following are some descriptors of effective therapists.

Characteristics Based on the Research

1. An effective therapist begins by focusing on the personal and cultural needs of the client to determine the best therapeutic approach. There are many "brands" of psychotherapy. Therapists who are attuned to the latest research do not impose their particular brand on clients. Instead, they begin by talking with the client to determine, in a collaborative way, the type of approach that best fits the client's needs.

2. An effective therapist gathers routine feedback from clients relative to how the client feels about the therapy and the therapist. In other words, instead of being "therapist-centered," effective therapists are

"client-centered." The client is regarded as a partner who knows, better than the therapist, whether therapy is working. In short, effective therapists engage the client as a full partner in the healing process by routinely checking with the client to see how the therapy is going.

3. An effective therapist is interpersonally sensitive and skilled. Effective therapists listen. They extend empathy, acceptance, and care in ways that are emotionally healing.

4. An effective therapist is culturally aware and realizes that every relational encounter is, in a sense, a multicultural encounter. Effective therapists have cultural humility and are open to learning from their clients.

5. An effective therapist supports and activates the self-righting potentials of the client. In other words, effective therapists do not take away the client's power by insisting that "doctor knows best." Instead, they realize that the client's own potentials are the power center of effective therapy and they do everything possible to support and activate those self-healing potentials.

There are thousands of good, effective therapists who have these qualities. Take the time find the one who's right for you. Go to some "trial" sessions with different therapists if necessary. It's worth the effort to find the kind of therapist I've described - and if you do, I predict your life will never be the same.

David N. Elkins, Ph.D., [The Human Dimension](#) From spirituality and therapy to healing.

David is a clinical psychologist and professor emeritus of psychology in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, where he trained psychotherapists for 30 years. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA) and has served twice as president of Division 32 of APA, Society for Humanistic Psychology. He is the author of three books: *Beyond Religion: Building a Spiritual Life Outside the Walls of Traditional Religion* (Quest Books, 1998), *Humanistic Psychology: A Clinical Manifesto* (University of the Rockies Press, 2009), and *The Human Elements of Psychotherapy: A Nonmedical Model of Emotional Healing* (American Psychological Association, 2015).

"Words spoken from the heart and filled with a powerful wish for someone's happiness can deeply touch that person's life and revive his or her spirit, becoming a source of inspiration." Daisaku Ikeda

10] [Pediatric guidelines now urge holistic health and well being checks](#) - PBS News Hour - You Tube 5:18 minutes

New guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics released Wednesday recommend that, during routine checkups, physicians also screen children for signs of poverty. The move is part of a larger effort to improve mental health and physical development in adolescents. Hari Sreenivasan talks to Dr. Renee Jenkins, former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, for more.

Census figures show one in five children in the country lives in poverty, which can contribute to higher rates of asthma and obesity, poor language development, and increased infant mortality.

The new guidelines encourage doctors to ask patients about basic needs, such as food, heat and housing during well-child visits, and to help them connect with community resources that might be of help.

Dr. Renee Jenkins is a former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics who currently teaches at Howard University Medical School. [PBS News Hour with transcript](#)

“What is relatively easy for you could be really difficult for someone else. Don't judge people. You don't know what it took for them to be here today, what they've given up, the extent of their bravery, the mountains and valleys they've waded through. Consider people in a kinder light and we will find heroes and heroines in one another.” S.C Lourie

11] [When Danai Gurira couldn't find complex stories about African women, she wrote her own](#) - PBS News Hour - YouTube 3:09 minutes

Danai Gurira is a playwright and performer who wants to make sure women of color don't search in vain for stories they can relate to. Her latest play, "**Eclipsed**," is premiering on Broadway, and she also has a starring role in AMC's "*The Walking Dead*." Gurira offers her **Brief but Spectacular** take on growing up in Zimbabwe and telling African stories on American soil.

ECLIPSED is the story of five extraordinary women brought together by upheaval in their homeland of Liberia. They forge a close-knit community... one that inspires them to feats of increasingly greater strength. Directed by South African-born LIESL TOMMY (The Good Negro, Appropriate), **Eclipsed** is a stirring tale of hope, humor and resilience - and the only new play by a woman on Broadway this season.

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Albert Einstein

12] [National Women's History Project](#) - Our History is Our Strength – *Writing Women Back Into History*

The National Women's History Project recognizes and celebrates the diverse and historic accomplishments of women by providing informational services and educational and promotional materials.

Women's History Month – As recently as the 1970's, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in the K-12 curriculum or in general public consciousness. To address this situation, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a “Women's History Week” celebration for 1978.

The week March 8th, International Women's Day, was chosen as the focal point of the observance. The local Women's History Week activities met with enthusiastic response, and dozens of schools planned special programs for Women's History Week. Over one-hundred community women participated by doing special presentations in classrooms throughout the country and an annual “Real Woman” Essay Contest drew hundreds of entries. The finale for the week was a celebratory parade and program held in the center of downtown Santa Rosa, California.

Mobilizing a Movement - In 1979, Molly Murphy MacGregor, a member of our group, was invited to participate in The Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College, which was chaired by noted

historian, Gerda Lerner and attended by the national leaders of organizations for women and girls. When the participants learned about the success of the Sonoma County's Women's History Week celebration, they decided to initiate similar celebrations within their own organizations, communities, and school districts. They also agreed to support an effort to secure a "National Women's History Week."

Presidential and Congressional Support - The first steps toward success came in February 1980 when President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week. In the same year, Representative Barbara Mikulski, who at the time was in the House of Representatives, and Senator Orrin Hatch co-sponsored a Congressional Resolution for National Women's History Week 1981. This co-sponsorship demonstrated the wide-ranging political support for recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the achievements of American women.

A National Lobbying Effort - As word spread rapidly across the nation, state departments of education encouraged celebrations of National Women's History Week as an effective means to achieving equity goals within classrooms. Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Oregon, Alaska, and other states developed and distributed curriculum materials for all of their public schools. Organizations sponsored essay contests and other special programs in their local areas. Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities were celebrating National Women's History Week, supported and encouraged by resolutions from governors, city councils, school boards, and the U.S. Congress.

Each year, the dates of National Women's History Week, (the week of March 8th) changed and every year a new lobbying effort was needed. Yearly, a national effort that included thousands of individuals and hundreds of educational and women's organizations was spearheaded by the National Women's History Project.

National Women's History Month - By 1986, 14 states had already declared March as Women's History Month. This momentum and state-by-state action was used as the rationale to lobby Congress to declare the entire month of March 1987 as National Women's History Month. In 1987, Congress declared March as National Women's History Month in perpetuity. A special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American women.

"I cannot consent to take the position that the door of hope - the door of opportunity - is to be shut upon any man, no matter how worthy, purely upon the grounds of race or color. Such an attitude would, according to my convictions, be fundamentally wrong." Theodore Roosevelt

13] [Women's History Month 2016](#) - The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in paying tribute to the generations of women whose commitment to nature and the planet have proved invaluable to society.

14] [Black Women's Blueprint, Inc.](#) envisions a world where women and girls of African descent are fully empowered and where gender, race and other disparities are erased.

We work to place Black women and girls' lives as well as their particular struggles squarely within the context of the larger racial justice concerns of Black communities and are committed to building movements where gender matters in broader social justice organizing so that all members of our communities gain social, political and economic equity. We engage in progressive research, historical documentation, policy advocacy and organizing steeped in the struggles of Black women within their diverse communities and within dominant culture.

An Invitation to the Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, April 28- May 1, 2016.

[Tell Your Story](#) - This narrative is being gathered for the Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Black Women's Blueprint. The purpose of this initiative is to give voice and obtain information to help develop anti-rape strategies and strategies to prevent sexual assault and sexual abuse in Black/African American communities in the U.S. This project was conceived and developed using a Critical Participatory Action model. "Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a more activist approach. PAR is an approach to community narratives that values the significant knowledge people hold about their lives and experiences. PAR positions those most intimately impacted by research as leaders in shaping research questions, framing interpretations, and designing meaningful research products and actions" (The Public Science Project).

Your participation in this project is voluntary. The procedure involves filling an online form. Your responses will be anonymous and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address. The narratives collected from this initiative will be for community organizing, human rights advocacy, Black women's history archiving and scholarly purposes.

If you wish to engage further in this work, you may choose to complete additional information. Completing this information is voluntary and is not required. If you have any questions about the initiative, please contact BlackWomen@blueprintny.org [Questionnaire](#)

"Be strong enough to stand alone, smart enough to know when you need help, and brave enough to ask for it." Mark Ameno

15] [Healing Through Creativity Festival](#) [HTC] - Where trauma & chronic illness survivors and supporters are invited to share art, music, writing, poetry and any other creative forms to inspire, educate and promote awareness.

Saturday, October 29, 2016 - Hours: TBA - at the Bluefield Area Arts Center at 500 Bland Street, Bluefield, WV 24701. Contact us to help, participate or volunteer. Free to enter and attend.

Artistic works displays - outreach exhibits - music - poetry - all art forms are welcome.

HTC is a free Art Event for Survivors of Trauma including Rape, Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Crime, War Trauma, Disability, Illness, Accidents, Grief, Loss & other Trauma.

[Entry Guidelines](#) & Contact info – htcfestival@yahoo.com geaux2000@hotmail.com

We open our hearts - We support those who are making their way through the various stages of recovery from physical and psychological trauma. The event is inspired by the need in the community

to support survivors and to seek additional resources and contacts to help in recovery. Once aware of supportive resources, individuals may follow up with any of the fine contacts from this event for more in-depth help, education and support. You know what you would give to keep just one person from suffering. Healing through Creativity promises to be a life changing experience.

Positive focused expressions - Healing Through Creativity features positive-focused expressions from trauma survivors to promote understanding. Survivors and supporters share the fun and excitement of creativity without fears of judgment or undeserved guilt and shame. The event promotes community awareness about the needs of survivors of trauma to the body, mind and spirit. Workshops, speakers and displays promote prevention of assault and abuse. Healing through Creativity helps to end silence, feelings of abandonment and undeserved guilt often felt by survivors. The event recognizes organizations that educate, serve and protect the community.

“The more you love, the more love you are given to love with.” Lucien Price

16] [Male Abuse Survivors: Breaking the Silence](#) – ABC News Story - Utah – video - 6 minutes

This season, the ABC Drama "American Crime" has been tackling an issue that's often ignored because it's so taboo; sexual violence against men. Many believe a man can't fall victim to this kind of crime. But tonight, in a very powerful panel discussion, you'll see not only does it happen, it happens often.

Before we begin, we have a warning. This conversation is incredibly raw and may not be suitable for all audiences. Two of the men are still too scared to show their faces but all seven were brave enough to share their stories to protect others.

These seven men all have one thing in common.

“My entire life I felt like there's something wrong with me,” Andrew Vineyard said.

Each man is grappling with a life altering experience.

"I felt that I what happened was my fault. I couldn't say that I was raped until I was 51. I'm 59 now," said Joe Ellis.

Joe was part of the Oprah Winfrey Shows on males sexually abused as children. & Please note, there are 2 clips to watch, all posted below 1st screen, worth watching folks. MS

“You can't do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth.” Evan Esar

17] [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month](#) - The Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (MSAA) Brings Awareness to Symptoms and Relapses

MSAA recognizes March as MS Awareness Month. For the more than 400,000 Americans living with multiple sclerosis (MS), the support of loved ones, care partners, and organizations such as MSAA are vital to improving their quality of life.

MSAA's Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month campaign will devote each week in March to heightening the understanding of the management of relapses and multiple sclerosis symptoms.

- Walking and MS Awareness Week (week of March 7, 2016) is sponsored by Acorda Therapeutics and will feature comprehensive information on managing walking and MS, along with a newly developed video and survey. Difficulty in walking is one of the most common issues for individuals living with MS. Information can be found on MSAA's website at mymsaa.org/walking.
- Pseudobulbar Affect Awareness Week (week of March 14, 2016) is supported by Avanir Pharmaceuticals and will highlight an informative video and survey. The video provides valuable insights into understanding Pseudobulbar affect (PBA) and its cause, guidance on discussing PBA with your doctor, and ways to evaluate and treat the condition. PBA is characterized by sudden, uncontrollable expressions of laughter or crying without an apparent trigger. Information can be found on MSAA's website at mymsaa.org/pba.
- MS Relapse Awareness Week (week of March 21, 2016), in collaboration with the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation and supported by Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, will feature a newly developed relapse quiz, video, webinar, brochure and other tools – all available on MSAA's MS Relapse Resource Center. MS relapses are exacerbations or attacks of MS that can cause a temporary worsening or recurrence of existing symptoms or the appearance of new symptoms. More information can be found on MSAA's website at relapses.mymsaa.org.

For more information about MS Awareness Month or any of MSAA's programs and services, please contact Sarah Masino, community relations coordinator at (800) 532-7667, extension 122, or via email at smasino@mymsaa.org

"Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content." Helen Keller

18] [Join a Local Support Group](#) : National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Self-help groups bring people together who share common life experiences for support, education and mutual aid. Benefits of participating in a self-help group include:

- Learning new information and strategies for confronting problems.
- Finding support from others.
- The opportunity to help others.
- Feeling empowered and more self-confident in coping with challenges.

National MS Society self-help groups focus on support, advocacy, education, wellness or may be more social in nature. Some groups also serve specific populations, such as young adults, parents with MS, carepartners or African-Americans. Other groups may have a specific focus, such as physical activity, wellness or healthy living.

People come together at self-help groups to lift each other up through personal struggles and encourage each other to try new things and live each day to its full potential.

Find a group in your area here, or to talk to someone about establishing a group, contact an MS

Navigator at 1-800-344-4867 or [online](#).

“Keep me away from the wisdom that does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh and the greatness which does not bow before children.” Kahlil Gibran

19] [MS-UK](#) - Affected by MS? Need to talk? We are here for you, *wherever you are in the world*. Contact us, via our Live Web Chat now

Not everyone is able to or likes talking on the phone, so in 2015 we launched our web chat service to give you an instant response to your questions online.

This web chat service is run by our trained MS Advisors at the MS-UK Helpline.

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.” Martin Luther King Jr.

20] [How one chief tried to reverse police wrongs of the civil rights era](#) - PBS News – Race Matters Series - YouTube 7 minutes

As a young officer in Montgomery, Alabama, Kevin Murphy wondered why no one had ever acknowledged past injustices committed by police against civil rights activists. Special correspondent Charlayne Hunter-Gault talks with Murphy about his initiatives as police chief to promote a more reflective police force and how those ideas can be applied to law enforcement around the country.

PBS News Hour by Kenya Downs

Growing up, retired Montgomery County police chief Kevin Murphy wondered why no one in his home state of Alabama formally acknowledged the injustices and violence committed against Rep. John Lewis by police during his time as a student activist. During the 50th anniversary of the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, he did just that. Murphy publicly apologized to Lewis, and personally handed him his badge.

Witnessing the negative interactions of police with minority communities as a youth has guided Murphy’s approach to law enforcement. After becoming chief, one of the first things he did was implement a program for his officers to learn racial bias in policing, using lessons on important parts of Montgomery’s civil rights history. The class has since be added to regular police training, including a tour of the Rosa Parks Museum and scenarios that mimic real-life scenarios of improper policing. His goal was to caution new officers on how to use the power of their uniforms ethically. He has a message for law enforcement agencies across the country on how to be more effective at serving their communities.

“Law enforcement needs to start hold themselves accountable,” he said. “There’s no such thing as street justice. You have to abide by the law when you’re wearing a uniform and set the example. When you don’t do that you’ve lost all credibility with the public you serve.”

“Oh Great Spirit who made all races, look kindly upon the whole human family and take away the arrogance and hatred which separates us from our brothers [and sisters].” Cherokee prayer

21] [Cyndi Lauper Opens Shelter for Homeless LGBT Youth](#) - Matthew Perpetua - Rolling Stone

True Colors Residence first facility of its kind in New York City

Cyndi Lauper opened a 30-bed housing facility for homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered youth in Manhattan. The True Colors Residence, named after her 1986 hit "True Colors," will be located on West 154th St. near Frederick Douglass Blvd. in Harlem. The residence, the first permanent housing facility of its kind in the city, was conceived by the singer, her manager and the West End Intergenerational Residence, a non-profit focused on providing housing for homeless families and the elderly.

Lauper, a longtime supporter for LGBT rights, was moved to pursue this project because up to 40 percent of homeless youth in the city identify as LGBT. "These young people often face discrimination and at times physical assault in some of the very places they have to go for help," she wrote in a letter seeking donations for the residence. "This is shocking and inexcusable!"

The True Colors Residence is a new energy-efficient building with 30 studio apartments for youths aged 18 to 24, complete with indoor and outdoor community space. Residents will pay rent based on their income and will receive help with job placement.

"Oh Great Spirit who made all races, look kindly upon the whole human family and take away the arrogance and hatred which separates us from our brothers [and sisters]." Cherokee prayer

22] [First-of-its-kind domestic violence shelter for all-male victims opens in Arkansas](#) - Bethania Palma Markus – Raw Story

A domestic violence shelter serving male victims has opened in Arkansas and is perhaps one of the first of its kind, according to **Arkansas Online**. [*see article below. MS*]

The Taylor House Domestic Violence Shelter for Men could be the first registered, stand-alone shelter for men in the country, said Patty Duncan, executive director of the non-profit Family Violence Prevention in Batesville, a city in northern Arkansas.

"Many people do not realize that domestic violence also affects men," Duncan told **Arkansas Online**. "It's not just male-female relationships. Domestic violence includes intimate partners, family and household members."

The new shelter opened in October. It's already housed five men.

"We know there are more victims out there," Duncan told the paper. "Those that we have housed are receiving good services, I feel."

The shelter has nine beds and includes space for men who are accompanied by children. Duncan said that if needed, there is room to expand. The home used by the non-profit was donated by a local family, **Arkansas Online** reports. Previously, the group had been housing men fleeing violence alongside women.

"My perspective on that was we try to offer peer support, and I don't want to necessarily segregate

male and female, but let's offer men a location that is run by their peers," Duncan said. "It's going to be easier for a male victim to go into a program and speak to someone about their feelings, their emotions, their fears, their concerns, to someone who may not judge them and may not look like an abuser to them."

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics cited by the **Huffington Post**, a large number of domestic violence victims are men, and their abusers can be either other men or women.

One in four American men will be domestic violence victims during his lifetime - or upwards of three million male domestic violence victims every year. Statistically, one man is abused by a domestic partner every 37.8 seconds, according to HuffPo.

"Domestic violence is not just a women's issue; it's a family issue," Duncan told **Arkansas Online**. "A victim is a victim, and we want to help them become survivors in their own right."

"You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection" Gautama Buddha

23] **Arkansas Online** - [Batesville nonprofit opens domestic-violence shelter for men](#)

When most people hear the term "domestic violence," their minds automatically turn to women or children in dangerous household situations. Men are often seen as the abusers in domestic-violence scenarios, but there are times when men are on the receiving end of abuse. [Read the entire article](#)

"The ideals which have lighted my way, and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been kindness, beauty, and truth." Albert Einstein

24] [It's Time to Acknowledge Male Victims of Domestic Violence](#) - Bari Zell Weinberger, Esq. - Huffington Post

When we discuss domestic violence, it is often assumed that the victims are women. And the statistics are truly traumatic. The less-told story is that a striking number of men are victims, too, suffering physical, mental and sexual abuse in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. According to the CDC, one in four adult men in the U.S. will become a victim of domestic violence during his lifetime. That's upwards of three million male domestic violence victims every year, or one man in America abused by an intimate or domestic partner every 37.8 seconds.

Highlighting these statistics is not meant to downplay in any way domestic violence among women. It is, however, intended to add to the growing conversation that anyone can be the victim of domestic abuse and everyone who needs protection deserves access to it.

Male victims of domestic violence, just like female victims, often deal with intense self-doubt and anxiety before reaching out for help. Victims may fear their abusers will seek retribution if they go to the police, or they feel great uncertainty about leaving their home for temporary safe house shelter. Men and women can both experience these kinds of worries. But one barrier to that tends to only apply to male victims? The belief that domestic violence laws and resources don't apply to them. [Read the entire](#)

[article](#)

“If I am overwhelmed, I may be trying to do too much. Today I will try to 'Keep it simple.'” Courage To Change

25] [Recovery International - Mental Health Peer to Peer Self Help Support Groups](#)

Recovery International offers meetings to men and women of all ages that ease the suffering from mental health issues by gaining skills to lead more peaceful and productive lives. In the last 79 years RI has equipped over 1 million people with tools to control behavior and change attitudes.

Mission Statement - The mission of Recovery International is to use the cognitive-behavioral, peer-to-peer, self-help training system developed by Abraham Low, MD, to help individuals gain skills to lead more peaceful and productive lives.

Vision - Recovery International will be the world's premier provider of self-help training for mental health and wellness available to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Recovery International self-help group meetings consist of five parts:

- Reading – The group reads from one of Abraham Low's books or listens to one of the recorded lectures. At some meetings participants highlight parts of the reading that were especially meaningful to them.
- Examples – Meeting participants take turns describing an event from everyday life that caused distress. They explain how they used Recovery International tools to address their discomfort and control their responses. After each example, other members offer comments (referred to as “spotting”) that highlight the example-giver's successful use of Recovery International tools and suggest other “spottings” that also could have been used.
- Spotting and Questions – Members offer additional comments on and ask questions about the examples previously given.
- Mutual Aid – This is a time for informal discussion about how participants are using the Recovery International tools. It is a good time to ask the group leader or a veteran member to help develop an example to share at a later meeting, or to ask questions about specific Recovery International “spottings” that were discussed. Some groups have refreshments at this point and meeting attendees enjoy socializing.
- Voluntary Contributions – Participants are asked at each meeting to help support the organization via voluntary contributions, with the suggested donation being \$4 per meeting. If an attendee isn't able to contribute, that should not deter him or her from attending Recovery International meetings.

It is important for you to feel as comfortable as possible when you attend your first Recovery International self-help group meeting.

[Before attending your first meeting, keep the following in mind:](#)

Start your road to Recovery today. Find a meeting near you.

“What I would like to see is a multicultural society based on love, caring, justice and interdependence with all living things.” Paul Kivel

Additional Resources:

26] [Why Aren't More African Americans Opening Up About Their Mental Health?](#) - The Root

Like Mother, Like Daughter: Aliya S. King confides in her mom about everything - except her mental health. Her mom, Rita Moore King, realizes that her generation will have to do better.

27] [10 Things to Remember About Toxic Family Members](#) – Marc Chernoff

Family is supposed to be our safe haven. Sometimes, however, it's the place where we find the deepest heartache.

28] [Resistance: "I Have Nothing to Talk About Today"](#) - Steven Reidbord, M.D. - Psychology Today

An apparent block in therapy opens a path to insight.

29] [How Mental Illness is Misrepresented in the Media](#) - US News & World Report

Insidious portrayals on TV shape perceptions about real-life people with psychological disorders.

“You may think you love is stored in your heart, but it's not. It's in the hearts of everyone you've touched with your beautiful soul.” Robert Clancy

Take care, Michael, Mary, Becky, Cynthia, Lynn & Mary Ann

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – mikeskinner@comcast.net

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A diagnosis is not a destiny

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

[The Surviving Spirit Speakers' Bureau](#)

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

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"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi

