



On Thursday, March 24th, the verdict in the Jian Ghomeshi sexual assault trial will be delivered. Join us in solidarity to support the women who bravely testified, the countless others who could not go to the police and people who have lived through sexualized and gender based violence/abuse in our communities.

Let's create a space to remind ourselves and others impacted by sexualized violence/abuse that we believe, support, and love survivors. No matter the outcome of the trial, we support people who have lived through violence. Together we will celebrate all the ways we resist and seek justice. We believe survivors. #StartByBelieving #IBelieveSurvivors #WeBelieveSurvivors.

Five Ways You Can Get Involved on the Day of the Verdict, Thursday March 24th 2016

1. Post **Selfies to Support Survivors** online on March 24th with the hashtags: #StartByBelieving #IBelieveSurvivors #SelfiesForSurvivors Show survivors that they are not alone. Show the world that we don't believe victim blaming and myths about sexual violence. We believe survivors.
2. Host a **Self Care Crafternoon or solidarity rally/event** in your Community. Send details to publicawareness@avaloncentre.ca for inclusion in a list of events.
3. **Chalk supportive and empowering messages on the streets and sidewalks** in your community. This is a creative demonstration of solidarity to survivors and reminds community members to #StartByBelieving. Feel free to send photos to publicawareness@avaloncentre.ca or use the hashtags listed above.

4. Support your local sexual assault centre:

Fundraise for or make a donation to your local sexual assault centre or service that addresses gender based violence. Financial support for the work they do further benefits survivors and demonstrates that you #StartByBelieving.

5. Most importantly check in with the survivors in your life by:

Practicing community care:

- Check in with people around you, follow their lead and ask what they need. Don't make assumptions, LISTEN. Let them know that they do not have to talk about any of the details of what happened unless it is important to them. They can take their time to make sense of what happened. Respect the person's choices, even if the decisions do not feel right to you, or are different than the ones you would make. Remember, the most important thing you can do right now is to show them that they are in control.
- When discussing sexualized violence/abuse in public be mindful not to be victim blaming, minimize sexual assault/abuse/harassment, or to perpetuate gender and racist stereotypes or sexual assault myths. You can be a leader and model to other people respectful ways to engage in conversation about the systemic and societal impacts of sexual assault and abuse.

Being Prepared:

- People you care about might disclose that they are survivors of sexual violence be it harassment, assault or rape. Listen, believe, remind them it's not their fault, that they have the right to be safe and they are not alone. You can refer them to a sexual assault centre or to the organizations in your community that address gender based violence and sexualized violence/abuse.
- There are many things that you can do to help a survivor feel supported. The best way to find out what would be most helpful is to ask that person what they need right now. Be sure to give them options at every opportunity, such as where they would like to sit while you talk. Regardless if they have just been sexually assaulted or if it happened in the past, remind them that they have options and support when they are ready.

Respecting Boundaries:

- People may not want to talk about the trial or about sexual violence at all. It's not survivors' job to educate you on sexual violence myths or share information about what we were subjected to. Do your own homework on the issues.

I Believe You!:

- This is a very powerful message for people who have experience sexualized violence/abuse. The myth that victims lie is extremely harmful and prevents many survivors from disclosing, reporting, or accessing support. If someone tells you they have been sexually victimized #StartByBelieving.

It's Not Your Fault!:

- No one deserves to be sexually assaulted, no matter what. It doesn't matter where you were, who you were with or what you were wearing. There is no such thing as "asking to be sexually assaulted". Survivors deserve to be believed, supported, and respected.

This is a Collaboration Between:

- Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
- The Sexual Assault Services Network of Nova Scotia
- The Atlantic Network of Sexual Assault Centres

Questions? Want to list your event or share your selfies? Email publicawareness@avaloncentre.ca.

Adapted from SACHA (Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton and Area. Many thanks for conceptualizing the #IBelieveSurvivors Campaign.

Excerpts from Supportive Conversations: Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

www.avaloncentre.ca

902 422-4240 Avalon Office

902 4250122 Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Response Line

