



Midwest Anti-Violence Solidarity Circle Founders' Statement

We are frontline anti-violence social workers, advocates, community organizers, educators, changemakers, and survivors committed to ending gender-based violence. Often, we are caught working in a carceral system not created by or for survivors, in direct conflict with those we serve.

This is the reality we face: [1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. Every 68 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted. One in five black women are survivors of rape. Almost half of all transgender people have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. These rates are even higher for trans people of color and those who have done sex work, been homeless, or have \(or had\) a disability. Out of every 1000 sexual assaults, 975 perpetrators will walk free.](#)

The current system does not prevent or end sexual violence. In fact, we see firsthand how the current system retraumatizes and exploits survivors by gatekeeping justice and healing.

This vicious cycle leaves us, many of us survivors, feeling deflated, burned out, and deeply saddened. It's clear to those of us enmeshed in this dysfunctional system that to address the roots of violence, we must dismantle systemic oppression and all that gives it strength - racism, capitalism, cis-hetero-patriarchy, ableism. We set out to co-create systems where survivors actively define what justice looks like **for them** - where there are alternatives to policing, where our beloved communities work with us to end violence, where our work is sustained, and where we may thrive.

We honor and uplift the wisdom and lived experience of BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ communities addressing harm, repairing relationships, and creating space for accountability.

Our Anti-Violence Solidarity Circle Mission:

- To address the challenges of working to end gender-based violence: [secondary trauma](#), [burnout](#), the constant triaging of survivors with little to no pathway for “justice”, and the lack of support within our institutions.
- To support advocates, as we explore alternatives to policing and justice while implementing structural reforms that address survivors’ needs in real-time.

We invite you to be a part of building this community of solidarity as we dismantle our current systems - rooted in white supremacist cis-hetero-patriarchy. We welcome your support in building alternatives **created by and for survivors** of gender-based violence. As current systems are maintained by our communities’ participation in and dependence on the status quo, it will take all of us to make the radical changes ahead.

Finally, in 1977, [anti-rape activists wrote an open letter to the movement](#). Today, we echo their vision and answer their call to action.

“We are a political group that focuses on the issue of rape and violence against women, and that is working towards the long range goal of a radical transformation of the very basis of our society. We do not believe that rape can end within the present capitalist, racist, and sexist structure of our society. The fight against rape must be waged simultaneously with the fight against all other forms of oppression.”

In solidarity,

Morgan, Louisville and Indianapolis

Sara, Chicago

Haleigh, Indianapolis

Akane, Chicago