

# This Moment, The Movement, Our Mission

*A Vision for Ending Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, and  
Gender Based Violence*



*January 2019*

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# A Letter from GGE Founder & President Joanne N. Smith

Community,

For 16 years we have chosen each other, an intergenerational community women of color and allies who center young people in the fight to end gender and racial inequity. This is a liberation fight for all of our lives. For that, I say thank you. Like many, Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) has been impacted by the disorienting and harmful leadership of the regime in Washington. We have fought alongside immigrants, survivors, incarcerated folks, and youth, most of whom are people of color and many of whom identify as queer, trans, gender non-conforming or non-binary. We have pushed back against the status quo with the understanding that Fannie Lou Hamer's words ring just as true today as they ever have - *"Nobody's free until everybody's free."*

It is with that moral imperative and clarion call that GGE creates culturally responsive programs, leads advocacy strategies, and challenges institutions to shift conditions for Black girls. These efforts result in an even broader impact on all girls of color, GNC youth, as well as for boys and men. Believing that the burden is on communities - not on girls - to transform our culture of violence, GGE holds communities accountable and positions young people to be the experts needed to create the conditions for all of us to thrive.

GGE's commitment to creating space for gender and racial equity includes employing young people internally to lead in strategic formation. We attract transformational leaders, such as Vivian Anderson, creator of EveryBlackGirl, in response to the disregarded violence girls of color were experiencing in schools, and GGE's Senior Director Tarana Burke, founder and creator of the 'me too.' movement. We also strategically supported allied movement moments, such as as Black Lives Matter NYC, an intentionally decentralized network of community leaders who provided support for families of victims of state-sanctioned violence. A social innovation incubator, GGE fosters talent, elevates platforms, offers crucial infrastructure in the development, recognition, relevancy, sustainability, and respect of some of our leading social movements.

Our social justice message remains visionary and hopeful as we continue our fight for full racial and gender liberation, especially for the most vulnerable among us. We are continually vigilant – proactive as well as reactive - as the Trump Administration continues to unravel the safety net, disproportionately impacting the young people and survivors we serve.

We ask you to join us as we set forth a courageous and ambitious 2019 agenda and envision demanding, building, and accessing the policies, practices, resources, and power that we deserve. GGE will turn 17 in June 2019. Over all these years, I am continually reminded that it is the youth who must lead us. Their optimism, their drive, their refusal to accept the idea that they don't deserve better than what they have been given -- and most importantly believing them when they name both the atrocities and the joy that they are truly experiencing in their day to day lives -- they are our compass. In 2019, we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with them as they lead 365 days of the year.

Onward,

Joanne N. Smith  
President and CEO  
Girls for Gender Equity

## Our Herstory

Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) is a Brooklyn-based intergenerational advocacy organization, engaging cisgender (cis) and transgender (trans) girls of color and gender non-conforming (GNC) youth of color. In this work, GGE centers Black girls, in the movement to achieve gender and racial equity. Since 2001, GGE has committed to the optimal development of our communities through a combination of direct service, policy change, community organizing, and culture change work.

Responding to the needs of girls of color navigating life at the intersections of race, gender, immigration status, and class, social worker and activist Joanne N. Smith was inspired by a young person named Lilly in Coney Island who was in search of an afterschool basketball program for girls. Given the lack of resources and the inattention to the needs of girls of color at her school, Lilly said *“Yeah right, not gonna happen. They don’t see me or hear me; why would they create anything for me?”* After completing a community needs assessment, delivering a community petition to funders, and successfully applying for and receiving an Open Society Foundations Social Justice Fellowship, Smith founded Girls for Gender Equity in Sports (GGES) in September 2001. At the time, GGES leaned on the guarantees of Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendment as a guidepost for equitable access to health and wellness for Black girls in central Brooklyn.

Then, in December 2001, an eight-year-old girl was sexually assaulted on her way to school in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn. Students and parents marched to bring awareness to rape and sexual violence against Black girls, spearheading GGES expansion from health and fitness programming to a non-profit organization dedicated to ending violence against girls of color.

In 2003, GGES was renamed Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). GGE quickly grew to meet the needs of girls of color across New York City through workshops, community organizing, health and fitness programs, gender equity festivals, and a young women’s empowerment summer program.

Since then, GGE’s programs and work has continued to center the needs of cis and trans girls of color and GNC youth of color as our movements, our communities, and our political urgency have evolved.

## Our Work: Direct Service

GGE’s current work is defined by programs that move young people to action. GGE has cultivated three major programs to develop the leadership and address the advocacy needs of young people.

- **Sisters in Strength (SIS):** SIS is a community-based program that utilizes trauma and healing-informed restorative approaches to address the impact of sexual abuse and social injustice on cis and trans girls and gender non-conforming youth. Through weekly group sessions, SIS reaches cis and trans girls and gender non-conforming youth between the ages of 15-18. SIS offers a context for examining cycles of violence and trauma, as well as tools for exploring identity, autonomy, and healing from a youth-development perspective. SIS encourages young people to assume leadership roles within their communities in order to disrupt the culture of silence, avoidance, and shame around sexual violence in intimate, shared, and community spaces. Historically, SIS has been GGE’s anchor youth organizing program. Given the urgency of the ‘me too’ movement, SIS has shifted to a smaller cohort of participants who identify as survivors of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, or gender based violence or as allies who are committed to changing the conditions that cause harm to their peers. In this new iteration, SIS serves as a pilot ‘me too.’ movement youth program and is being replicated in focus and branding by the Firecracker Foundation in Lansing, Michigan.<sup>1</sup>
- **Urban Leaders Academy (ULA):** ULA is a five day a week, after-school program designed to help 150 low-income, middle and high school girls, boys, and GNC youth in Brooklyn ages 11–18 achieve academic excellence, social and emotional growth and maintain healthy lifestyles. Through a social justice framework, ULA youth think critically, build their capacity to be agents of change, and act to transform systems of oppression. Programming includes training in restorative justice and intimate partner violence prevention for students, parents, school staff, and administrators. Students receive academic support and engage in a range of programs, including STEAM, food justice, health and fitness, mentorship, and more. ULA takes a whole-school approach to cultural transformation and works with school administrators to bring restorative justice practices to life in schools.
- **Young Women’s Advisory Council (YWAC):** YWAC is a program of GGE and was a cornerstone of the NYC Young Women’s Initiative, launched in 2015 in partnership with the New York City Council. Now in its fourth year, YWAC is an advocacy and civic engagement program for 20 young cis and trans women and GNC youth of color residing in all five boroughs ages 16-24. YWAC advances the lives of young women of color through policy and organizing campaigns in New York City. YWAC also works with national movement leaders to inspire adoption of local young women’s initiatives throughout the country. Since the launch of the Young Women’s Initiative in New York City, eight other cities and states have launched Young Women’s Initiatives, each with a local Young Women’s Advisory Council.

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the work of the Firecracker Foundation and Sisters in Strength - Lansing, visit <http://thefirecrackerfoundation.org/programs/sisters-in-strength-lansing/>

## Our Work: Policy & Organizing

GGE believes that young people of color have the tools and expertise to advance the changes that need to be made in their communities. GGE roots its policy and advocacy work where violence begins for girls of color - at home, in the streets, at school, in jails and prisons, and in their places of work. In 2017, GGE underwent a comprehensive participatory process with the Center for Advancing Innovative Policy (CAIP) to sharpen its focus for the next 3-5 years.<sup>2</sup> Based on this process, GGE's major areas of focus are:

### **Safe & Supportive Schools**

- Expand equal protection for young people through the enhancement of Title IX.
- Institute affirming school dress codes that celebrate cultural diversity, body diversity, and gender expression.
- Implement comprehensive, age-appropriate, medically accurate sexual health education inclusive of consent, LGBTQ identities, and the full spectrum of healthcare options, every grade, every year.

### **Preventing Violence & Moving towards Safer Communities**

- Increase law enforcement transparency and accountability, specifically when it comes to gender based violence, including on the basis of gender identity and gender expression, in day-to-day police, correctional, and detention-based interactions through increased reporting, repeal of law enforcement secrecy laws, and increased support for survivors.
- Expand support for young people who are incarcerated in juvenile facilities with particular attention to cis and trans girls and gender non-conforming (GNC) youth.
- Fully divest from punitive measures for those seeking justice citywide, including in schools, and move towards expanding restorative justice programs and alternatives to placement as a form of discipline.

### **Investing in Our Communities for the Long Term**

- Galvanize governments, philanthropy, and communities to codify local initiatives for cis and trans girls and women of color and GNC folks of color, at parity with local initiatives for young boys and men of color that exist in many cities and states through ongoing investments in My Brother's Keeper.
- Ensure that such initiatives allocate resources, develop practices, and generate policy priorities to meet municipalities' gender and racial equity goals.

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<sup>2</sup> The output of GGE's process with CAIP is available at <https://www.ggenyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Girls-for-Gender-Equity-Policy-Agenda-Sept-2017.pdf>

## Our Work: Transformative Participatory Practices Centering Young People

At GGE, young people are always front and center in how we work. Because of this, we are relied on as a national resource for best practices in working with cis and trans girls of color and GNC youth. Partners across the country call on our expertise for:

- **Participatory Action Research (PAR):** GGE has historically championed PAR as a way for young people to engage not just as subjects of research, but as researchers themselves. GGE's initial PAR work resulted in the book *Hey Shorty!*, documenting the reality of street harassment experienced by girls of color in New York City. Building on years of work engaging participatory practices that bring young people to the center of the work, GGE completed two recent participatory action research projects, *Black Girls Breaking Silence on School Pushout*<sup>3</sup> and *The School Girls Deserve*.<sup>4</sup> These research projects have brought to light the implicit bias in and devastating consequences of harsh school discipline practices, policies concerning young people who are pregnant or parenting while in school, and the juvenile legal and foster care systems. *The School Girls Deserve* emerged from a PAR project that engaged over 100 young people in the New York City schools to develop 45 recommendations for changing school culture, recommendations that center cis and trans girls of color and GNC youth of color.
- **Participatory Governance:** The foundation of the New York City Young Women's Initiative was the idea that young cis and trans women and GNC youth of color must have a seat at the policymaking table to inform policies that directly impact their lives. This idea took flight through the work of the Young Women's Advisory Council, currently completing its third cohort year.
- **Transforming Philanthropy:** Philanthropy has been moved by GGE's work to bring girls of color to the center. GGE spurred the creation of the NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color at The New York Women's Foundation, a direct response to the lack of equitable resourcing for girls of color as compared to their male counterparts. Philanthropy continues to follow the influence of GGE in recently launching the Fund for the Me Too Movement and Allies, which invests in survivor-centered organizations seeking to end child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence.

## Our Work: Advancing the Movement

GGE believes that innovation has to be resourced in our movement. Foundation funding cycles, the need for backend infrastructure support, and political volatility often leave little room for

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<sup>3</sup> *Black Girls Breaking the Silence* is available at <https://youtu.be/-y0AmxZMqpQ>.

<sup>4</sup> More information on *The School Girls Deserve Campaign* is available at <http://www.ggenyc.org/the-schools-girls-deserve/>.

grassroots movements to amass resources, organize supporters, and execute innovative strategies to respond quickly to the urgency of the moment.

To that end, GGE has served as an organizational fiscal sponsor for a number of grassroots movement campaigns and budding organizations as they evolved from infancy to free-standing entities. Some of these organizations include Free Palestine, Black Lives Matter NYC, EveryBlackGirl, and, most recently, The 'me too.' Movement.

We are proud to support new projects that push the boundaries of our imagination when it comes to building a more just world.

## The Movement to End Gender Based Violence

*Feminist efforts to end male violence against women must be expanded into a movement to end all forms of violence. Broadly based, such a movement could potentially radicalize consciousness and intensify awareness of the need to end male domination of women.*

- bell hooks<sup>5</sup>

## Re-Examining the Movement's Herstory: Contending with over a Century of Black Women's Activism

GGE's work builds on a long herstory of movement building and activism in North America and globally to end gender based violence. Our work focuses on the pressing and often overlooked and ignored realities of women of color in the United States and cis and trans Black women in particular. There are many phrases used to describe the movement and activism to end violence against women and girls - battered women, violence against women, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, family violence, and gender based violence. Some of these words reflect a shared understanding of what survivors of violence experience; others reflect unique moments when the movement to end gender based violence was evolving along with the culture and politics that surrounded it.<sup>6</sup>

Mainstream sources continue to cite the "battered women's movement" of the post-1960s feminist movement in the United States as the inception of the movement to end gender based violence in the United States. From this movement emerged the earliest version of what scholar and founder of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence Dr. Beth E. Richie calls "an elaborate apparatus of social services [that] has been developed to provide emergency shelter, crisis intervention counseling, medical and legal advocacy, and ongoing assistance with housing,

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<sup>5</sup> Hooks, bell. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End Press.

<sup>6</sup> Hall, Rebecca Jane. (2014). *Feminist Strategies to End Violence Against Women*. The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements. Available at <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199943494.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199943494-e-005?print=pdf>



employment, and custody issues that women who experience violence need.”<sup>7</sup> Yet scholars of Black feminism relentlessly remind us that Black women who led movements for justice since the era of slavery were unabashedly driving the movement to end sexual violence against Black women and girls at the same time.

In the 1890s, journalist and activist Ida B. Wells spoke out publicly about the sexual exploitation of Black women by white men.<sup>8</sup> Rosa Parks’ earliest work with the NAACP was to investigate sexual assault experienced by Black women, including the 1944 case of Recy Taylor in Abbeville, Alabama. Ms. Taylor’s life and legacy were honored in the 2017 documentary about her survivorship and the case itself, *The Rape of Recy Taylor*. Community outcry and survivor-led activism followed the rape of Gertrude Perkins, abducted and raped by two police officers in Montgomery, Alabama in 1949.<sup>9</sup>

Numerous foundational texts that guide gender based violence and intersectional racial justice movements root themselves in the experiences of Black women who survive violence. In her widely acclaimed paper *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, published in 1989, Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw uplifts the experiences of Black women as survivors of multiple forms of violence and discrimination as a way to understand what intersectionality - multiple compounding experiences of oppression existing at the same time - looks like in real time.<sup>10</sup>

The public testimony of Professor Anita Hill during the 1991 confirmation hearing of Justice Clarence Thomas represented an unprecedented cultural moment where the realities of sexual violence faced by Black women in the workplace, compounded by sexism and racism, were made visible. In 2011, twenty years after her public recounting, the documentary *ANITA Speaking Truth to Power* followed GGE program participants leading sexual harassment educational workshops and talking about the relevance of Professor Hill. Professor Hill’s valiance was revisited recently as the world watched Dr. Christine Blasey Ford speak her truth to power during the confirmation hearing of Justice Brett Kavanaugh. GGE planned and participated in rallies DC and New York to support survivors and center the narratives of young people impacted by sexual violence and child sexual abuse.

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<sup>7</sup> Richie, Beth E. (2000). A Black Feminist Reflection on the Antiviolence Movement. (2000) *Signs*, Vol. 25, No. 4, *Feminisms at a Millennium*. pp. 1133-1137. The University of Chicago Press. Internally available at <https://www.jstor-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/stable/pdf/3175500.pdf?refregid=excelsior%3Aa2d45e1def76ff3f9419ad8487f2baef>

<sup>8</sup> Feimster, Crystal H. (2018). Ida B. Wells and the Lynching of Black Women. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/28/opinion/sunday/ida-b-wells-lynching-black-women.html>

<sup>9</sup> Hidden Pattern of Rape Helped Stir the Civil Rights Movement, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=134131369> (2011), Add McGuire, Danielle L. (2011), *At Dark End of the Street*. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/danielle-mcguire/at-the-dark-end-of-the-st\\_b\\_708185.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/danielle-mcguire/at-the-dark-end-of-the-st_b_708185.html)

<sup>10</sup> Crenshaw, Kimberle. (1989). *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

Most recently, a mass movement to finally bring justice to the survivors of R&B singer Robert “R.” Kelly resulted in *Surviving R. Kelly*, a six part docu-series airing on Lifetime Television.<sup>11</sup> For the first time ever, survivors and individuals from Kelly’s inner circle came forward with allegations of sexual, mental, and physical abuse at his hands. Efforts to hold Kelly accountable have been led by #muteRKelly, a collective of organizers calling for a worldwide silencing of his music.<sup>12</sup> An online petition by Color of Change amplified this call and demanded that RCA Records drop R. Kelly from their record label and that the music streaming service Spotify cease playing his songs. The movement to hold R. Kelly accountable is possible because of the activism of Black women, uplifted by the urgency of the ‘me too.’ movement.

These leaders and numerous other icons of the abolitionist and racial justice movements - some whose names and narratives we know and many whose we do not - were central to shaping modern day activism to end child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence among women and girls of color. For over a century, Black women and other women of color have not only led the way when it comes to the movement to end gender based violence, they “have been at the forefront of the most radical dimensions of this work.”<sup>13</sup> Yet their narratives remain disconnected from the broader movement.

## The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Following the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women by the United Nations General Assembly that same year, the mainstream feminist movement invested a great deal of activism and advocacy into the development, passage, and continued re-authorizations of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) within the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.<sup>14</sup>

Our partners at Legal Momentum have traced the legacy of VAWA, including the drafting process, the Supreme Court case *United States v. Morrison* which deemed a portion of VAWA unconstitutional, and consistent attacks on the integrity of the law itself. Legal Momentum notes that alongside work to expand protections for survivors, VAWA has led to the distribution of nearly \$4 billion in funds to state, tribal, and local governments, non-profit organizations, and universities for initiatives focused on ending violence against women.<sup>15</sup> In its re-authorizations, VAWA has expanded criminal legal options for survivors to pursue accountability, perhaps most notably in 2013 when the law was expanded to allow tribal governments to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence non-native perpetrators of violence, including individuals who

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<sup>11</sup> Girls for Gender Equity released a discussion guide to support community conversations about the docu-series, available at <https://www.ggenyc.org/survivingrkelly/>

<sup>12</sup> To learn more about the #MuteRKelly movement, visit <https://www.muterkelly.org/about>

<sup>13</sup> Richie, Beth E. (2000).

<sup>14</sup> A full text version of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/billfs.txt>

<sup>15</sup> History of VAWA. Legal Momentum. Available at <https://www.legalmomentum.org/history-vaawa>

violate a protection order in tribal land.<sup>16</sup> This expansion of jurisdiction was largely seen as a win for the Obama Administration and victim advocates.<sup>17</sup>

When calling for resources to be allocated for the protection of women from sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence, many organizations at the forefront of VAWA largely ignored the threat that law enforcement presents for cis and trans Black girls and women, GNC communities, Native American girls and women, immigrants, and sex workers who have long experienced harm at the hands of law enforcement and other state actors.<sup>18</sup> VAWA's annual allocations appear partially as grants to coalitions with a great deal of those resources going to police departments and prosecutor's offices.<sup>19</sup> These investments have positioned law enforcement as the principal protectors of women and girls, which fails to recognize how law enforcement and prisons operate as added sources of sexual violence for people of color within the United States.

## Tensions in the Movement to Date

Dr. Beth E. Richie foresaw where we find ourselves today. In her 2000 article, *A Black Feminist Reflection on the Antiviolence Movement*, she names numerous tensions which our movement remains in the thick of today. These include:

- **Contending with law enforcement as the principal provider of “women’s” safety:** In large part, VAWA has ushered in an era of law enforcement serving as the default resource to prevent and respond to violence.
- **Whitewashing reality:** The notion championed by the “battered women’s movement” that gender based violence is “every woman’s problem” leaves little room for the extraordinarily nuanced and specific ways in which child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence impacts people across race, class, gender, and immigration experiences.
- **Erasing the leadership of people of color in the movement to end child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence:** Countless texts tracing the history of the movement to end violence all but omit the leadership of cis Black women and, certainly, trans Black women and gender non-conforming and non-binary people. Organizational leadership in this space remains largely cisgender and largely white.<sup>20</sup>

Additional tensions exist in our movement, causing friction in our organizing, our collaborations, our messaging, and our service delivery. These include:

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<sup>16</sup> The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. (2013) United States Department of Justice. Available at <https://www.justice.gov/tribal/violence-against-women-act-va-wa-reauthorization-2013-0>

<sup>17</sup> Gillette, Jodi and Galbraith, Charlie. (2013). President Signs 2013 VAWA – Empowering Tribes to Protect Native Women. The White House Archives. Available at

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/03/07/president-signs-2013-va-wa-empowering-tribes-protect-native-women>

<sup>18</sup> Victoria Law, *Against Carceral Feminism*, 178

<sup>19</sup> United states Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, 2016 Biennial Report to Congress on Effectiveness of Grant Programs Under the Violence Against Women Act, <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/933886/download>

<sup>20</sup> Richie, Beth E. (2000).

- **Centering trans women:** According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, 47% of people surveyed were sexually assaulted during their lifetime.<sup>21</sup> Black trans folks experience even higher rates of sexual assault, and more than half (53%) of Black respondents reported being assaulted at some point in their lifetime.<sup>22</sup> A comprehensive understanding that the root cause of violence against transgender women is the very same root cause of the violence against cisgender women continues to not sit comfortably in most “women’s” organizations, almost defining transphobia. Many issues that trans women and GNC folks experience are relegated to LGBT organizations, whose work has led to tremendous change in our movement.
- **Centering criminalized survivors:** A significant gap in the popular discourse around child sexual abuse and gender based violence is the neglect of girls and women who have experienced or are currently experiencing juvenile and criminal legal systems. In some states, upward of 90% of the girls in the juvenile system have at least one experience with sexual abuse.<sup>23</sup> The connection between sexual abuse and juvenile and criminal legal system involvement could not be more glaring. The overwhelming majority of all girls and youth in female facilities have experienced sexual harm -- a truth that demands that any discussion of the sexual abuse of children center the narratives of criminalized survivors. Our movement must recognize that juvenile prisons are both purveyors of sexual violence and warehouses of sexual violence survivors. Our movement must center the survivors who are often framed as disposable and who do not fit into the popular narrative around what a survivor looks like.
- **Criminalizing commercial sex work:** Tensions in our movement still exist between the fundamentally different perspectives of criminalizing buyers of sex and fully decriminalizing consensual sex work.
- **Fighting for resources:** According to a 2018 analysis, less than 2 percent of all foundation funds go toward addressing gender based violence.<sup>24</sup> There is an inordinately small pool of funding going to providers of services to respond to gender based violence - and even fewer resources designated for prevention. Competition for funding and dependence on foundation and government resources create enormous tension in the work, as larger organizations reap the benefits while smaller, innovative shops are often left behind.

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<sup>21</sup> James, Sandy E., Herman, Jody L., Rankin, Susan, Keisling, Mara., Mottet, Lisa, & Anafi, Ma'ayan. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. Available at <http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS%20Full%20Report%20-%20FINAL%201.6.17.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Rodriguez, Damary. (2018). Centering Trans Survivors in the #MeToo Movement. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Available at <https://www.nsvrc.org/blogs/centering-trans-survivors-metoo-movement>.

<sup>23</sup> Gatti, Uberto, Tremblay, Richard, Giaro, Frank, Iatrogenic Effect of Juvenile Incarceration, 50 Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry, 991 (2009). Aizer, Anna, Doyle, Joseph Jr., Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital, and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly Assigned Judges, Quarterly Journal of Economics, (2015) available at <http://mitsloan.mit.edu/shared/ods/documents/?DocumentID=4287>.

<sup>24</sup> Shifman, Pamela. (2018). Time's Up for Philanthropy, Too. The NoVo Foundation. Available at <https://novofoundation.org/novointhedia/times-up-for-philanthropy-too/>.

# The ‘me too.’ Moment

The movement to end child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence is experiencing an unprecedented moment.

In 2006, activist and youth development expert Tarana Burke, who founded the organization Just Be in Selma, Alabama, launched a youth program and community-based call to action using her ‘me too.’ curriculum, calling for Black women and girls to build community around their shared experiences of survivorship from child sexual abuse and sexual violence.

In October 2017, actress Alyssa Milano helped spur an international digital movement, calling on individuals who had experienced sexual violence, child sexual abuse, and sexual harassment at the hands of perpetrators who were never held accountable - from Hollywood executives to colleagues to teachers to intimate partners - to raise their hands and say, “me too.” Tarana Burke served as Director of Programs at GGE at the time and was quickly ushered into the international spotlight, amplifying the call to in-person action that was spurred by the “#metoo” digital phenomenon.

In May 2018, GGE publically named next steps for the movement.<sup>25</sup> As described in our overview of programs, GGE launched the first iteration of ‘me too.’ programming in the form of survivor-centered healing circles for young people who are seeking to organize around their experiences, reshaping the focus of our anchor youth program, Sisters in Strength (SIS).

In October 2018, one year after #metoo went viral, GGE joined nine national organizations to launch a call to action to advance the work of the ‘me too.’ movement, with almost 300 organizations working to end gender based violence, child sexual abuse, and sexual assault signing on. In this letter, called “Seek a Better World,” we called for the following:

- **Federal and international policy reform:** Lawmakers worldwide, including the U.S. Congress, must advance comprehensive reform to address sexual violence in its many forms, from child sexual abuse, to violence and other forms of sexual harassment at work, in schools, in homes, and in communities. Legal protections must ensure that all work is safe work, create greater transparency and accountability, and secure fair pay and treatment for those whose economic vulnerability puts them at greater risk of harassment and violence. Governments must also prioritize investing in programs and services to enable survivor healing and support.
- **20 states by 2020:** By 2020, 20 states must pass laws to strengthen legal protections against sexual violence and other forms of sexual harassment at work, in communities and every place where it occurs, consistent with the principles set out above, and with

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<sup>25</sup> More details available at <http://www.ggenyc.org/2018/06/gge-and-me-too-movement-launching-an-online-community-for-survivors/>

care to avoid policy responses that further criminalize people of color and other marginalized communities.

- **100 school districts across the country:** Schools are often the first places where young people experience and report child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or gender based violence. Schools have a critical role to play in responding to violence when it occurs — and equally important, in shifting towards prevention. We call on 100 school districts across the country to demonstrate their leadership by:
  - Implementing comprehensive, age-appropriate, medically accurate, LGBTQAI-affirming sexual health education that addresses child sexual abuse, consent, sexual harassment, and dating violence.
  - Making a public commitment to institute protections for all young people in schools, including LGBTQAI and gender nonconforming young people, above and beyond the protections of Title IX.
  - Codifying options for survivor-centered and trauma-informed restorative approaches to justice in schools when harm is caused to help move towards collective accountability, rather than defaulting to punitive approaches to school discipline.
- **\$300 million for healing and justice in 2019:** We challenged philanthropy, including foundations, corporate donors, and individuals to seed \$300 million in U.S. funding in the next 12 months, dedicated to investing in people and organizations that are addressing sexual violence and other forms of sexual harassment throughout our culture and on all fronts, from grassroots organizing, to direct services, to culture shift work, to legal support and policy development in the United States. Further, we urge philanthropists, businesses, and individuals to seed similar funds across the world to address these needs.
- **Vote to support survivors:** Voters must use their own power at the ballot box to vote in leaders who champion safety and dignity for women and all survivors, and vote out those who do not.
- **Organize:** Individuals fighting for social justice issues around the world must include sexual violence as a priority, by making clear the wide-ranging connections it has to issues from public health to mass incarceration. We urge those who seek a better world to organize in your communities and within your institutions so that there is a broad base of support for efforts to end sexual violence worldwide.

This call to action was featured as a full page advertisement in *The New York Times* and lives on GGE's website.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The full call to action and detailed next steps in this work are available at <http://www.ggenyc.org/better-world>

# Our Vision for the Future

Even with this call to action, we need to shape an even clearer vision for what this moment means for the future of our work. Beyond the removal of individual perpetrators of violence from high-paying positions, often with healthy settlements, the energy and purpose behind the ‘me too.’ movement must continue to shape our vision for a just world - and a just world that includes community accountability and justice for survivors of child sexual abuse, sexual assault and gender based violence across the spectrum of race, gender, class, immigration status, and sexuality.

## Our Analysis

GGE locates our analysis in the unique needs of young people of color, cisgender, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people who have experienced various forms of sexual harm.

As the organizational fiscal sponsor of The ‘me too.’ Movement and as an organization that has centered Black girls in the movement to end gender based violence for seventeen years, we recognize that people who care about children, specifically girls of color, look to us for direction in this critical moment.

With an acknowledgement that this is difficult, uncomfortable work, that requires a careful balance of thoughtfulness, compassion, and urgency, we ask educators, youth, parents, and community members to join us in exploring anti-carceral ways to prevent sexual harm, respond to it, and hold people who do harm accountable.

Many of our existing practices do not work. Silencing of survivors of sexual violence does not work. Denial does not work. Responding to harm with more harm does not work.

To that end, our vision for a more just future is rooted in the following:

- **Rooting Ourselves in Herstory:** It is absolutely necessary to understand that the long history of racial violence in the United States has always included sexual violence, including sexual violence at the hands of law enforcement, the state, and institutions that purported to protect people.
- **De-Center Prisons and Police:** The dominant narrative around sexual harm should acknowledge the ways that police and prisons are sources of sexual violence and sexual harm. The United States government has long been the purveyor of sexual harm toward girls, women, and GNC people of color. GGE understands that in the aggregate, arrest and incarceration are not deterrents or effective tools to prevent sexual violence. In fact,

the criminal legal system often harms survivors by dragging them through grueling processes of repeated disclosure, public shaming, cross-examination, and (depending on their race and class and that of their perpetrator) the presumption of their perpetrator's innocence. The criminal legal system often inflicts new harm in addition to the harm of the wrongdoer, rather than meeting the survivor's needs.

- **Start at the Margins:** There is no single institution that has a higher concentration of cis and trans girls and GNC youth who have experienced sexual abuse than a juvenile jail or prison.<sup>27</sup> Our movement's work must therefore center cis and trans incarcerated girls and GNC youth who are system-involved and criminalized survivors of violence.
- **Prevention First:** GGE has been and will continue to be a national leader in the work to prevent gender based violence, sexual harm, and child sexual abuse. This includes comprehensive training for supportive adults who serve children and comprehensive, age appropriate, medically accurate, culturally relevant sexual health education that is inclusive of healthy relationships and understanding consent.
- **Survivors First:** GGE will continue to lead work that centers survivors and connects them to opportunities for healing, organizing, and storytelling.
- **Right to Justice:** We believe that people who experience harm of any kind, including interpersonal violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and gender based violence, should have the autonomy to respond and seek redress through the mechanism they feel most comfortable with. We are living in a time where activists, movement builders, and direct practitioners are building radical forms of justice in ways that are more accessible to more people than ever before. Knowing that radical practices have not reached the scale that we hope they will, we do believe that survivors have a right to healing. This means that while we breakdown the existing tools, we support any survivor as they seek healing and accountability.

## Rooting a Response to Violence in Anti-Carceral Feminism

Anti-carceral feminism is an analysis rooted in avoiding or abandoning the use of the carceral state - police, criminal courts, detention facilities, and prisons specifically - as response mechanisms to gendered violence. Intersectional feminism is largely categorized as an analysis of race and gender, often accompanied by a strong critique of capitalist systems, which embody violence gendered and otherwise. The explicit anti-capitalist statement of Black feminists of the Combahee River Collective and the work of women of color who called for an end to gendered violence make prison abolition, or at the very least ending mass incarceration, arguably a core

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<sup>27</sup> Saar, Malika Saada, Epstein, Rebecca, Rosenthal, Lindsay, Vafa, Yasmin. (2015). The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: A Girl's Story. Human Rights for Girls, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality. Ms. Foundation for Women. [https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015\\_COP\\_sexual-abuse\\_layout\\_web-1.pdf](https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015_COP_sexual-abuse_layout_web-1.pdf)



tenet of feminism rather than a new iteration of feminist values.<sup>28</sup> Despite their anti-carceral origins, feminist anti-violence movements have largely been co-opted by organizations that, under the premise of women's rights, largely look to the criminal legal system as the solution to gendered and sexual violence.

This approach has ignored the inextricable racist origins and strategies of the United States' system of policing and use of prisons. The U.S. prison system is largely an outgrowth of the enslavement of Black people and the convict leasing system.<sup>29</sup> It is the product of what former President Richard Nixon categorized as the "War on Drugs" which disproportionately impacted millions of black people within the United States.<sup>30</sup> Reliance on an inherently racist, classist, and homophobic system as the shield against gendered violence was an act of violence at worst and a miscalculation at best. As we look for strategies and solutions in the 'me too.' social movement, we can choose to correct the violence created by carceral feminism by developing an analysis around transformative justice and demanding that resources be invested in both prevention and care for survivors.

This analysis is not new. Cis and trans women of color have been sharing strategies through scholarship and activism for decades.<sup>31</sup> Our analysis seeks to center young people who are survivors of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence. Our framework leans heavily upon the wisdom of leaders of the #FreeBresha Movement, generationFive, Survived and Punished, Project NIA and individual activists who lead these movements like Mariame Kaba, who have focused their efforts on leading young people and girls of color who have experienced harm through transformative justice processes.

There is arguably no single institution with a higher concentration of girls and GNC youth who have experienced sexual violence than juvenile legal systems. An anti-carceral feminist response to sexual abuse and gendered violence requires thoughtful interventions to prevent and combat the criminalization of cis and trans girls and GNC youth. While the ultimate goal should be to abandon the criminalization of children and youth, in the interim, efforts must be made to end the use of incarceration specifically. Cis and trans girls and GNC youth who come into the juvenile or adult criminal legal systems not only are likely to report sexual trauma, but are also more likely to experience further victimization while incarcerated.<sup>32</sup> Decades of research demonstrates that incarceration is often more harmful than beneficial for any person, but it presents unique risks for cis and trans girls and GNC youth.<sup>33</sup> Feminist responses to gendered violence should demand that government abandon the use of confinement of youth, particularly

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<sup>28</sup> Combahee River Collective. (1977). The Combahee River Collective Statement. Available at [https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition\\_Readings.pdf](https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Blackmon, Douglas. (2008). Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II. Anchor Books.

<sup>30</sup> Drug Policy Alliance. A Brief History of the Drug War. Available at <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war>

<sup>31</sup> Anti-carceral feminist can look to the members of INCITE! for a comprehensive framework for understanding anti-carceral feminism. More resources from INCITE! Are available at <https://incite-national.org/resources-for-organizing/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2014/09/christina-piecora-female-inmates/> , [http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/97-02\\_rep\\_riskjuvenilesface\\_jj.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/97-02_rep_riskjuvenilesface_jj.pdf) (update/clean up cite)

<sup>33</sup> Williams Institute, 2014

through divesting from juvenile incarceration and investing in evidence-based tools for behavior that warrants intervention, decriminalization of specific offenses wherever possible, and the provision of resources to respond to the poverty and trauma which largely predict system involvement.

Our emphasis in this moment is on the work that can be done to prevent and protect young people, especially cis and trans girls and GNC youth of color from harm, as well as creative strategies for providing space for young people to heal. We recognize GGE's unique position as an organization that has always held space for youth by focusing on prevention and survivor response. We also recognize that the work does not fit into linear timelines and certainly does not fit into neat dichotomies of victim/survivor and harm-doer, knowing that people who have caused sexual harm have often experienced sexual harm themselves.<sup>34</sup>

In order to end child sexual abuse, sexual assault and gender based violence, we understand solutions - and offer a range of questions to frame our thinking - within the spectrum of three categories:

- **Preventing Violence Before it Begins:** How do we educate young people, their families, and our communities about the attitudes that foster violence? What conversations should we have about everyday interactions that will push us to build and nurture environments free from harm? What does community safety really look - and feel like? What would it take to ensure that the places that young people spend the most time - schools - are better equipped to meet the needs of the many students who experience sexual violence in their homes, communities, and schools themselves?
- **Responding to Violence When it Occurs:** What might a true trauma-informed response from community members look like? What might intervention beyond reliance on actors of the state look like? What is the delicate balance between developing support for student-survivors and the ways that mandatory reporting to the child welfare systems have been disproportionately harmful to communities of color?
- **Seeking Accountability that Introduces Opportunities for Justice Beyond the Criminal Legal System:** Accountability is perhaps the most complex and most urgent series of questions that we ask ourselves. What would it look like to abandon the use of incarceration for adults and out-of-home placement of children and youth who are perpetrators of violence?

We do not propose to have answers to the above questions. However, we do hope to offer a platform to dig deep and create space to continue the conversations that many of our colleagues in the movement have already begun.

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<sup>34</sup> generationFive, *Ending Child Sexual Abuse: A Transformative Justice Handbook*, 15 (2017), citing, Glasser, M. I. Kolvin, D. Campbell, A. Glasser, I. Leitch, S. Farelly. "Cycle of child sexual abuse: links between being a victim and becoming a perpetrator." *The British Journal of Psychiatry* Dec 2001, Vol.179, Pgs. 482-494. [bjp.rcpsych.org/content/179/6/482](http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/179/6/482)

## Preventing Violence

Advocates for young people must work to shift culture, to change the ways that young people understand sex, sexuality, and sexual violence, and to create space for discussion around what young people have experienced.

## Comprehensive Sexuality Education Inclusive of Consent

There is overwhelming evidence documenting the effectiveness of comprehensive sexual health education, particularly education that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) cites as embracing “community-centered” efforts.<sup>35</sup> Curricula that teach students about gender and power are more effective at protecting young people than those that do not teach about gender and power.<sup>36</sup> However, according to the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), only one state in the country has a health education curriculum that mandates that students are educated about consent.<sup>37</sup> This means that millions of young people across the country are not being equipped with the language or necessary resources to negotiate sexual relationships. The state of California, by contrast, has taken the first steps toward ensuring that students have medically accurate information about sexual and behavioral health. Through the California Healthy Youth Act of 2015, California now requires that students learn about consent as part of comprehensive sexual health education.<sup>38</sup> Among other goals, the statute aims to ensure that schools “provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to have healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors.” California’s state mandate also requires that school districts respect and address the needs of students across genders and sexual orientations.<sup>39</sup>

Public school education should be one of several venues to prevent sexual violence and abuse. School districts should work with educators, advocates, and youth development experts to develop sexual health policies that protect against the harmful messages which reinforce the gender stereotypes and dominance that characterize rape culture.

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<sup>35</sup> American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2016; Reaffirmed 2018). Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Committee Opinion No. 678. Available at <https://www.acog.org/-/media/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Adolescent-Health-Care/co678.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20190116T0040261550>

<sup>36</sup> Haberland, Nicole. (2015). The Case for Addressing Gender Power in Sexuality and HIV Education: A Comprehensive Review of Evaluation Studies. Guttmacher Institute International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health. Volume 41, Issue 1. Available at [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article\\_files/4103115\\_0.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/4103115_0.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Eisenstein, Zach. (2018). We’re Starting to Make the Link Between Sexual Assault and Sex Ed. But We Need to Do Better. Sexuality Information and Education Council. <https://medium.com/@siecus/were-starting-to-make-the-link-between-sexual-assault-and-sex-education-but-we-need-to-do-better-afb900ccf278>

<sup>38</sup> American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. (2016). California Healthy Youth Act (CA Education Code Sections 51930-51939) Frequently Asked Questions. Available at [https://www.aclunc.org/docs/frequently\\_asked\\_questions-california\\_healthy\\_youth\\_act-ca\\_sexual\\_health\\_education\\_roundtable.pdf](https://www.aclunc.org/docs/frequently_asked_questions-california_healthy_youth_act-ca_sexual_health_education_roundtable.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Cal. Educ. Code § 51930 (II, Div. 4, Part 28, 5)

## Rooting School-Based Social Work Practice in a Transformative Youth Development Model Rooted in Black Feminism

As an organization founded by a social worker that continues to have staff members and interns trained in social work, GGE has a unique, ecosystemic approach to youth work for gender and racial equity. GGE's work is grounded in a strengths-based, intergenerational approach that roots program participants in their environment. This means that GGE begins with the foundational idea that those working with young people should identify, affirm, and support their strengths. Young people bring valuable lived experience and expertise which generates innovative ideas, novel ways of addressing problems, and creative solutions. Recognizing and supporting young people from a strengths-based analysis starts from an understanding that youth are not deficient nor receptacles of adult wisdom. They have extraordinary perspectives, ways of viewing the world, and knowledge that should be honored such that they are co-collaborators.

While honoring the extraordinary gifts of young people, GGE's work is also intergenerational. We know that youth leadership can thrive when supportive adults create the systems and infrastructure that allow young people to lead. We believe that support and collaboration across generations allows us to remember our herstory while writing our future narrative.

We integrate this youth development model with our commitment to anti-racist, feminist and trauma-informed social work practice. This perspective is essential when working with cis and trans girls of color and GNC youth of color. We know that the young people we work with are powerful leaders and thinkers with assets that will lead the necessary work for our movements. We also acknowledge and confront institutional barriers and dominant messages about cis and trans girls and GNC youth of color that disempower and constrict equitable and just opportunities, and we constantly sharpen our practice to undo this harm.

Similar to our positive youth development analysis and approach, we view young people as connected members of a larger complex ecosystem. This approach considers the important folks in young people's lives like their immediate and extended family members, friends, school staff, neighbors, and community. The approach also includes an analysis of the social and political landscape from Black feminist perspective as crucial to understanding the multi-layered dynamics of young people's ecosystems.

This orientation to social work practice is one that we believe must be replicated in schools and other learning environments that seek to better serve cis and trans girls and GNC youth of color.

## Expand Survivor-Centered Programs in Schools, Led By School Social Workers

Educators, social workers, school administrators and school leadership should work under the assumption that survivors are present - every single day. When school social workers are

trained in the practices named above, we believe that schools can serve as places for more robust survivor identification and, ultimately, survivor and community healing. Young people should be able to access the support they need in their communities to promote their well-being and development.

Particularly if school is the place where harm happens, schools have a responsibility to provide spaces for healing - on an individual level to ensure that survivors have access to personal healing, on an interpersonal level between survivors and those who have caused harm, on an institutional level to correct rules and policies that led to harm being caused in the first place. Personal accounts from survivors who are students in middle and high school reveal that instead of being embraced by a school when an incident of violence occurs, survivors are frequently pushed out.<sup>40</sup>

Healing justice programs that cater to the needs of survivors and their allies belong in school settings. As a provider of an innovative community-based healing justice program that recruits directly from practitioners inside of schools and as a provider of school-based programs, we know that the need for intervention in school settings is critical.

## Provide Multiple Entry Points for Conversations Around Safety

Reflecting on the many individuals who recounted moments when they could have intervened but chose otherwise in the *Surviving R. Kelly* docuseries, our colleagues at the Black Youth Project (BYP100) wrote, "...It takes a village to fail a child."<sup>41</sup> No one entity can bear the responsibility of keeping communities and especially children safe. Instead, prevention can happen when all of us are responsible.

Conversations around safety must happen in many places and from a range of messengers. In our gendered world, entry points and messengers are different for cis boys and young men than for cis girls and women, and none of these messengers may meet the needs of folks who are transgender or GNC. Supportive adults, particularly those who have chosen to serve or care for young people (educators, social workers, school administrators, parents, caregivers, and more), must engage in their own learning around child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and gender based violence and prepare themselves to have ongoing conversations with young people about what safety in relationship with peers, family members, friends, other adults, and strangers truly means.

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<sup>40</sup> These accounts were collected during the PAR process that led to the development of GGE's *The School Girls Deserve* report and have been shared by direct service providers who have anonymously shared the stories of young people who have documented the responses they have received from school administrators when they have disclosed an incident of sexual violence taking place within the school setting.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, Sherronda J. (2019). *Surviving R. Kelly: It Takes a Village to Fail a Child*. Black Youth Project. Available at <http://blackyouthproject.com/surviving-r-kelly-it-takes-a-village-to-fail-a-child/>

# Responding to Violence

## Re-Thinking Police As First Responders

Many of our colleagues in the movement are cultivating other systems of crisis response when violence occurs, particularly intimate partner or other forms of domestic violence, beyond - and ultimately instead of - calling the police. In the near term, this requires us to ask ourselves how we as individuals and as members of a community show up for family, neighbors, and friends when violence occurs. Are we prepared to intervene?

When building accountable communities, we must consider how we show up for community members when we are made aware that harm has occurred. Our partners at generationFIVE note:

Showing up in a moment of crisis matters. Showing up one month later, six months later, one and two and five years later also matters as people heal, strive for accountability, and deepen relationships. This doesn't mean that we're always going to get it right. This principle asks us to be conscious and transparent about the support we can offer and the limitations of what we can provide throughout an intervention—and if we overstep these limits, to acknowledge it and to be responsive as we can.<sup>42</sup>

## Challenging the Use of Foster Care and Child Welfare Systems

Many of the most vulnerable young people are those who are connected to or involved with state systems, specifically the child welfare system and juvenile justice system. Relying on those systems to protect young people is misguided and in most cases dangerous. Studies have shown that young people who are placed within group homes are 2.5 times more likely to end up connected to juvenile or criminal legal systems than the young people who are placed with families.<sup>43</sup> LGBTQ youth are overrepresented within the foster care system and uniquely vulnerable for sexual violence.<sup>44</sup> Black children are disproportionately represented in the foster care system, a reflection of the long history of “Jane Crow,” categorized as the “criminalization of parenting choices,” particularly those of Black and Latinx mothers.<sup>45</sup> Many youth in the foster care system are funneled into commercial sexual exploitation (also called trafficking) in a phenomenon that our partners at Rights for Girls, the Vera Institute, and the Ms. Foundation for

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<sup>42</sup> Ending Child Sexual Abuse: A Transformative Justice Handbook. (2018). Available at <http://www.generationfive.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/g5-Transformative-Justice-Handbook.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Ryan, et.al. 2012

<sup>44</sup> Williams Institute, 2014

<sup>45</sup> Clifford, Stephanie, Silver-Greenberg, Jessica. (2017). Foster Care as Punishment: The New Reality of Jane Crow. The New York Times. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/21/nyregion/foster-care-nyc-jane-crow.html>

Women call the “sexual abuse to prison pipeline.”<sup>46</sup> We cannot rely on systems that have continually harmed youth of color and LGBTQ youth to create safety.

## Integrate Healing Justice into Survivor-Led Activism to End Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Gender Based Violence

Survivors must be at the forefront of activism to shift the very conditions that cause all of us harm. This is a core tenet of GGE’s Sisters in Strength program and one that echoes our organizational value that folks impacted by systems of oppression have the tools to lead transformation in our world. Our activism, however, must be healing in and of itself.

Cara Page and the Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective define healing justice as a practice that “identifies how we can holistically respond to and intervene on generational trauma and violence, and to bring collective practices that can impact and transform the consequences of oppression on our bodies, hearts and minds.”<sup>47</sup>

Activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha reminds us that healing justice is not a new concept. Many of our movements have embraced a space for people to be well and, in fact, provided basic services that were not otherwise provided by mainstream medical institutions while they organized for justice. Our movements must become places that help us to be well, work to undo ableism, allow for grief, and move away from the notion of “self care” and towards collective care.<sup>48</sup>

This is the work that must be well resourced by those who seek to financially support our work. It cannot be quantified and does not fit the traditional funder request of predictable deliverables and unmeasurable outcomes. Instead, support for healing justice will help keep more of us - and especially more survivors of color across the spectrum of ability and wealth - in this work for the long term.

## Accountability

Harm is complex. We understand the value of language and recognize that terms which define a person exclusively by their actions or their trauma do not align with a belief that transformation is possible.

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<sup>46</sup> Saar, Malika Saada, Epstein, Rebecca, Rosenthal, Lindsay, Vafa, Yasmin. (2015). The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: A Girl’s Story. Human Rights for Girls, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality. Ms. Foundation for Women. [https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015\\_COP\\_sexual-abuse\\_layout\\_web-1.pdf](https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015_COP_sexual-abuse_layout_web-1.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Black Emotional and Mental Health (BEAM) Collective. Healing Justice. Available at <http://www.beam.community/healing-justice/>

<sup>48</sup> Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. (2016). A Not-So-Brief Personal History of the Healing Justice Movement, 2010 - 2016. Mice Magazine. Available at <http://micemagazine.ca/issue-two/not-so-brief-personal-history-healing-justice-movement-2010%E2%80%932016>

Our broader movement is in the midst of a cultural transformation to rethink methods of seeking justice when harm is caused. We look to the incredible leadership of organizations that have done the hard work to explore what accountability for gender based violence can look like.

## Scale Resourcing for Transformative Justice Processes Led by Practitioners of Color

Our own organizational framework around what accountability through a transformative justice approach can look like, especially in instances of child sexual abuse, is still in nascent stages. Luckily we are able to learn from giants in this work - largely organizations and collectives led by transformative justice practitioners of color. We look to the following resources for guidance and support:

- Survived and Punished, led by Mariame Kaba, created the Survived and Punished Domestic Violence Response curriculum, which offers tools for community practitioners to expand their analysis to better understand the connections between racialized gender-based violence and criminalization.<sup>49</sup>
- Creative-Interventions offers guidance for changing culture and developing accountability processes.<sup>50</sup>
- Philly Stands Up, a small collective, did the work of practicing transformative justice to confront sexual assault via a community accountability process.<sup>51</sup>
- The Just Practice Collaborative offers trainings for community members committed to doing the work of seeking accountability.<sup>52</sup>
- The valuable resource hub, Transform Harm, centralizes much of the analysis around using transformative justice to end and respond to sexual violence.<sup>53</sup>
- We also look to the transformative justice processes led by organizers and community activists who have done the difficult work to hold members accountable for harm.<sup>54</sup>

Many of these resources offer tools for circumstances in which people who have caused harm are willing to take responsibility for their actions. They also assume that both people who have caused harm and survivors are connected to existing community organizations who can help advance a process. These conditions are often not available to everyone and even less available to young people.

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<sup>49</sup> Criminalizing Survivors Curricula. Available at <https://survivedandpunished.org/criminalizing-survival-curricula/>

<sup>50</sup> Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence. Available at <http://www.creative-interventions.org/tools/toolkit/>. See also Taking Accountability: How Do We See Violence? Available at [http://www.creative-interventions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Section-4F\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.creative-interventions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Section-4F_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Ansfield, Bench., Colman, Timothy. (2012). Confronting Sexual Assault: Transformative Justice on the Ground in Philadelphia. Tikkun.

<sup>52</sup> Just Practice Collaborative. Available at <http://www.shirahassan.com/just-practice-collaborative/>

<sup>53</sup> Transform Harm. Available at <https://transformharm.org/community-accountability/>

<sup>54</sup> Black Youth Project (BYP 100) Community Accountability Process (Chicago, 2015 - 2016). Available at <https://transformativejusticeinitiative.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/byp100-survivor-statement.pdf>



To that end, we call on philanthropy, community, and government to scale resourcing for transformative justice processes to deepen our understanding of what could work in entire communities that are pursuing a brand new framework to undo harm. Our movement understands recognizes the deep flaws in the carceral system - and needs a longer runway to explore new solutions, especially at scale. We look to the leadership of practitioners of color who root their work in communities most harmed by the criminal legal system to lead the way.

## Our Call to Action

We enter into 2019 with both visionary optimism and measured trepidation. The regressive policies of the Trump Administration will be devastating for cis and trans women and GNC people all over the globe. Yet our organizing, our rapid response, and our new Congress tell us that resistance is fertile. Now more than ever, we must step into our leadership as movement participants - no matter our entry point into the conversation.

We walk in to 2019 with numerous questions - for ourselves and for our movement. Throughout the year, GGE will host a series intergenerational salon-style conversations, bringing together community members, parents, academics, social workers, educators, lawyers, and young people to discuss topics within the broader gender and racial justice movement, including:

- Consent and Culture Change
- Technology and the Movement to End Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault Gender Based Violence
- Providing Entry Points for Young Men and Boys in the Movement to End Child Sexual Abuse and Gender Based Violence
- Centering Trans and Non-Binary Folks in the Gender Based Violence Movement
- Scaling Transformative Justice Processes

GGE will continue to be an incubator for movement leadership and culture. GGE is poised to grow our institutional, strategic, and leadership capacity in order to lead a multi-year, multi-pronged racial and gender justice movement.

As we near 17 years, we understands that movement moments like this do not come around often. The #metoo surge against sexual violence provides opportunities for pivotal societal change - and equally pivotal challenges. Our work is far from over. GGE is fueled by coalition partners, networks, elected officials, media, philanthropic partners, youth, and survivors to maintain the momentum to end gender based violence while centering and following the leadership of young people. All of us our needed. Join us as we continue define our intergenerational, intersectional movement end child sexual abuse, sexual assault and gender based violence - in 2019 and beyond.