



March 19, 2013

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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Turn off the victim blaming. Turn on support for survivors.

One day after the decision in the Steubenville rape trial, the victim blaming resumes: her name is shared in the media, threats are made against her and her credibility is called into question yet again. When will this stop? Why is society afraid to confront the fact that rape is predominately perpetrated by people we know and trust? In 8 out of 10 cases, the victims know the perpetrator.¹

Let's dispel the messages we have been hearing way too loud and turn up the volume on supporting survivors.

1. **Victims aren't responsible for "ruining" a perpetrator's life.** Rape is a crime of abuse and power. The justice system sent a message Sunday that rape is a crime with consequences.
2. **Alcohol is not the cause of rape.** While alcohol is often used to facilitate a rape, it is not the root cause of sexual violence.
3. **Blaming victims and calling victim credibility into question will never end sexual violence.** We need to stop shifting the blame onto victims, and instead realize that perpetrators are the ones responsible.
4. **Victims' identities should be protected. Their names should never be published in media. Ever.**

And while this crime will have an impact on her, it's important to note that over time, individuals can move from victim to survivor to thriver. Each survivor has their own healing process. Survivors are resilient. The

¹ Miller, T. R., Cohen, M. A., & Wiersema, B. (1996). Victim costs and consequences: A new look (NCJ 155282). Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>

Steubenville victim's mother said, "**This does not define who my daughter is. She will persevere, grow, and move on.**" To hear from other survivors about the impact of sexual violence on their life, click [here](#).

Since high-profile cases garner attention and can be triggering for other survivors, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence has compiled these resources to assist survivors navigating next steps:

- **Sexual Assault in Ohio: Legal Definitions**
- **Understanding the Trauma of Sexual Violence**
- **Understanding PTSD in the Aftermath of Sexual Violence**
- **Supporting a Loved One Who's Been Victimized**
- **Criminal Justice Fact Sheet for Survivors**
- **Contact Information for Rape Crisis Centers in Ohio**

As survivors navigate their own path, we will never forget sitting in the courtroom during her testimony and hearing such strength and resiliency. She has brought hope to other survivors that they will be heard and that they do matter. So remember, your words and actions about what happened in Steubenville lets survivors know if you are someone they can talk to about what they may have carried inside, silently for years.

About OAESV and NSVRC

As Ohio's statewide coalition, OAESV advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence.

For more information, visit www.oaesv.org, [www.twitter.com/OhioAllianceESV](https://twitter.com/OhioAllianceESV) and <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Alliance-to-End-Sexual-Violence/333035558365>.

Founded by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape in 2000, NSVRC identifies, develops and disseminates resources regarding all aspects of sexual violence prevention and intervention.

For more, visit www.nsvrc.org, www.facebook.com/nsvrc and [www.twitter.com/nsvrc](https://twitter.com/nsvrc).