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Joe Campbell, Youth Engagement Specialist
Candle Light Vigil for Jyoti Singh Pandey

Thank you

1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys experience sexual abuse before the age of 18. Think of how many friends you have on Facebook. Over 80% of sexual assault survivors are women; According to the World Health Organization between 15% and 71% of women experience physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. The World Health Organization also recognizes between 17% and 30% of women's first sexual experience was reported as forced.

Shocking statistics when you know this is also the most under reported crime. Only 6% get reported and as high as those numbers are I always wonder how many stories go untold.

We are here today in memory of Jyoti Singh Pandey. She was attacked, sexually assaulted and killed on December 16, 2012. This woman did nothing wrong and yet the back lash that this women's memory is receiving tells an all too familiar tale of the blaming messages sent to women for too long. People have publicly said this about the women..... she shouldn't have been out late, she could have prevented this if she had fallen to the feet of her attacker, and even that she didn't have the right to be on public transport.

As important as her story is, all too often the only stories we hear are the stories about how the innocent victims of this crime could have prevented or done something different so as not to be a victim of these crimes; how they need to be responsible for their own victimization. We have to switch the conversations around this issue. We have to start looking at who is doing this and the messages we are sending to people who experience this!!!

This is a global issue and the messages being perpetuated in this case are the exact same ones women are taught here - typical prevention tips. It has to stop. These messages are blaming and shaming countless innocent people around the world. An assault would not happen if someone didn't choose to assault a person.

98% of all sexual offences are committed by men. Most men don't assault, but when it happens it's almost always a man. Men need to do more to change those numbers, there has to be a problem how we are teaching men to be men. Make no mistake this is a men's issue too.

For years women have been leading this amazing movement to end men's violence against women. This is not a solely a women's issue or a men's issue. This issue is about human rights, about creating a safer more accepting world for us all. As a man I feel so privileged to have to opportunity to work alongside these women. To be able to follow the fearless women who have made it possible for more people than ever to be speaking out on this issue.

This is such a daunting issue. It's so big, a global issue, and so complex. Dr Seuss a famous child's author once said: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot nothing is going to get better it's not." You need to recognize that you, just by coming here tonight in memory of this woman, you are very much part of the solution. The only change we have control over is the change that we create within ourselves.

We at CCASA are rethinking prevention, and trying to change the parts of our culture that are allowing this crime to continue. We need your support.

- We need to re-think who is responsible for preventing sexual violence, and that responsibility lies with the ones who are committing the crime in the first place.
- We need to recognize that it is not survivors or victims who are responsible for prevention, but rather the offenders to stop offending in the first place.
- Facilitate change within your own circle of influence educate and talk to your peers and family.
- Talk to CCASA
- Always be a pillar of support for those people in your lives affected by this

That potential for change that's within you, the fact that we're all here in support of this cause, excites me. Because I know together we can.

Thank you for coming. I'm honored to be a part of this conversation.