

Sound Therapy for Healing Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Every 73 seconds another American is sexually assaulted. That means that during a 15 minute presentation another 12.3 people in this country will be sexually assaulted. 1 out of 6 women and 1 out of 33 men. 9 out of every 10 victims are female. Each year just under 600,000 assaults occur. (1)

Worldwide over 136 million women have been abused. That is 35% of the female population which is almost half of all humans.(2) These statistics are based on those incidents that have been reported. There are many that go unreported by those not wanted to speak up or relive the shame. They know their abusers and do not want to ruin their lives. The victims often are accused of “asking for it” or being provocative. They relive the trauma in the telling and are assaulted again. These statistics are only for Americans. The numbers worldwide are staggering. Is it any wonder we live in a society where war and violence are used to dominate, manipulate and control? To dull or numb the pain, we turn to drugs, alcohol, sex, shopping, or food to name a few. The resulting manifestations of the unresolved abuse can be depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Eating disorders, Sleep Disorders, Suicide, Panic attacks, and self-harm. (1) There are many healing modalities one can turn to; Psychology, counseling, meditation, light therapy and EFT. However, sound healing is one of the most effective, natural and ancient traditions for returning to balance and flow. It provides a holistic, safe alternative that uses instruments and voice toning to gently unearth and heal the physical and emotional scars of sexual assault.

The healing process begins when we start to come back to the body. It is where the traumas are stored. This blocked energy usually results in disease in the body. We have cut ourselves off from feeling deeply and we value our minds, as they try to figure things out, get them right, or maneuver through situations. We do anything to avoid feeling the pain.

Each of us needs to feel safe, affirmed and connected. Most of us have experienced trauma as children. This could be beatings, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse. Since we are not usually taught how to process trauma in a healthy way, we, instead, internalize the abuse and become our own abusers. Sometimes we abuse others. We develop survival plans which may include grabbing for attention, interrupting, always needing to be right or to be the center of attention. When we do this, it is not inclusive. We are unaware of the needs of others and will hurt those around us in order to get our needs met. This is not intentional. A lot of our behaviors are unconscious.

Through the sound bath, we are invited to inhabit our bodies. To come back to ourselves. Back to our hearts. To loving ourselves and our bodies. Sound can calm the

autonomic nervous system so that you do not always feel as though you are on high alert. The stress of always being “on” causes fatigue to the adrenal glands and cortisol is being released into the body. There is heightened awareness and fear constantly running even if on the unconscious level. Through breath work and sound with soft instruments, there can be a breakthrough or release. This could be experienced as crying, shaking, shouting, sighing or toning. There is a connection between the body and heart. When we connect with our hearts, we feel more centered and grounded. Our hearts start to open. It may feel painful at first. Beneath the pain is where the love resides. We inhabit our bodies in a new way and we start to trust ourselves again. This is crucial as we may have felt that our bodies betrayed us and led to the assault. Or we have formed other unconscious beliefs. With guidance, we start to believe life is good. To let go of the victim mentality and to realize we have choices.

Sound healing offers us a way to find our voice. To speak up for ourselves. To express and allow others to express without feeling intimidated or unheard. When we are centered and grounded, we can be present and speak our truth in love.

Using sound healing can have far reaching results. The recipient will eventually stop abusing themselves and others. When we heal, we are healing generationally so that the violence will not perpetuate. Sound therapy has been used in some prisons in the U.S. and abroad. We could use this therapy with sex offenders as they were, in most cases, victims of assault themselves. There are 917,771 registered sex offenders in the United States.(3) It would reduce the recidivism rate. The long range hope would be to end any sexual or violent assault. To end child trafficking and sexual enslavement.

Using sound to heal and free us from the effects of being abused results in our having a larger capacity to be loving and to be there for others. We become better friends and people as we are able to meet our own needs. Start by being gentle with yourself, and using your voice. Peace on earth begins with each of us finding that peace within. It is on purpose. It is a choice. It is to be practiced daily.

Sharon Lee Muscara

10/18/2020

Sources:

1. Rainn.org website whose statistics come from Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Crime Victimization survey, 2018 2019. Note. RAINN applies a 5-year rolling average to adjust for changes in the year-to-year NCVS survey data.
2. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>
3. Security.org whose statistics come from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children