



Call to Action

Sexual violence is not normally a partisan issue, but this year the personal became political in ways that challenged us, as a nonprofit organization, with how best to respond to the trauma experienced by sexual assault survivors. Advocacy programs received increased crisis calls and survivors re-lived their own assaults. These moments are when we rely on the source of our strength and purpose – MNCASA members who make a difference in survivor lives every single day.

We resolve to work even harder on your behalf as new challenges head our way. Oppression and injustice are familiar issues to all of us who work to end sexual violence. Still, many of us are afraid of what is to come. Anger and sadness are also common responses. Family members, friends, colleagues and neighbors are at risk in all aspects of their lives, just for being who they are. *Being an ally in word alone, without action, is simply not enough.*

We are a coalition for all survivors of sexual violence, no matter their race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, faith or political party. We will protect access to services, remain survivor-centered, promote culturally specific responses, confront policies that further oppression in all venues, engage in hard conversations across dividing lines, and continue to establish prevention as a Minnesota priority. And we will support survivors who share their stories in hopes of letting others know that they are not alone.

During this time, we call for more communication. In particular, we ask members to meet with elected officials in local, state, and national government. Talk to them about what the survivors in your community need most and seek their commitment to actively respond to sexual violence policy issues. Make sure that they understand the connections between sexual violence and other forms of oppression. We will issue our 2017 legislative action agenda in December along with talking points to further the conversations and there will be opportunities for all of us to unite in the coming months.

With adversity comes opportunity. While the conversations have been difficult we also welcome the broader national dialogue about sexual violence and intersectional issues. We pledge to play a role in these conversations – as leader or listener – and to take action when human rights are under attack. We ask our members to do the same.

There are tough times ahead so take time to reflect, talk to your colleagues and peers, breathe and seek support when you need it. Contact us when you need help. And thank you again for everything that you do.

Sent on behalf of MNCASA Staff