START BY BELIEVING
DAY SOCIAL MEDIA
TOOLKIT
Pledge Templates for Social Media

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3hvMBwy
Instagram: bit.ly/3fEKUvf

Sample Post

I am Neo, a member of the United States Air Force, a victim advocate and a friend. I will always be there to support victims of sexual violence. I will Start by Believing.
Generic Template

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter: bit.ly/2BjeI1i
Instagram: bit.ly/2NcWtNH

Sample Post

The first Wednesday in April is Start by Believing Day!
Prepared Social Media Infographics

Increase awareness of the Start by Believing philosophy, and its importance, through these eye-opening infographics. All of the following infographics can be found on the Start by Believing website: startbybelieving.org/social-media-posts/

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3F6Xtfb
Instagram: bit.ly/3pVxsLu

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I just think about all the people that weren’t believed, or the people who haven’t been believed, or the people who are afraid to speak up because they don’t think they will be believed... I don’t know what turn my life would have taken if people hadn’t believed in me when I said that something happened.

- Taylor Swift

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3F6Xtfb
Instagram: bit.ly/3pVxsLu
Statistics show that rapists don’t just attack once — many re-offend, often multiple times.

**IT’S A FRIGHTENING EQUATION: ONE FAILED RESPONSE CAN MEAN ADDITIONAL VICTIMS.**

Start by Believing is designed to change this.

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Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3sX09cx
Instagram: bit.ly/3mVS3Ny

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Of **100** rapes committed
an estimated **5-20** are reported to police

**0.4-5.4** are prosecuted

**0.2-5.2** result in a conviction

**0.02-2.8** in incarceration

#STARTBYBELIEVING

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/34c4nmk
Instagram: bit.ly/3sXAdNW
RESEARCH STUDIES ESTIMATE THAT JUST 2-8% OF SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTS ARE FALSE.

Knowing how to respond to sexual assault is critical. A negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where perpetrators face no consequences for their crimes.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3f6qPjf
Instagram: bit.ly/3HQFgnV

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3FUWCiT
Instagram: bit.ly/3t2YSkx
I approach each sexual assault report with a start by believing philosophy. This helps me conduct thorough, evidence-based investigations which is key to achieving due process and holding more offenders accountable.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3zrL2sM
Instagram: bit.ly/3eQAmuv

When a patient tells me their stomach hurts, I begin from that assumption—while remaining open to alternative possibilities. Similarly, when a patient says they were sexually assaulted, I begin from that starting point.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3teUDIT
Instagram: bit.ly/3tistGt
VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT DESERVE TO BE TREATED WITH COMPASSION AND RESPECT. WHEN OUR WORDS OR ACTIONS COMMUNICATE THAT THEY ARE NOT BELIEVED, THIS HURTS VICTIMS AND UNDERMINES OUR ABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY PROSECUTE CASES.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3kuAaXW
Instagram: bit.ly/3GNSYsC

INVESTIGATORS WHO START BY BELIEVING ARE ABLE TO CONDUCT A MORE THOROUGH INVESTIGATION, WHICH IS THE ONLY WAY TO INCLUDE OR EXCLUDE SUSPECTS BASED ON THE EVIDENCE.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3mZ3ELR
Instagram: bit.ly/3HGnm7f
ADOLESCENT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT ARE LESS LIKELY TO REPORT OR ACCESS SUPPORT THAN ADULTS. (8-13% REPORTED)

#Startbybelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3pTpT7Z
Instagram: bit.ly/3t5jI2m

SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS TYPICALLY REACH OUT TO 2-3 PEOPLE FOR SUPPORT, BEFORE REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.

Friends and family play a critical role in determining whether victims will report or access services. #StartbyBelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3FVRxqq
Instagram: bit.ly/34fQS53
ABOUT HALF (43-52%) OF ALL SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS RATE THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AS UNHELPFUL OR HURTFUL.

AN ADVOCATE'S CORE VALUE IS TO BE PRESENT WITH VICTIMS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THEIR ASSAULT, AND TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, REASSURANCE, AND VALIDATION. ESSENTIALLY, ADVOCATES CANNOT DO THEIR JOB IF THEY DO NOT START BY BELIEVING.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3qL6pBK
Instagram: bit.ly/31qk88l

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3HeqzgL
Instagram: bit.ly/3XJyNmF
Sexual assault victims who receive negative reactions are less likely to disclose to anyone else. This includes:

- Being blamed or patronized
- Being doubted, stigmatized, or shamed

Victims may be better off receiving no support at all than receiving reactions they consider to be hurtful.

(Campbell, R., Ahrens, C.E., Sefl, T., Wasco, S.M., & Barnes, H.E., 2001)
LESS THAN HALF (27-40%) OF SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS SEEK MEDICAL CARE.

Friends and family play a critical role in determining whether victims will access services. #StartbyBelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3mYljDA
Instagram: bit.ly/3sZ6zYO

FEW SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS (5-20%) REPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.

Friends and family play a critical role in determining whether victims will report or access services. #StartbyBelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/31olTCO
Instagram: bit.ly/3FXaFV5
SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS WHO RECEIVE NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM LOVED ONES ARE LESS LIKELY TO DISCLOSE TO ANYONE ELSE. #STARTBYBELIEVING

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/32V9l6p
Instagram: bit.ly/3HDRwaT

RESEARCH ESTIMATES THAT WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BEFORE THEIR 18TH BIRTHDAY ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AGAIN.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/34c6uGM
Instagram: bit.ly/3mWUiR
SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS TYPICALLY RECEIVE MORE NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM LOVED ONES THAN THEY DO FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT OR COMMUNITY SERVICES.

#Startbybelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3ztGRNd
Instagram: bit.ly/3eT4Agi

The fear of not being believed or being blamed prevents many sexual assault survivors from accessing medical care and victim advocacy.

Many decide it simply isn’t worth the risk to reach out for help.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3eO6Sx9
Instagram: bit.ly/3ESJM3i
63% OF SURVIVORS DIDN’T REPORT THEIR SEXUAL ASSAULT BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID THEY WOULD BE BLAMED FOR IT.

#StartbyBelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3qUReGe
Instagram: bit.ly/3EWdlke

IN ONE STUDY, “EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM A FRIEND WAS RELATED TO SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER RECOVERY” AMONG SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS.

(Ullman, 1996)

#StartbyBelieving

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: bit.ly/3zrOfbO
Instagram: bit.ly/3qURy7U
Two key responses that have a positive effect on survivors:

(1) Being believed, and
(2) Having someone to talk to

Sexual assault victims describe positive responses as:

- Being listened to
- Being provided with emotional support
- Not being blamed
- Being encouraged to talk about the sexual assault, and
- Having a support provider who is not distracted with other things
Multi-Image Instagram Posts

These graphics are available for multi-image Instagram posts, and include frequently asked questions, what to say to survivors, and 10 reasons to Start by Believing. All of these graphics can be found on the Start by Believing website: startbybelieving.org/social-media-posts/

Start by Believing FAQs

Q. What is Start by Believing?
A. Start by Believing was created to end the cycle of silence and change the way society responds to sexual assault. The campaign focuses specifically on changing the response to survivors of sexual assault by expressing belief and support, rather than doubt, shame, or blame.

Q. Why do we need to Start by Believing?
A. Sexual assault victims often face reactions of doubt and blame when they report the crime or reach out for help. These reactions can increase the trauma survivors experience and decrease the likelihood they will pursue justice and healing. This also means that perpetrators are not held accountable for their crimes, and they remain free to hurt more people.

Q. Is Start by Believing appropriate for criminal justice professionals?
A. Start by Believing is appropriate for criminal justice professionals because case outcomes will only change when police and prosecutors start from the presumption that a sexual assault report has merit, and then follow the evidence through the course of a fair, impartial, and thorough investigation.

Q. What impact does Start by Believing have on survivors?
A. Survivors often first turn to friends and family members, and if their response is disbelief or blame, it can increase the trauma and reduce the chances a victim will report or seek other support services.

Research shows the two things that have the most positive impact on survivors are: (1) having someone to talk to, and (2) being believed. In other words, Start by Believing.
What to Say

**START BY BELIEVING**

"I believe you."
"I'm sorry this happened."
"I am here for you."

**BE SUPPORTIVE**

"You can tell me as much, or as little as you want."
"It's not your fault."
"I'm glad you told me. I'm so proud of you."

**ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP**

“What can I do to support you?”
“I can stay with you tonight. Would that help?”
“Do you want me to go with you to the hospital or police station?”

**AVOID WHY QUESTIONS**

Even with the best of intentions, "why" questions can sound accusatory and make survivors blame themselves.

Instagram: bit.ly/3rcTwjM
Instagram: bit.ly/3JZSmkp
Instagram: bit.ly/3nj337Y
Instagram: bit.ly/3Gougxy
Instagram: bit.ly/3fff0aw

startbybelieving.org
10 Reasons to Start by Believing

1. I told my mom that I was sexually assaulted by someone we knew, and she immediately started defending him and questioning me. Never once did she support me or ask me if I was okay.
   - Amy
   Instagram: bit.ly/3fj0fmQ

2. Most victims of sexual assault never report to law enforcement, often because of the responses they receive from friends and family members.
   Instagram: bit.ly/3HZed9P

3. When my two siblings told me they had been sexually molested by my father, I took my father’s side. All these years later, I realize that I had been in the best position to get them help if I had just started by believing.
   - Tori
   Instagram: bit.ly/34A9Fbu

4. A negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where perpetrators face no consequences for their crimes.
   Instagram: bit.ly/3njHxjB

5. My mother first revealed the sexual abuse she endured as a 5-year old when she was 95. For 90 years of her life, she thought no one would believe her.
   - Pat
   Instagram: bit.ly/33skWKk

6. Statistics show that rapists don’t just attack once – many re-offend, often multiple times.
   Instagram: bit.ly/3K5MeqP
My daughter Jenny was raped by a serial predator. It should never have happened. Several years earlier the perpetrator was caught assaulting a woman, and he was acquitted because “the jury didn’t like the victim.” Thousands of lives were impacted by one jury’s presumption that a victim was lying. We can change. We can help victims recover and put away predators if we simply start by believing victims who have the courage to come forward.

- Steve

From the patrolman who arrived at my door, the officers who searched for my cat, to the detective who worked my case for over two years, I felt believed and supported.

- Tony

Every response matters. Your response matters. Stop the cycle of silence and Start by Believing.
Profile Displays

Start by Believing Day is the first Wednesday in April. Share your excitement with these profile images for Facebook!

Facebook Banner: bit.ly/3jRzCek

Facebook Profile Picture: bit.ly/3IJ85q3
Hashtags & Tagging

Here are some of our recommended hashtags:

#StartbyBelieving  
#WhyIStartbyBelieving  
#IStartbyBelieving  
#EveryResponseMatters  
#MyResponseMatters

When mentioning another agency or organization, be sure to tag them!

And be sure to share your efforts with us:

Facebook: @StartbyBelieving  
Twitter: @SBB_EVAWIntl  
Instagram: @evawintl

Other Resources

Action Kits: startbybelieving.org/resources/#campaignmaterials


Pledge Page: startbybelieving.org/pledge/

Submit Your Campaign: startbybelieving.org/submit-your-campaign/

SBB Day Information: startbybelieving.org/start-by-believing-day/