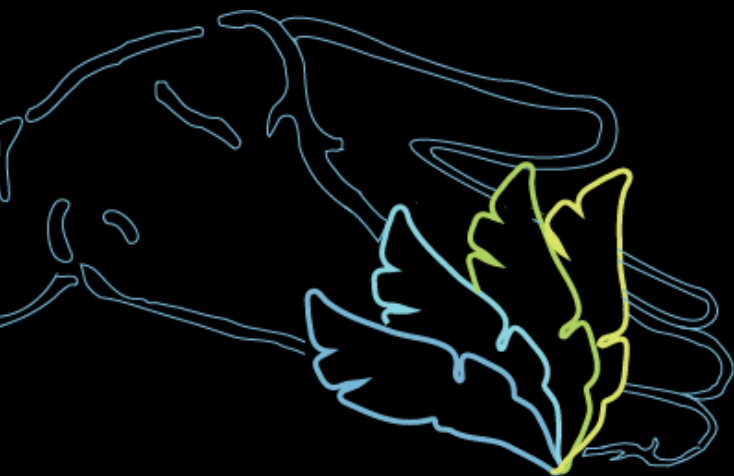


2023 IMPACT REPORT



A Guide for Brave Journeys



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Letter from Board President



Dr. Lisa
Littlejohn Hill

2023 and 2024
Board President

As we embarked on 2023 with optimism and purpose, the Brave Step team approached our mission with a sense of determination that is unmatched in this space. From compassion-driven services to capacity-building debates, we've not stopped working for this community and will continue to do so until the need is abolished.

However, the demand is relentless. As you'll see in 2023, we served more survivors than in 2022 and yet with the same resources.

As Brave Step looks to the future, we recognize that there is an essential need to evaluate our capacity and focus on quality not quantity.

We invite you to join us on this journey and create a safer, healthier world for current and future generations.

"The stakes within the realm of sexual violence are high. As advocates, we want to honor those we serve with our actions and ensure a path to wellbeing for as many as possible."

Mission & Vision

MISSION

Brave Step empowers individuals who have been impacted by sexual violence. To shape a strong, supportive community, we:

- Provide personalized services that help adults impacted by sexual violence claim the life they deserve;
- Foster brave public conversations about sexual violence; and
- Cultivate courageous changemakers.

VISION

- Inspire and empower adults to take action within their lives and shape a strong, supportive community for current and future generations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Brave is empowering our bravest to reach new heights through personal healing and growth.
- Brave is being survivor and loved one centered at the core of every program, project and decision.
- Brave is demonstrating compassion and building trust at each interaction.
- Brave is embodying integrity when the stakes are high, advocating for those impacted and honoring them with our actions.
- Brave is delivering multi-disciplinary services that are responsive and flexible to the need while maintaining a personal touch.

2023 Board of Directors

Kenneth Cooper, TIAA

Casey Denbow,
UNC Horizons

Dr. Erin DiCesare,
Johnson C. Smith University



Nan Gray,
Gray + Howard Studios

Dr. Lisa Littlejohn Hill,
Vision Counseling

Katie Hodges,
Truist Financial



Carol Hoke-Milligan,
Bank of America

Caleb Holloway,
Atrium Health

Malinda Ingram,
Mecklenburg County
Criminal Justice Services



Joseph Keillor,
Baker Donelson

Courtney Lawrence,
Jewish Family Services

Ashley Pearson, Bringewatt,
Wolter & Snover



Emily Wetsel, PYA

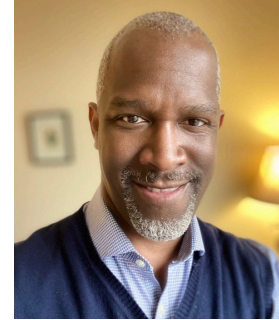


2023 Advisory Board

Bentley Ball, MA, LCMHC

Isis Bey, LCSW, TFCBT,
CCTP II

Dr. David Brantley III,
Psychologist



Dr. Michael Christo,
Novant Health

Dr. Gene Edwards,
Psychologist

Dr. Jennifer
Langhinrichsen-Rohling,
Psychologist at UNC
Charlotte



Jeannie Owens, MSW,
LCSW

Jasmine Temple, Doctoral
Student



2023 Staff



ERICA BUTLER, MA, LMFT

Loved Ones Program Manager



CRYSTAL EMERICK

Founder and Executive Director



JAMIE HART

Survivor Outreach Coordinator



YENTING LIU, MSW, LCSW

Adult Survivor Care Program Manager

Special thanks to our 2023 interns:

Patty D., Arizona State University

Navyasri G., UNC Chapel Hill

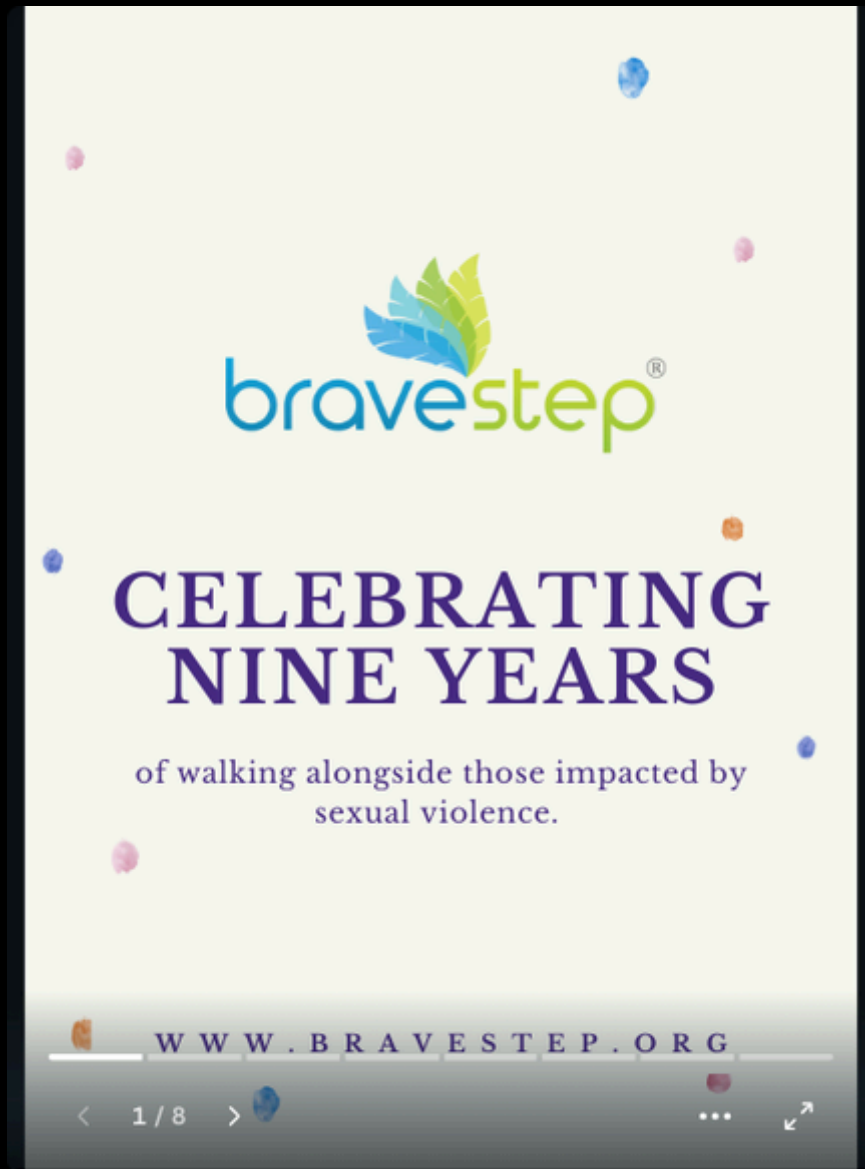
Chloe H., UNC Charlotte

Olivia H., UNC Charlotte (MSW program)

Britney M., UNC Charlotte (MSW program)

Gabby M., Davidson College

Hayley S., UNC Charlotte (MSW program)



**Experience the life-changing
impact Brave Step had on
survivors, loved ones, allies and
Changemakers.**



2023 Results



Changemaker

Fostering brave public conversations about sexual violence is at the heart of what we do. It is our responsibility to inform the community on the impact of sexual violence, preventative measures to take and how we can collectively fight this pervasive and devastating issue.

→ **283** New Changemakers in 2023

→ **4,397** Steps taken in 2023



Since 2014,
Brave Step
has served:

530 ↗

Survivors and
Loved Ones

1,195 ↗

Changemakers

827 ↗

Total
Empowered

2023 Results



Adult Survivor Care

Brave Step serves as a steadfast guide for adult survivors of sexual violence on their personal journey to wellbeing, empowerment and claiming the life they deserve.

101

New Survivors Served in 2023



152

Total Served in 2023



Loved Ones

Brave Step believes that loved ones of sexual violence survivors can play a crucial role in helping survivors claim the life they deserve if effectively armed with knowledge, skills and support from others in similar experiences.

28

Served in 2023



7

Groups Offered



Adult Survivor Care

To help survivors claim the life they deserve, Brave Step uses a multi-faceted model that includes individual counseling, group therapy, peer-led support groups, empowerment programs, and ways to find one's voice.

As part of our 2023 programming, we introduced **two trauma-informed storytelling workshops** for clients to discover the transformative power of storytelling to connect with others and claim their own narrative.

“Brave Step is adding to my healing journey.” - Survivor



Music Therapy

After experiencing eight weeks of immersive music therapy sessions led by the exceptional **Piedmont Music Therapy** team, participants courageously delved into the art of songwriting, resulting in the creation of these heartfelt lyrics:

“Life is a journey of acceptance, and empowerment. Our individual healing is a comforting journey. With all our differences, we come with kindness and empathy. There may be closure of the group, but our healing continues.”

Adult Survivor Care

Heart-Rate Variability Biofeedback

Brave Step is dedicated to providing distinctive trauma-informed programs and techniques to empower clients on their journey. Through a valued partnership with **Carolina Biofeedback Clinic**, Brave Step supported two rounds of the highly sought-after HRV Biofeedback courses.

“I went in not fully understanding HRV. After my first session, I was sold. Getting real-time feedback from the device tracking my heart rate and respiration through breathing. The feedback helps me be more aware of what was happening in my body through the technique of breathing...I can honestly say it took me to another level of self-awareness!”



Group Therapy

Brave Step piloted two therapist-led survivor book clubs, where participants embarked on a journey exploring 87 emotions and experiences. One round was exclusively provided for students participating in **Year Up**, an organization that supports young adults from underserved communities with skills training.

Under the guidance of a skilled therapist, attendees gained deeper insights into themselves and others and also learned to release entrenched feelings and adopt fresh perspectives, fostering personal growth and healing.

Adult Survivor Care

42,000+

Minutes of individual counseling sessions were provided in 2023.

6.4% +

Over the course of six months, there was an improvement in depression levels.

30% ↑

Over the course of time with Brave Step, participants noted an increase in empowerment.

6.5% ↓

In six months, participants reported a decrease in PTSD symptomology.

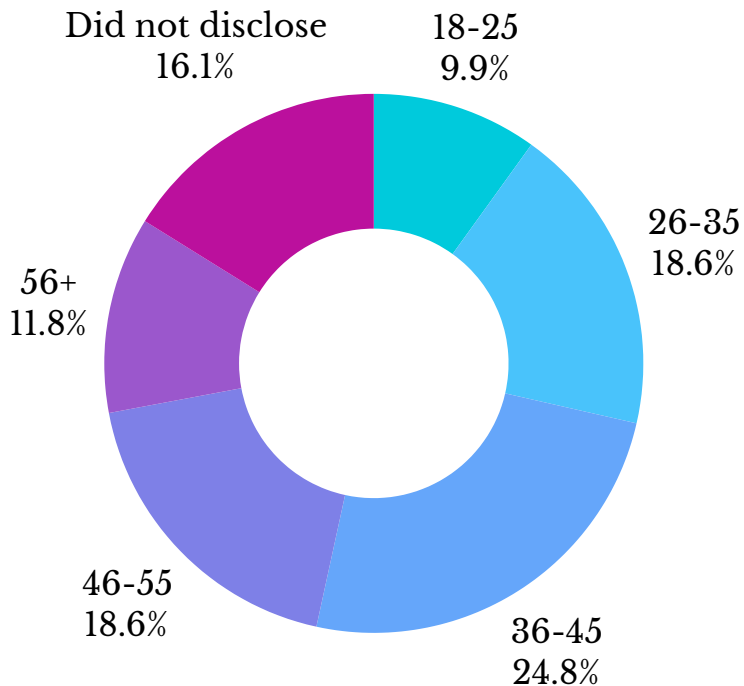
25%

Over the course of six months, there was a **clinically significant change with a decrease to a moderate level of anxiety and a mild level of stress.**

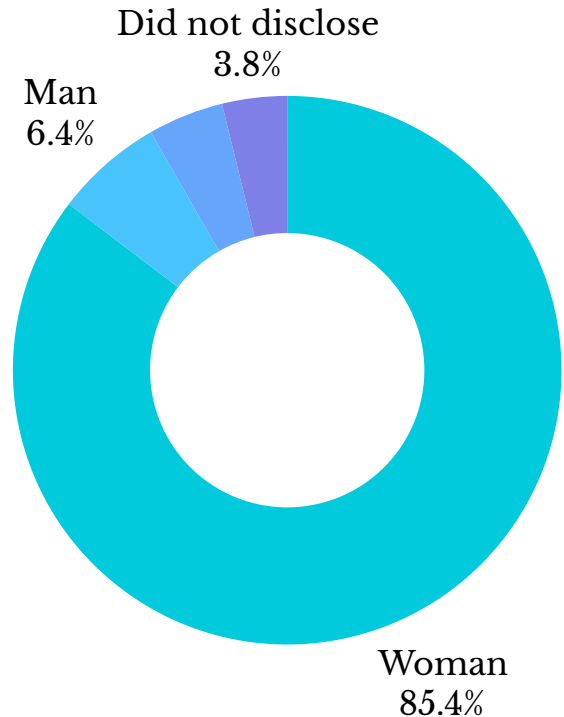
Year over year growth in the number of survivors served.

Adult Survivor Care

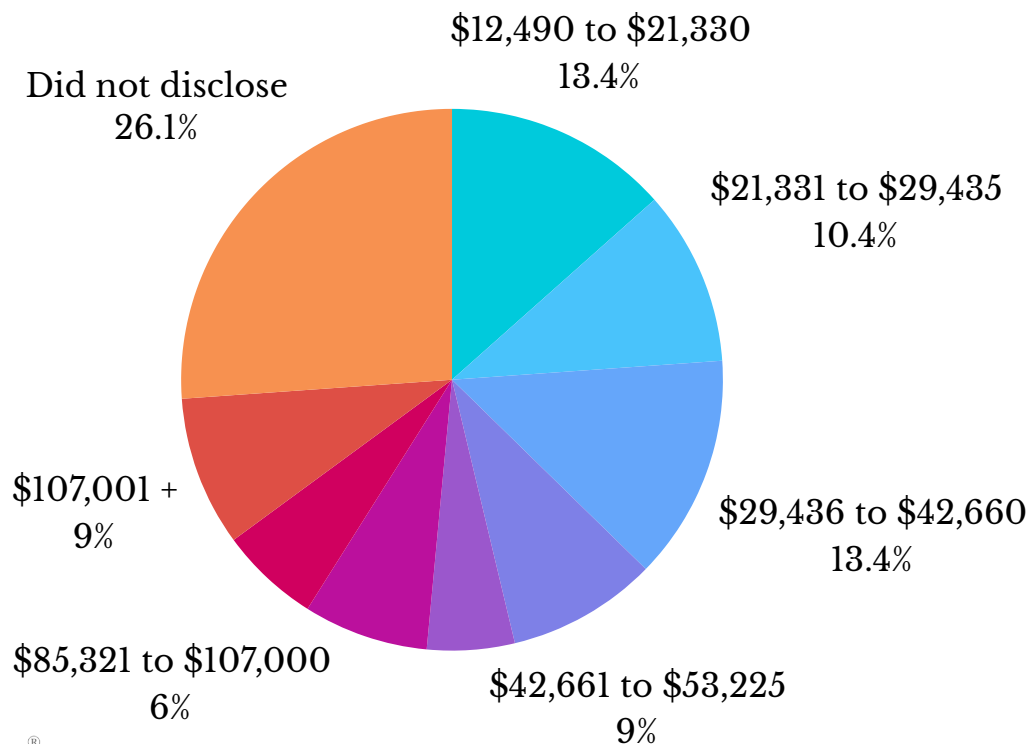
Age



Gender Identity

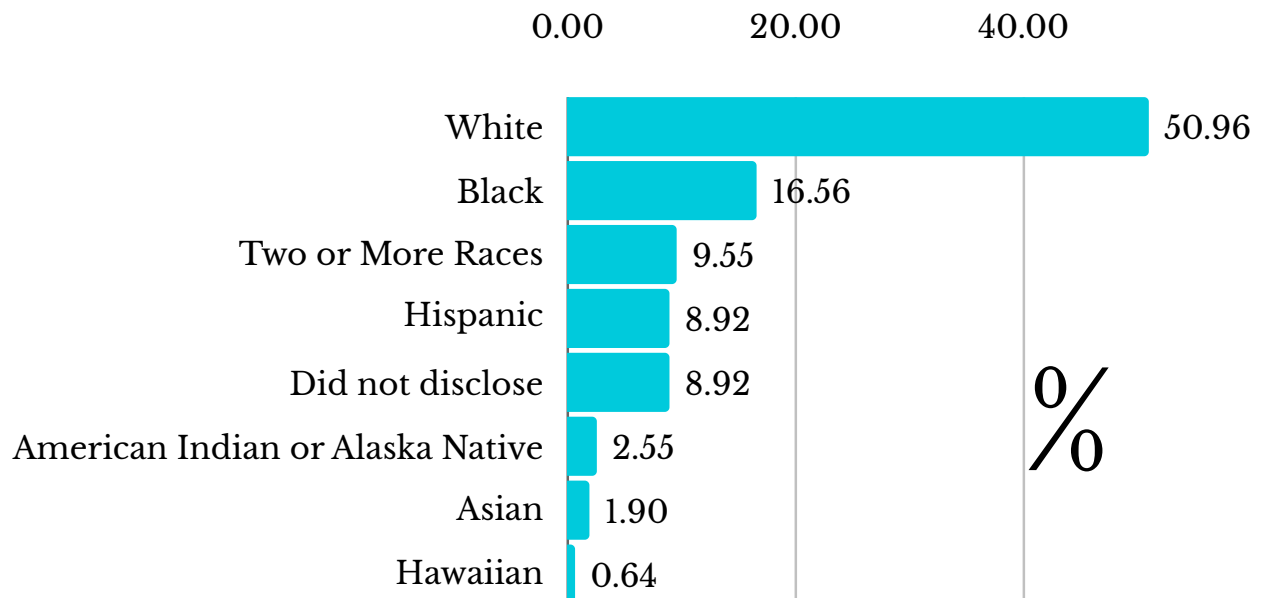


Socioeconomic



Adult Survivor Care

Race & Ethnicity



Survivor Truth

“I want to say thank you for creating this safe space for me! The group and therapy have helped me understand myself better and that I am not alone. I’ve found my voice after so many years and this foundation has truly helped me. I’m very grateful!”

Loved Ones

Brave Step provides education, guidance and a support network that allows loved ones a safe place to learn more about sexual violence, its impact, how to best support the survivor, and also how to process their emotions as a loved one.



77.8%



Participants improved their understanding of how common sexual violence is.

90%



Participants improved their understanding of the effects of sexual violence on the survivor and the loved ones.

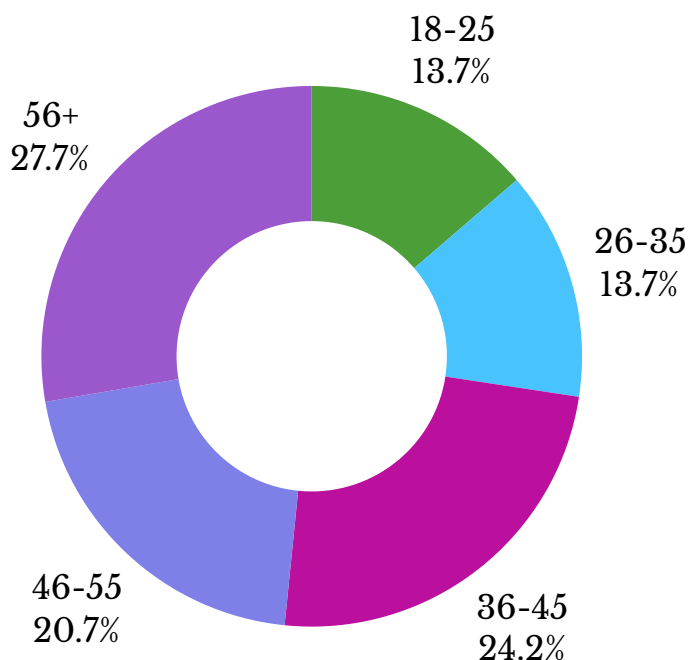
90%



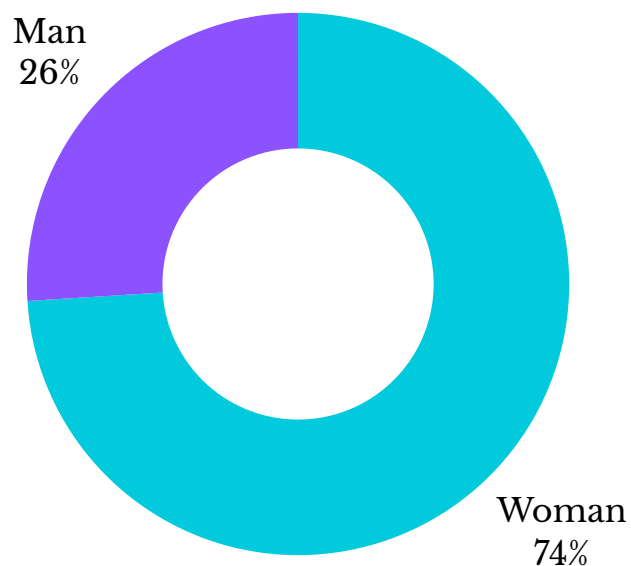
Participants improved the skills needed to have positive interactions between loved ones of survivors and the survivors themselves.

Loved Ones

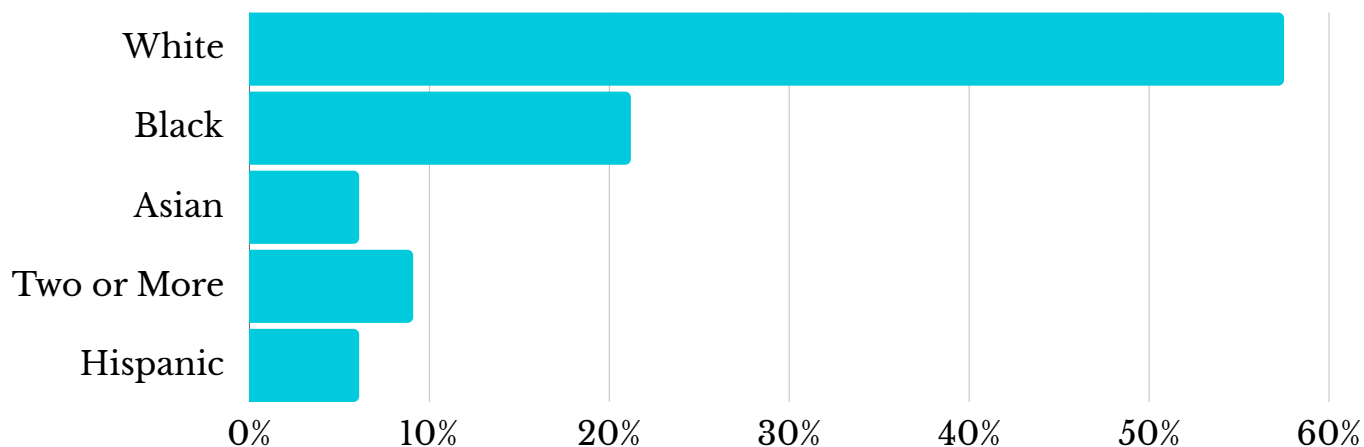
Age of Participants



Gender Identity



Race



Loved Ones

Brave Step believes that loved ones and allies can play a crucial role in helping survivors claim the life they deserve if effectively armed with knowledge, skills, and support from others in similar experiences.

We thank the organizations below for their support, leadership and collaboration in 2023. In 2024 and 2025, Brave Step will continue testing and learning through this program.



Loved One Truth

“I am very grateful for this referral/resource. I was struggling with all aspects of life after this tragic event, but this has been very fulfilling.”

Changemaker

Brave Step's Changemaker program provides participants the training and the tools they need to support one another and help prevent future sexual violence.

- Delivered more than two dozen education and prevention-focused workshops in 2023 for community organizations such as Year Up, Despierta, El Puente and others.
- Of those 24+ workshops, 15 were offered to Cabarrus County Detention Center for approx. 88 participants to educate survivors who often did not have access to trauma care.
- 4,000+ steps were taken in 2023. Steps taken could include attending a workshop, reading a trauma-informed article, engaging in a discussion and more.

Program Responses

100% 

Participants in the virtual quarterly workshops felt more equipped or informed to help prevent sexual violence.

73.3% 

Year Up participants felt “more empowered to speak up against sexual violence.”

90% 

Strongly agreed or agreed that “I have a better understanding of ways to cope with trauma triggers.”

100% 

Participants learned practical ways to support themselves and their family.

Changemaker

Prevention & Education

- Empowering Women
- Consent and Body Safety
- Holding Space
- The Neuroscience of Trauma
- Calm Body, Quiet Mind
- Coping with Triggers
- The 3 Stages of Healing
- How to Set Boundaries
- More

The workshop with Jennifer was excellent! It gave me some wonderful insight on how to “hold space” for my adult son I was estranged from for over eight years and we are now reconnecting. Learning how to hold space for him as we reconcile will truly help in our journey.

Todo es muy bueno para mí. Me siento bien por lo que aprendí sobre el abuso sexual y por hablar sobre ello.

Volunteers are essential to our success.



185 hours of volunteer time in 2023.

According to the Do Good Institute, the value of donated time equals \$33.49 per hour which equates to \$6,195 in value. Thank you, volunteers!

2023 Changemaker Award Recipients



Unsung Hero
Janet Ganoung

In 2017, Janet began as a fearless peer leader, attending and leading dozens of meetings. With more than 120 hours of volunteer time, she also publicly shared her story and advocated for survivors.



Provider Plus
Patty Montagnino, LCSW

Patty contributed her expertise and leadership by designing a therapist-led book club program. As an individual therapist, she is consistently a top choice for clients.



Relentless Warrior
Sue Anne Wrenn, LCSW

Sue Anne's work as an advocate, a leader and a fighter on the issue of sexual violence spanned decades. She also was recognized as an EMDR pioneer in the Charlotte region.



Above and Beyond
Sharon Jordan

Sharon joined Brave Step in 2018 and later began her journey as a peer leader and an assistant group leader. She is a spokesperson, sharing her story of pain and triumph in many public settings.

Financials

Brave Step is a careful steward of the generous dollars that fuel our mission. In 2023, the mission was amplified through contributed time, expertise, organizational needs and treasured dollars.



For the 2023 calendar year:

Revenue including in-kind	\$223,351	↗
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Expenses	\$223,290	↗
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Net Assets as of 12.31.23	\$110,190	↗
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Brave Step's 990 and financial review are available upon request.



2023 Financials

Budget Allocation

84.4%



Programming

10.5%



Fundraising

5.1%



Admin

Program Allocation

47.3% or
\$105,640.44



Adult Survivor Care

13.4% or
\$29,901.40



Loved Ones

20.4% or
\$45,566.93



Programming
(impacting all
programs)

3.3% or
\$7426.92



Changemaker

Fund- raising Sources

31.5%

Grants

25.3%

Individual
Contributions

16.9%

Donated Services

6.3%

Corporate
Contributions

1%

Investments

4%

Faith-Based
Contributions

1%

Earned Revenue

8.5%

Special Events

5.5%

In-Kind Donations

How YOU can help ...

Brave Step's mission is one that requires passionate advocates and the time, treasure and skill. Join us by donating, volunteering and/or partaking in a program. Bravely step forward ...



Your gifts are life empowering!

- \$5: Gives a trauma survivor 12 minutes of specialized therapy with a compassionate trauma therapist.
- \$10: Fuels 10 minutes in group therapy where connection is made, a shift in understanding can be taken and a step towards freedom.
- \$50: Is one hour of bravery for a survivor needing group counseling, impacting six to eight people.
- \$250: Provides an education and/or inspiring speaker that leads others on their journey as a Changemaker or to becoming one.

Volunteer your time and talent!

- As Brave Step works to maximize its capacity and address the growing need, your skills and expertise can amplify this mission. Explore getting involved today.



Creating a lasting impact!

- Brave Step is currently assessing and refining how we serve through Adult Survivor Care, Loved Ones and the Changemaker programs with a focus on deepening our impact for those served.

Join Us!



970 Stafford Farm Road, Concord, N.C. 28025



(704) 361-5230



www.BraveStep.org



info@bravestep.org



Facebook:

www.facebook.com/ABraveStep

Instagram:

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YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@ABraveStep

LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/company/ABraveStep