

# Communal Statement in Support of Survivors

At the end of fall semester, student activist Liz Dunn posted a “List of Men to Avoid” on their personal Facebook account, allowing other survivors to identify Middlebury students who have perpetrated sexual and/or emotional violence. Since this action, Liz has been publicly and privately targeted, as well as threatened with punishment for violation of the Respect for Persons clause in the Student Handbook. In addition to potentially facing official college discipline, Liz has been pressured by both administrators and students on the list to disclose the identities of the survivors who submitted names. Liz has refused to divulge this information, but the college has deemed Liz’s efforts to protect the anonymity of survivors as “failure to comply” with their investigation, threatening more severe punishment. We strongly condemn these actions taken against both Liz and the survivors who sought recourse outside of the school’s unforgiving Title IX processes.

While we understand that the school is acting in accordance with Title IX policy by asking for the names of the survivors, we believe that survivors should have agency in how and to whom they disclose their experiences of violence, and whether they would like to participate in the emotionally draining and punitive process of Title IX. Forcing survivors to reveal themselves to the administration reinforces the idea that survivors are only believed, respected, and validated when they seek “justice” through official judicial structures. It is hypocritical for an institution that has begun emphasizing restorative practices to then take punitive actions against survivors of sexual violence. If we are to truly build a community, and to dismantle a culture of violence by recognizing harm, we cannot simultaneously punish survivors. We must all work to transform the abusive manifestations of patriarchy rather than punishing those who are already on the front lines of that struggle.

We as a community need to decide where we fit within the national context of “Me Too.” The #metoo movement not only demonstrates social media’s power to mobilize for social change, but also how conventional institutions have failed to affirm and elevate the voices of survivors. We might not all agree about the tactic of “The List,” but we all share a desire for a campus free from sexual violence. As we move towards this vision, we cannot punish a student who speaks out about violence perpetrated against community members. This is an opportunity for the school’s administration to take a more restorative and transformative approach to community accountability. Disciplinary action against Liz reinforces a punitive system rather than transitioning towards the restorative practices put forward by administration, faculty, and students alike. Survivors of sexual assault have continuously fought for a restorative model, and we must respond to that demand.

The originator of the Me Too movement, Tarana Burke, states that “this movement is really about survivors talking to survivors,” empathizing with and caring for one another. Liz and the survivors who shared their stories acted in continuity with that legacy. Though Liz’s methods may be controversial, their action is an expression of care and

respect for this community, not a means of breaking it. This school needs to devise new practices and policies to address pain and promote healing. The fact that survivors came forward in this extrajudicial way is a testament to how the existing structures of accountability fail them. Demands for community accountability outside of existing punitive channels are an expression of care for community. Demands for collectively addressing harm may be one way to reimagine and build community. Transformative justice is necessary if we are truly dedicated to creating the inclusive Middlebury that we claim to envision. The administration, faculty, staff and students all want a campus free from sexual violence. We all want to create a community in which individuals are not afraid to exist. Punishing Liz and survivors rather than working towards healing is an attack on this shared vision.

**SIGN PETITION FOR NO OFFICIAL COLLEGE DISCIPLINE FOR LIZ  
DUNN: HERE**

**Contributors (along with support of unnamed student activists):**

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