

## **FIRE SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT – Karin Hanta, Mariam Khan, and Shariell Crosby**

**Maddie:** One more, quick housekeeping item: We invited MiddSAFE to set up a resource table at the event tonight, but they're really strapped for Advocates in the month of January. They have, however, kindly put extra Advocates on the line tonight. So if you are a Middlebury student, whether you're a partner of a survivor, a friend of a survivor, or just need some extra support processing these issues, you can reach a MiddSAFE advocate at (802) **377-0239**. You can also learn more about the services offered by MiddSAFE at [go/middsafe](http://go/middsafe). Additionally, anyone in the audience tonight who needs support can turn to WomenSAFE, an organization in Addison County that works with these issues and whose hotline is also running at this time. WomenSAFE can be reached at (802) 388-4205. Take care of yourselves and each other tonight, okay?

### **Introduction**

**Maddie:** In a world built on beautiful grassy hills, with too much homework and too little time, there isn't really a space in our daily lives to think that something *this* devastating could happen in a community where "everyone is always fine." But it does, and frequently. Tonight, 6 people have submitted stories from public parties or private places and all from the Middlebury community. As of today's event, we now have nearly 100 stories from survivors who chose to come forward with their experiences through the It Happens Here project.

**Shariell:** From these stories and the bravery of these survivors, we have been given an opportunity. An opportunity to learn, to process, and to stand as witnesses to the experiences of those around us. We have the opportunity to deepen our commitment to these issues and our sense of responsibility to this community.

**Maddie:** We recognize that this event affects everyone differently, and we want to make space for all of those reactions. Please feel free to leave if you are feeling overwhelmed. We are live streaming this event next door in

Crossroads, which is a venue that is fully lit at this time. If that space would feel more welcoming to you, I'd encourage you to head to Crossroads now.

**Shariell:** Tonight, we will hear 6 monologues that describe experiences with sexual and/or relationship violence. We have neither censored nor edited these submissions. Some of tonight's stories were submitted anonymously and are being read by individuals not connected to the submission. If a student volunteer is reading an anonymous submission that we received online, they will begin by saying "This is an anonymous submission." Authors who are reading their own piece may identify themselves by starting with "This is my story."

It is not the purpose of this project to claim that sexual violence cannot be solved so we're just going to cope with it or talk about it. This is a project about really hearing survivors in ways that statistics cannot. This project is about our community coming together to tell survivors that if they ever want to share their story and feel heard by their community, there will be ears ready to listen. Tonight we listen because knowing and recognizing this epidemic is the only way we can go about combating it in our daily lives. Tonight we listen for all of those times that we couldn't or didn't.

**Maddie:** The stories tonight largely focus in on sexual and relationship violence that has happened here at Middlebury College. But despite our organization's name, we know that it doesn't just happen here, but everywhere. We know that these acts of violence happen at higher rates in non-campus communities, such as those in Addison County, and that our identities often mediate and inform the ways in which these issues are experienced, received, and lived. And so our task here tonight is much broader than simply caring about these issues during our four years at Middlebury. We are here for those who have experienced childhood trauma. We are here for people who grew up around domestic violence. We are here for people who will, unfortunately, encounter these issues long after their educations at Middlebury.

**Shariell:** You may notice a sticky note on the back of your chair. Please use it to record your thoughts and reactions throughout the night. At the conclusion of this event, there will be a board outside for you to post your notes and reflect upon what other audience members have to say.

Thanks for being here tonight, and thanks for being open to how this night will impact each of you in different ways. Here is our first story.

## **Conclusion**

**Shariell:** Again, thank you all so much for being here this evening. Oftentimes, people who sit and listen at these events have a lot that they want to unpack afterwards. We encourage you to take a moment to reflect on your sticky notes, and to share your reflections with us and with others on the black boards outside of this event. We'd kindly ask, however, that you leave our pens on your chairs. We also encourage you to linger after the event and talk with others about what they've taken away from all of this. Maddie and I will also remain sitting on the stage for a few minutes to answer any lingering questions that you may have, and both MiddSAFE and WomenSAFE advocates remain on their respective phones tonight to offer additional support to those who need it.

**Maddie:** This Thursday, the SGA, JusTalks, and It Happens Here will be co-sponsoring an Atwater dinner on sexual and relationship respect. We hope that this will be the first of many important conversations on sexual and relationship norms in this community. Although the seats at that dinner are all already taken, we here at IHH remain committed to hearing your responses to this event and enacting them into meaningful change. Please feel free to contact either of us with any questions that you may have at either our personal emails or at [ihmidd@gmail.com](mailto:ihmidd@gmail.com). The stories from tonight's event are also now live on our website if you happen to want to let any of these stories sink in a bit further. We'd also like to thank the many people who have volunteered their time to make this event happen tonight, especially our readers.

As you leave, resources from both Middlebury College as well as WomenSAFE can be found on the round tables as you exit Wilson Hall, including resources on how you might be helpful to friends or partners who have experienced sexual or relationship violence. Again, thanks for spending part of your Tuesday evening with us, and have a safe night, everyone!