

STAFF EDITORIAL

You too? Abuse epidemic needs fix

Recently, a discouraging trend has surfaced, one that has exposed something both disheartening and raw, hidden in plain sight among us. Numerous people: celebrities, mainly women, some men and a concerning amount of adolescents, have bravely taken a stand with the very simple phrase, “Me too.” This is a movement that reveals a problem that has always been present from the very beginning of society as we know it.

Although this phrase was originally coined by Tarana Burke, sexual assault survivor and activist on MySpace a decade ago, as a grassroots movement that focused mainly on women of color within in our own communities, it was brought to attention this year by actress Alyssa Milano and followed by many other high-profile celebrities such as Reese Witherspoon and Rose McGowan. Burke hopes to prevent the movement from straying too far from its original purpose, although she has expressed pride towards the countless people who have bravely come forward to confess. Burke has noticed that many black female celebrities rarely receive the support and understanding that their white counterparts do.

“I have a theory, my theory is that after electing confessed molester (Donald Trump), we decided to speak up, women of our generation

usually did not,” Jessica Saigh, intern counselor, said. “I cannot count the numerous times that I’ve been groped or touched, and all I did was dismiss it. They put our whole lives on trial while [generally] men are not. [Women] are asked what they are wearing, if they were drunk, or why didn’t they fight back? Women have had enough. I think it’s a good thing, though, and I think it’ll have a positive impact. I think men aren’t even aware because they react differently.”

Interestingly, the same standards that determine what is OK and what isn’t when it comes to femininity and masculinity, can also be very destructive towards the men who have and will experience something so traumatic. Even in the modern era in the U.S., men are ridiculed for doing anything that isn’t remotely accepted as idealistically “male,” and the same goes with women. What someone wears, how they behave, their mannerisms and their status in society (based on wealth, race, and many other factors), all play a part in how everyone around them perceives them.

Among the accused are Louis C.K. and Harvey Weinstein with multiple counts of sexual misconduct, both of whom have received scrutiny. Interestingly, sexual misconduct is commonplace in our own communities

and the perpetrators are rarely ever get the same attention.

“Creepy uncles” and other family members are easily dismissed, because maybe this person is usually so nice and caring, or they wish to avoid causing this because it happens and it’s normal, even if it shouldn’t be. While this continues, I don’t know how many times I have heard people mention how willing a family is to kick out a son or a daughter who come out with a different identity. It is the reason, according to the Williams Institute at UCLA, about 40% of the youth who are homeless identify as part of the LGBT+ community.

Even though parents are willing to put their own children out of the house for their sexual identification, they choose to ignore the relatives that commit any form of abuse upon their children, siblings and parents. The first thing viewed on the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) statistics page online is, “Every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted. And every 8 minutes, that victim is a child. Meanwhile, only six out of 1,000 perpetrators will end up in prison.” This is something that should move a person. Speaking up about this is only the beginning, but it is still a step in the right direction.

TIME magazine is literally honoring

women who have spoken up about their abuse. This year’s “Person of the Year” is actually a group of women, all of whom have broken the silence of their abuse. On the cover, Adama Iwu, Ashley Judd, Isabel Pascual, Susan Fowler, Taylor Swift, and an arm, purposely cut off, belonging to an anonymous woman from Texas, representing the numerous people who have not come forward to speak about such a traumatizing experience.

A group in Nairobi, Kenya, have been taking measures to reduce their sexual assault epidemic since 2010. About one in four women in Nairobi been sexually assaulted, usually by their own relatives and other loved ones. There are two separate programs: Your Moment of Truth for the boys, and No Means No for the girls. The girls program trains them on self defense with a focus on empowerment. The boys program banishes the assumptions that make people think that sexual assault is OK, such as the clothes people wear, and what to do when you witness sexual assault. This has made a huge impact, reports of rape have gone down 20% since this program began. Providing the youth with sexual assault awareness and training programs like this could make a difference.

Under pressure from all sides

Students caught in cycle of stress should seek help from school counselors

By **Kaya Blount**
Staff Writer

High school is a tumultuous time for teenagers. As characterized by classic movies like “The Breakfast Club” or “Fast Times at Ridgemont High,” these particular four years of an adolescent’s life may be generally joyful or awful due to hormones, drama and classes.

However, most people can agree that high school is stressful. But the stress that many high schoolers face day in and day out may actually be changing how our brains look and act-- even its size is affected. Chronic stress changes brain chemistry, right down to our genes. It can also cause a host of other problems, like hypertension and Alzheimer’s in later years. Stress even impairs a person’s judgement and coping skills, leading



to unhealthy coping mechanisms like drugs and alcohol. This cycle of stress can make it hard for students to focus and retain information in classes, and it may even result in a number of students developing diagnosable depression.

According to TEDed’s video “How Stress Affects Your Brain,” the feeling of stress starts in the brain, in a place called the hypothalamus pituitary adrenal axis, or HPA axis for short. Basically, when a person faces stress, their HPA axis jumps into overdrive, releasing a chemical called cortisol. As cortisol levels in a person’s brain rises, everything in the brain is affected-- the hippocampus, the prefrontal cortex, even the brain’s size changes.

When the hippocampus is weakened, so is a person’s ability to learn new information and their ability to manage stress. This also leads to the hippocampus not making as many brain cells. As the prefrontal cortex is weakened, it shrinks. This affects a person’s ability to regulate behavior, concentrate, make good decisions and interact socially with other humans.

All of this means means chronic stress inhibits a person’s capability to learn and remember things, as well as sending their judgement out the window and hindering any relationships they might have or wish to make. This makes school difficult for hormonal students who are already stressed, as it creates a vicious cycle. If a student begins to feel overwhelmed, they may begin to fall behind in their studies, causing them to stress further.

Unbeknownst to most students here at U. City, there are ways to help those feeling overwhelmed. One such way is a 504 form, a document that allows a student (with a diagnosis) to have extensions, a permanent pass to any counselor and other accommodations. If a student’s parent simply contacts their grade-level counselor, the school is legally required to put together the 504 document in no more than 10 days, if the student is found eligible. Once the form is put together and given to the student, it may be enough to reduce the stress a student had been feeling.

“504 plans are a part of the

Americans with Disabilities Act and, in order to qualify for a 504 plan, a student must have a diagnosed condition that affects their ability to be successful at school,” according to Rachel Bromberg, school psychologist. “There are criteria that a student has to meet.”

In addition to 504 plans, another way we as a school could help students in need may be having talking circles (led by professionals) on how to handle stress healthily. Until then, Bromberg, the school psychologist and Michelle Marshall, the on-site Lutheran Family Children Services counselor, would be great people to talk to if you’re feeling stressed. The guidance office is a good starting point for anyone feeling overwhelmed, as your grade-level counselors are also available to talk.

All in all, high school is hard, and there can be serious consequences to one’s health if they don’t get help dealing with the inevitable stress of school life. If you are a student in need, just know that there are people here who care, as well as resources available to you that may help.

2017-2018 U-Times Staff

Co-Editor: Lucy Wurst
Co-Editor: Kathryn Fuller
Sports Editor: Julian Albright
Web Editor: Julian Albright
Staff Writers/Photographers: Linsey Sparks
Zhong-mei Webb
Ashlynn Jenkins
Kaya Blount
Eliot Fuller
Clayton Miller
Adviser: Mrs. Mary Williams

Philosophy

The newspaper’s primary obligation is to inform its readers about events in the school and community and of the issues of national or international importance which directly or indirectly affect the school population. The newspaper, while serving as a training ground for future journalists as part of the school curriculum, recognizes all rights and responsibilities under the First Amendment. While establishing U-Times as a public forum, student editors will apply

professional standards and ethics for decision-making as they take on the responsibility for content and production of the newspaper. Inasmuch as the student staff encourages constructive criticism of any part of the newspaper, authority for content rests in the hands of the student members of the newspaper staff. Students will not publish material considered to be legally unprotected speech, or libel, obscenity, material disruption of the educational process, copyright infringement, or unwarranted invasion of privacy.

Policies

Opinions expressed on the editorial page do not reflect the viewpoints of the school administration. All editorials (unsigned) represent a majority opinion of the Editorial Board. Signed editorials, columns, editorial cartoons, and reviews reflect the views of the author and not necessarily those of the U-Times Editorial Board. The U-Times reserves the right to reject, edit, or shorten letters. Submit letters to Mrs. Mary Williams in Room L306, or to any U-Times staff

member, or to marywilliams@ucityschools.org.

Contact Us

We are located in Room L 306 at University City High School, 7401 Balson Ave., University City, MO 63130. Our email address is marywilliams@ucityschools.org. Tweet us or follow us on Instagram @utimesonline.

MESHUGGAH café.



6269 DELMAR • 314-726-5662
IN THE ST. LOUIS LOOP

Vets honored at assembly

By Ashlynn Jenkins
Staff Writer

Veterans' Day is a day when many people mourn losses and others take time to thank people who are currently serving this country.

U. City honored veterans on Nov. 10 at the annual JROTC Veterans' Day ceremony. The program showcased current cadets, past JROTC students and veteran staff in U. City. Even loved ones of students and staff were showcased in a slideshow. The music stylings of Dorthea Nevils, English teacher, set the tone with her emotional rendition of the national anthem.

All traditions were done, well and professionally," Col. Thomas Henson, JROTC instructor, said. "Even the students and teachers were also well-behaved."

Unlike previous years, the cadets were in charge of the entire program, specifically, Dominic Bryant, junior.

"I planned the whole thing, and gave other people duties," Bryant said.

One addition to the assembly this

year was a drill which included the current dance styles of 'Dabbing' and 'Hittin' dem Folks' which Col. Henson said showed discipline.

"The team was in sync and had the same movements," Col. Henson said. "They they looked like one cohesive unit."

However, along with all the new, the flag-folding ceremony was performed by Tyreese Jones, junior, and Bryant. Although it was cut slightly short this year, it was Jones' favorite part.

It is a serious procedure to fold the flag which both Jones and Bryant did again this year.

"It was better this year because there was less laughing," Jones said.

The only thing the cadets and Col. Henson said they would change is having enough time to fully honor more of the past and present veterans and military family members.

"I think that military procedure was used correctly, and I'm happy with how the assembly turned out," Bryant said.



As they presented the colors, Tyreese Jones and Angela Smith, juniors, both made sure to keep up with military bearing. "[I'm just glad] every cadet saluted," Jones said. "[I was] thinking of all the fallen soldiers and family in the Army, especially my brother who is currently serving," Smith said. PHOTO BY ASHLYNN JENKINS

St. Louis Magazine 2014 A-List Award Winner: BBQ

Vernon's

• BBQ & CATERING •

\$1 OFF

ANY PURCHASE

One coupon per person per visit.

FREE SIDE

WITH ANY PURCHASE

One coupon per person per visit.

FREE DRINK

WITH ANY PURCHASE

One coupon per person per visit.

\$5 OFF

WITH \$30 PURCHASE

Also good with ONE other coupon from this ad.

6707 Vernon Ave. • St. Louis, MO 63130 • (314) 726-1227

VernonsBBQ.com