

SAYING ABORTION ALOUD:

Research and Recommendations for
Sharing your Abortion Story Publicly

Written by Renee Bracey Sherman
and the Sea Change Program



Renee Bracey Sherman, far right, sharing her abortion story.



Table of Contents

ABOUT THE PROJECT	2
WHAT IS PUBLIC ABORTION STORYTELLING?	4
HOW DO PEOPLE DECIDE TO SHARE THEIR ABORTION STORY PUBLICLY?	4
WHAT SUPPORT CAN A STORYTELLER ASK FOR?	6
GENERAL SUPPORT	6
STORY OWNERSHIP	6
ONGOING SUPPORT AND CONSENT	7
COMPENSATION	7
MEDIA SUPPORT	8
HOW CAN STORYTELLERS PREPARE THEMSELVES?	9
CREATE YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK	9
SELF-CARE	9
PRIVACY AND HARASSMENT	10
ABORTION STORIES SHARED WITH YOU	11
CONCLUSION	11
RESOURCES	12
TALK-LINES	12
STORYTELLING TRAINING	13
OTHER WAYS TO SHARE	14
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO CONTRIBUTORS	15
ABOUT RENEE BRACEY SHERMAN	15
ABOUT THE SEA CHANGE PROGRAM	16

"I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood." - Audre Lorde

About the Project

Storytelling is an art. It is a way of sharing oneself deeply with others. It is a way to connect with strangers around the world, sometimes around a shared experience, while other times around a new one. Storytelling is a way to challenge prevailing stereotypical narratives and speak out for your beliefs and your community. It is a tool that many organizations employ to convey the impact of policies, our intersectional struggles, and our visions for the future. It is a powerful tool, but also one that must be handled with care.

My first experiences with storytelling as a form of organizational communication were as an advocate working at a nonprofit serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and allied youth leaders. In my role, I prepared young people to share their stories — of coming out, experiencing school bullying, or accessing support services — through fundraising campaigns and before state lawmakers considering new legislation. I played a dual role: I was a staff member who supported and prepared youth to speak publicly about their lives, but I was also an adult ally who wanted to make sure that youth completely consented to sharing their story each and every time and that they understood their work's impact on their lives, their families, and their futures. Using great care, I spoke frankly with young people about who would see their beaming smiles and read their words on fundraising flyers, at rallies, and on our organization's website. I always let them see what I was creating with their image to ensure they felt honored and accurately represented. Most importantly, I wanted them to know that I had their back, and that they could change their mind at any point, no questions asked. It was their story. They were in control.

After being inspired by the youth I worked with, I realized it was time for me to step out of the shadows and start speaking out about an experience in my own life: my decision to have an abortion. For six long years, I'd been pretending like I hadn't had an abortion, because of the way our society shames and stigmatizes those who do. I knew there were other people who had had abortions, but felt lonely because it seemed none of them were talking about it in my community. Today, I have shared my story widely — from the steps of the Supreme Court of the United States to classrooms and living rooms across the country. I have received private notes and hugs in thanks

for sharing, and a few death threats. I have heard personal abortion stories and talked to strangers about how they can be allies to their loved ones who've had abortions.

Over the years, I have given advice to new abortion storytellers, brainstormed with advocates about innovative ways of sharing abortion stories, and heard the good, the bad, and the ugly from other abortion storytellers. My aim in creating this guide is twofold. I want to facilitate a path where:

1. The storyteller can feel ownership and empowerment over their experience; and
2. Advocates can honor the storytellers by offering them a sense of what to expect, transparency, and support.

In creating this guide, I surveyed 39 people who have shared their abortion stories publicly and conducted 13 in-depth interviews with abortion storytellers, storytellers in other movements, and advocates who work with storytellers who speak on stigmatized issues. Based on survey responses and interviews, I've compiled the experiences and best practices of public abortion storytellers from across the country and from other movements. This guide is intended to aid both storytellers and advocates in a conversation about consent, self-care, privacy, and ongoing support during the process of sharing abortion stories. I recognize that not everyone will want to share their abortion story publicly. That's totally okay. This guide is meant for those who want to do so, and want support in doing so.

With this guide, it is my hope that new storytellers will feel better prepared and supported to share their abortion stories publicly, and advocates will have a larger array of support options to offer storytellers. As we build this partnership, we can create safer spaces for untold stories to flourish, and stigma can subside.

Note: This guide uses gender-neutral language and aims to be inclusive of genderqueer and transgender people who have abortions and share their stories publicly.

What is public abortion storytelling?

We define public abortion story sharing or storytelling as sharing an experience with abortion in an outlet or event that is accessible to the general public for comment, sharing, and attendance. This can include articles and videos in the media, public workshops or events, political office visits and testimony, and public education campaigns about abortion experiences.

“There aren’t a lot of trans people sharing how reproductive justice affects them. I wanted to be visible.” – Survey respondent

This type of storytelling is different from private abortion storytelling, which often means sharing an abortion story with friends or family, because it involves people whom the storyteller doesn’t know. Because there isn’t a relationship between the storytellers and their audience, it can increase vulnerability for the storyteller and open them up to judgment and harassment. While this is also true for those who share their abortion stories privately, once a person shares publicly, they don’t always have control of who hears the story, how their words might be changed, and where their story is used in the future.

How do people decide to share their abortion story publicly?

Those who share their abortion stories publicly do so for a number of reasons; sometimes it’s to be heard when they feel silenced by society, to speak openly about a joyous or painful experience, to let others know they’re not alone, or to dispel myths and misinformation. Whatever your reasons are for sharing, make sure that *you* are at the center of them, not anyone else’s needs or desires. Not everyone has to share their abortion story, nor will they. No one should be pressured to share their abortion story when they are not ready or do not want to. For people who *do* want to share, there are a few things to think about before speaking publicly.

“I was angry at the way women are made to feel shamed by making the choice to have an abortion and wanted to lend a voice to help destigmatize abortion.”
– Survey respondent

When deciding whether you want to share your abortion story publicly, it’s always a good idea to take a moment and think about why you want to do this. What are your goals? What do you hope to achieve by speaking out? There are no right or wrong

answers to these questions, but you should know what *your* reasons are. That will help you think about how you want to share, what you want to share, and with whom you want to share it. For guidance thinking through these questions, see the worksheet provided in Exhale’s Guide to Publicly Sharing Your Story (exhaleprovoice.org/guide-publicly-sharing-your-story).

While thinking about your goals for sharing, you should also think about the places in which you do, and don’t, want to share your story. Do you feel most comfortable writing your story on a blog? Or would you like to speak to people at a local event where you can interact with listeners face-to-face? These are just a few examples. Think about what *your* comfort level with these outlets is. If you don’t like public speaking, perhaps writing or recording your story is the best medium for you. If you prefer having conversations or want to speak publicly, then you might want to look at venues like events, workshops, political lobby days and legislative hearings. Each outlet has its benefits, so you have to choose the one that’s best for you.

Writing your story on a blog or website might be a good choice for those who want to remain anonymous, prefer using a pen name, or don’t want to talk to people in person. The downside to online outlets is that their comment sections can attract negative responses, which can make you feel lonely at times — especially if you are looking for support after sharing your story. Some people love the ability to have a conversation with someone in person when sharing their story — whether it’s with a politician, their neighbor, or a room full of people in a workshop. These can be great experiences, but it can also be hard to take the negative feedback in person, especially if it’s an outlet where you have to give your name on the record, like testifying at a legislative hearing. It all depends.

As you’re writing your goals of why you want to share and what outlets you might want to share through, be sure to write down things that you *never* want to share. This helps you think about what parts of your story you want to keep private. You can always revisit this list, add new things, or take some things off as time goes by. Never forget: **You don’t have to share any part of your story you don’t want to. It’s your story.** All types of story sharing are valid and important, and you have to decide what feels comfortable for you.

What support can a storyteller ask for?

When you're sharing your story, whether it's with an organization or on your own through an event or website, you should know that there is support you can request, to ensure your story sharing experience is a good one. You are sharing a deep, personal experience, and you deserve to be supported by any organization that is working with you. Below are some forms of support that other abortion storytellers use to ensure positive experiences.

General Support

You can ask for help! Never forget this. When people want to share their abortion stories publicly, many find that they need help writing their story, deciding when the right time to share is, and how to make it a succinct and effective story. Organizations and more experienced abortion storytellers can help you with that. Testifying at a legislative hearing? Ask your local abortion rights organization to help you decide what to say, and they'll tell you what you can expect the experience to be like. Speaking at an event? Ask the event coordinator to talk you through the program and what you'll be doing. Ask who your main point of contact will be throughout the entire project, so that you know who you can go to for support. Having a clear picture of the plans helps reduce nerves and opens up lines of communication. They want you to succeed, so they're happy to help you!

Story Ownership

"The one time my story was shared by a national organization, they told the story *they* wanted to tell instead of my story." – Survey respondent

Your story is your story. Period. Many organizations have missions and talking points that they want to get out into the world, which is great, but you don't have to mold or change your story to fit their narrative. Abortion storytellers have noted that sometimes they feel pressure from an

organization to change or erase parts of their story to make it more palatable. You don't have to change anything in your story you don't want to change. If you are feeling this pressure, express that to the organization. Nuance is central to all of our experiences. We must make room in the world for stories that are longer than a sound bite.

Ongoing Support and Consent

You have the right to ask for support when sharing your story. If an organization wants to work with you, they should be checking in with you during each and every step of the project. You can ask questions about what it is they want from you and your story. What goals do they have in mind for your story and participation? Do those goals line up with yours? If so, great. If not, tell them about it. Make sure that you feel heard in the conversation. **You should never feel used for your story.**

“[The organization] took time to walk me through what the process would be...all the while reiterating that it was my story to tell.”

– Survey respondent

Because your abortion story is **your** abortion story, you have the right to share it as much or as little as you want. Those who ask you to share your story shouldn't assume that because you shared your story once, you'll do it again and again and again. They must get your consent each and every time. And you have the right to withdraw that consent at any point. Sometimes storytellers need breaks or want to stop sharing — and that's okay.

Compensation

Each and every time you write your story, share it on a panel, or speak at an event, you're working. You are using your gift to help advance a cause and providing content for that outlet — content for which you should be compensated. To be clear, if you want to do your abortion story sharing as a volunteer, you have that right. But abortion storytellers also should be valued for the work they are putting into shaping our movement, and that might include financial compensation. If they're asking you to speak at an event, ask if there's an honorarium. If they're asking you to write your story for an article, ask if you can be compensated for your writing. Even if an organization has a tight budget, the least they can do is cover your transportation costs to the event. Now, not every organization has a budget to pay you and you cannot be compensated in every instance — for example, at a congressional hearing. However, you shouldn't be going into debt to support an organization if you can't afford it. You are creating and working for the organization, and you should be compensated at some level for your investment of time, energy, and work.

Working with an organization is a two-way street. They want to be associated with you and your story, but you should also want to be associated with them. You are

helping to raise awareness for their brand, so make sure it's an organization you trust and want to be associated with.

Media Support

Sharing your abortion story publicly can be a wonderful, exhilarating, and scary experience. Sometimes after you share, reporters may want to interview you. You should decide what you want your level of engagement to be. Don't want to talk to reporters? That's fine. Ask an organization if they'll talk to the reporters for you or field all media requests. Or, just tell the reporters that you don't want to comment. This is also true even if you're in the middle of an interview with a reporter — you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. You don't have to talk to anyone about your story that you don't want to.

Sometimes media can misrepresent or distort what we're trying to say, especially when it comes to the nuances of abortion stories. By writing down exactly what you want to say when sharing your story, you can make sure that you are clear with your message and your intentions. It doesn't feel good when our stories are repeated incorrectly. Talking through your story, the goals of sharing your story, and what you want to say with a friend or an advocate can help you feel less nervous and navigate any unclear messages in your story.

Never forget: You don't have to share any information that you don't want out in the open — this can include your name, employer, or any other identifying information. You can ask the organization not to release that information. This is especially important if you are worried about anti-choice activists harassing your family, friends, or place of employment. Lastly, you can request the organization's support in securing your social media accounts to maintain your privacy online.

Experiencing harassment? Reach out to your contact at your story sharing organization. Ask them for support in reporting your harassers to the proper authorities. Sharing your story should be a positive experience, not one that brings harassment or threats.

How can storytellers prepare themselves?

If you are thinking about sharing your abortion story publicly, there are several things you can do to prepare yourself and your family for the experience. Ensuring that you are adequately prepared will help you feel less nervous and more ready to handle a variety of common situations that abortion storytellers experience.

Create Your Support Network

You shouldn't feel alone in sharing your story. If you're thinking about sharing your story publicly, tell the friends and family members who will be supportive of you. They will have your back throughout the process and can hold your hand when things get tough. Also, letting them know what you're planning on doing helps them prepare emotionally and think about ways to support you.

"I have shared my abortion story with my mentors and they've been super supportive and given me feedback on my writing."

– Survey respondent

Not everyone has a supportive family when it comes to abortion, and not everyone's family will be supportive of them sharing their story. This can make sharing your story hard. But if you want to continue to do it, there is support for you. Create a close circle of trusted allies who will have your back no matter what. It's okay to ask them to post supportive comments on your articles, or to send you an email or text to check in on you. If you realize that sharing your abortion story publicly might be too much of a toll on you or your family, you can always choose not to do it, or choose to do it anonymously. No matter how you share, make sure you have allies in your corner.

Self-Care

Make time in your schedule to practice self-care. Sharing your abortion story can take a lot out of you physically, emotionally, and mentally. It can be an exciting and draining experience, often at the same time. Be sure to build relaxation time into your schedule, especially after a public sharing experience. Your self-care could include a long walk, watching hours of your favorite television show, playing with your children or pets, spending time with friends, or eating a favorite meal.

You may want to keep a journal or notes about your story sharing experiences. In our survey, some storytellers noted that journaling has helped them reflect on their abortion experience. Other storytellers stated that reflecting on their experiences with

a close circle of friends, or through meditation or prayer, is a way they decompress and process.

If you don't want to go through this experience alone, reach out to other people who have shared their abortion stories publicly. The ability to process freely and openly with people who are going through similar experiences and who care about you deeply can be nourishing and supportive.

Privacy and Harassment

Sharing an intimate and vulnerable experience like an abortion story can be wonderful, but also dangerous. Anti-choice activists have been known to publish the private information of those who speak out about their abortion experiences. To prepare for this, you may want to take an inventory of the information that they can find online and be careful about what information you release.

“Organizations want me to speak up [about my abortion], but they don't have any mechanisms for protecting people who do speak up. ”

– Survey respondent

If you're worried about your private information getting out, consider sharing your story anonymously or under a pseudonym. This can be a former name, a nickname, or an old family name. Having a pen name can be key to helping you to share your story publicly, safely and more comfortably than with your legal name. This can also help protect your family members, particularly your children, from harassment.

When sharing your story, you might also talk about other parts of your life or identities, including but not limited to: your race, ethnicity, or nationality; your sexuality, gender identity or expression; class background, family, sexual assault or abuse, citizenship status, mental illness, disabilities, intimate partner violence, substance use, other pregnancy experiences, and more. These are all powerful experiences and identities that many people who have had abortions also share. To a listener, it will feel like a breath of fresh air to hear you speak openly about your identities, their complexities and intersections, and how they relate to your story. However, these are also things anti-abortion activists have been known to use against those who share their stories openly. People with marginalized identities tend to experience deeper, more racialized attacks, both on social media and in person. This is something to think about and possibly ask for support around when sharing your story. Your support networks and self-care regimen will be crucial in supporting you through any personal and hurtful attacks or harassment.

Inspect your social media accounts. Check all of your settings to make sure anything you don't want visible is kept private. This also keeps people you don't know from contacting you, sending hurtful messages, and gaining access to your lists of friends and family members. You can also turn off location tagging on social media sites and geolocation settings on your phone apps and photos to be sure that your movements and home locations aren't easily traceable. Have you done an Internet search on yourself recently? Check to see what comes up. Use online alert tools like Talkwalker Alerts and Google Alerts to be notified when someone posts your name online. You can also sign up for programs like Reputation.com to monitor your information online and ensure companies don't sell it into the wrong hands.

Don't read the comments! If you share your story publicly, sometimes anti-abortion activists will write articles about you or harass you online. This harassment can be about your abortion experience, but often extends to misogynistic, racist, xenophobic, homophobic, and other oppressive comments, too. Do your best to avoid reading these comments, block them on social media, and remember that you are still amazing and strong. If you feel the need to know what they are saying, have a friend read it for you. Don't forget to practice your self-care.

Abortion Stories Shared with You

Because you are sharing your abortion stories publicly, many people will have the desire to share their stories with you. This can be a wonderful experience that helps you and the other person feel less alone, but for some people it can be overwhelming. If others who have also had abortions want to connect with you, decide how you want to connect with them. It's okay for you to connect them with organizations like Backline or Faith Aloud who are fully equipped to counsel them about their abortion experience. Check out the Resources section for more information.

Conclusion

Being on the edge of social change can be scary. Sharing a personal story with complete strangers can be terrifying. Each time I get ready to stand up and say, "I had an abortion," my palms sweat and my heart skips a beat. I am nervous, anxious, and excited to connect with complete strangers over a common secret. But, afterwards, I am always proud that I did it. To have people from all walks of life say, "I had one, too," is the most powerful and uniting feeling — it changes you. It is a humbling feeling that reinforces the common bond and humanity between us all.

There are times when sharing your story will be tough. There will be times when you'll feel like you're not making a difference. But then you'll get messages from people who heard your story and were reminded that they weren't alone. Now, they are part of your abortion story, and you are part of theirs. And everything will feel worth it.

Never forget: it's your story and you are in charge. You don't have to share anything you don't want to share. You don't have to do anything you don't feel comfortable doing. You deserve the utmost respect and love for what you are giving to the world: your story. There are so many of us who have your back and are thankful that you are speaking out against abortion stigma so that the millions of other people who choose abortion can also speak out, if they want to. You are beautiful, powerful, and loved.

Resources

Talk-Lines

Sharing an abortion story can usher in a range of emotions — including bringing up experiences from your abortion that you don't want to share publicly, dealing with personal relationship challenges after your decision to speak publicly, and hearing many more abortion stories from people who want to share with you. Should you ever need to talk about your experiences with someone other than your inner circle, there are advocates ready to support you.

Similarly, sometimes people approaching you to share their own abortion stories may want a religious leader or a nonjudgmental person to speak with. The organizations below (described in their own words) are wonderful resources to share with community members, advocates, and people who have had abortions that you meet as you share.

Backline promotes unconditional and judgment-free support for people in all their decisions, feelings and experiences with pregnancy, parenting, adoption and abortion. Through direct service and social change strategies, Backline is building a world where all people can make the reproductive decisions that are best for their lives, without coercion or limitation, and where the dignity of lived experiences is affirmed and honored.

Website: YourBackline.org | Phone: (888) 493-009 | Hours: M-Th 5-10pm PST, F-Su 10am-3pm PST

Faith Aloud is the religious and ethical voice for reproductive justice. Faith Aloud receives phone calls from women across the country who are seeking spiritual

counseling before and after abortion. Counselors and medical professionals often hear women express their spiritual concerns about abortion. Many women have felt shame and stigma forced on them by their religious groups, their families, and the society. Faith Aloud trains clergy who want to provide women with the spiritual comfort of knowing that God is with them through all things. Support in English and Español.

Website: FaithAloud.org | Phone: 888-717-5010

Storytelling Training

Sometimes we need help crafting our stories for different audiences and mediums. The organizations below, described in their own words, can help you via workshops, individual training, or online resources. It's important to note that none of these organizations are specific to sharing abortion stories.

The Center for Digital Storytelling partners with organizations to develop programs that support individuals in rediscovering how to listen to each other and share first person stories. They offer public workshops, storytelling services, and guidelines. Learn more at storycenter.org.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. In 2010 they offered a training for advocates in how to compose an effective personal testimony that highlights cultural competence. View the webinar and their storytelling worksheets here: <http://bit.ly/1wPSmJF>.

The New Organizing Institute trains organizers to build and manage effective movements by integrating tried-and-true community organizing, cutting-edge digital strategy, and data-driven decision making. Learn about their principles of storytelling here: neworganizing.com/toolbox/training/tell-the-story-with-new-media.

The Op-Ed Project is a social venture founded to increase the range of voices and quality of ideas we hear in the world. They work with universities, think tanks, foundations, nonprofits, corporations and community organizations to provide training workshops to under-represented experts to take thought leadership positions in their fields. Learn more about them at theopedproject.org.

Silence Speaks surfaces personal narratives of struggle, courage, and transformation and works to ensure that these stories play an instrumental role in promoting gender equality and human rights. They provide workshops, create videos, and partner with organizations. Learn more about them at silencespeaks.org.

Other Ways to Share

There are many ways to share an abortion story, and some are more public than others. All are valid and important. Depending on your life situation and comfort level, you may want to choose a less public way of sharing. Below are a few outlets where you can share your story through writing, via video, under a pseudonym, or anonymously. You should also keep this list handy for others who want to listen to others' abortion stories or share their own.

The Abortion Conversation Project's mission is to challenge the polarization that characterizes abortion conversation, lessen the stigmatization of abortion, and promote speaking and listening with empathy, dignity, and resilience about even the most difficult aspects of abortion. Learn more at abortionconversation.com.

Advocates for Youth's 1 in 3 Campaign is a grassroots movement to start a new conversation about abortion — telling our stories, on our own terms. Visit 1in3campaign.org to learn more.

The Abortion Diary is a space for people to speak out against the shame, stigma, secrecy and isolation surrounding abortion by generating, sharing and receiving personal stories. People share their personal stories, and empower others to give testimony about their personal experiences and choices surrounding abortion. Visit theabortiondiarypodcast.com to learn more.

Emerge is an in-person discussion and support group for women who have had an abortion. Women who participate in the group meet weekly to share and discuss their individual experiences in a safe, respectful and supportive environment with other women. Visit prochoiceresources.org for more information.

Exhale creates a social climate where each person's unique experience with abortion is supported, respected, and free from stigma. Exhale provides services, training, and education to empower individuals, families, and communities to achieve post-abortion health and wellbeing. Visit exhaleprovoice.org to learn more.

NARAL Pro-Choice America's mission is to develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion. Visit prochoiceamerica.org/womens-voices/womens-stories to learn more.

The National Network of Abortion Funds works to make sure that all women and girls can get the abortions they seek. They fight unfair laws while directly helping women who need abortions today. Visit fundabortionnow.org/story/you to learn more.

NotAlone lets women who have had abortions know that they are part of a community through sharing first person videos of abortion stories. Visit notalone.us to learn more.

Planned Parenthood is a trusted health care provider, an informed educator, a passionate advocate, and a global partner helping similar organizations around the world. Planned Parenthood delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of women, men, and young people worldwide. Visit plannedparenthood.org/get-involved/share-your-story for more information.

Project Voice hopes to establish a resource of sharing and support. Women of all ages, races, religions, backgrounds, and circumstances have had abortions. Visit projectvoice.org to learn more.

Acknowledgements to Contributors

Thank you so much to the 39 people who shared their abortion experiences with us in our survey. Their wisdom, experiences, and ideas truly guided this process. Thank you to Monica Canfield-Lenfest, Olivia Ford of Positive Women's Network, Liza Fuentes, Emily Letts, Mikki Kendall, Natalia Koss-Vallejo, Melissa Madera, Gloria Malone, Ross Murray of GLAAD, Sonya Renee, Vanessa Riley, Katie Stack, and Wagatwe Wanjuki for taking the time to share their story sharing best practices through in-depth interviews. We are truly grateful for all of their voices and perspectives. We would also like to thank Exhale for their pioneering work in ethical storytelling. Their work laid the foundation upon which we conducted our research and developed these recommendations.

About Renee Bracey Sherman

Renee Bracey Sherman is a reproductive justice and storytelling activist who shares her own abortion experience to encourage others who have had abortions to speak out and end the silence and stigma. Renee is a member of Echoing Ida, a project of Forward Together that amplifies the voices of Black women around critical social justice issues. Renee's work has been featured on BBC Radio World Newshour, EBONY, Fusion, Salon, TIME, The Atlantic, RH Reality Check, and Feministing.com. In 2013,

Renee received the Justice Award from ACCESS Women’s Health Justice for her volunteer work providing shelter and transportation to women traveling 4-5 hours for their abortions. Previously, Renee worked with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied youth as they shared their stories to California policymakers to pass landmark anti-bullying, gender identity, and LGBT education legislation. Renee holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration from Cornell University. She currently sits on the board of NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation. Renee would like to thank her parents for teaching her to always speak her truth — no matter what.

About the Sea Change Program

The Sea Change Program is dedicated to transforming the culture of stigma around abortion and other stigmatized reproductive experiences. We conduct social science research and partner with organizations to identify, test, and share practices for reducing reproductive stigmas. We seek a world that upholds the dignity and humanity of people as they move through their reproductive lives. We work to increase the visibility of marginalized reproductive experiences, strengthen connections between people, reproductive health care providers, and their communities, and support the integration of abortion and other reproductive health services into mainstream health care. Learn more about the Sea Change Program at seachangeprogram.org.