



## **Survivor Speakers Bureau Guidelines**

Founded in 1973, BARCC's mission is to end sexual violence through healing and social change. The BARCC Survivor Speakers Bureau (SSB) was formed in 1999 by a group of survivors who wanted to share their stories as tools educate others about the realities of sexual violence, reach other survivors, and change community norms. Today, the SSB reaches hundreds of people every year; from high school and college students, to police, journalists, health care providers, legislators, the military, and more. Joining the SSB is a powerful way to connect with people, put a face to this issue, and motivate communities to take action to end sexual violence.

For many people who have experienced sexual violence, volunteering can be a rewarding and also challenging commitment. We have prepared the following guidelines to assist you in deciding whether or not joining the SSB is right for you at this time.

### **Requirements**

To join the SSB you must:

- If under 18, get parental consent
- Complete the SSB training and graduation
- Be able to attend at least 4 volunteer meetings per year
- Have access to an e-mail account

### **Qualities of a Survivor Speakers Bureau Volunteer**

Am I right for the SSB?

- Committed to BARCC's mission, philosophies, and programs
- Has a strong support network
- Open to and wanting feedback to improve public speaking skills
- Excited about educating diverse community groups to better understand sexual violence

## **General guidelines for Survivor Speakers**

Is the SSB right for me?

- Sharing one's story can be difficult and affects people in many different ways. Having a support network and strong coping skills is an important way to take care of yourself while volunteering.
- There is no timeline for healing from sexual violence, but we know that the first year is often a very tender time. We recommend that people wait at least one full year after having experienced sexual violence before applying to join the Survivor Speaker Bureau.
- If you have legal proceedings in process, you may want to consult your attorney before deciding to speak about your experiences publicly.
- Please be aware that Boston in many ways can be a small community; although you will be able to choose which engagements you speak at, there is always the possibility of someone in the audience knowing you or knowing someone you know. *We will further address any concerns you have about this in the interview.*
- As a member of the BARCC Survivor Speakers Bureau, you are a representative and an ambassador of BARCC to the community. As such, we ask that you follow all SSB protocols when sharing your story. You will also receive training to be able to speak effectively about BARCC's mission and services.
- When speaking at a BARCC-affiliated engagement, a staff member or volunteer, who has completed the 40-hour BARCC rape crisis counselor training, will be present. Their role is to provide education around sexual violence, BARCC services, and to offer support to audience members as well as to you.

## **Support will help you to be successful**

- We encourage speakers to have a support system in place before starting the training. Think about what you may need for your own

health and wellbeing before, during, and after speaking engagements. It is important that you are able to be honest with yourself and the Survivor Speakers Bureau Volunteer Coordinator about your limitations and safety.

- BARCC's Employee & Volunteer Assistance Program (EVAP) can help you identify additional resources and supports in the Boston area.

### **A Note about Confidentiality**

We take your privacy very seriously at BARCC and understand that many survivors have concerns related to sharing their stories publicly. We are unable to guarantee complete confidentiality to our Survivor Speakers. Identifying information such as your full name, type of abuse you've experienced, and your contact information such as a phone number and e-mail address will need to be shared with other volunteers and staff of BARCC as well as with outside event organizers and community members in order to set up engagements.