

# So, someone in your community has been named as abusive...

the most useful thing you can do is to hold them accountable. But how? this is not about punishment, sleuthing or divining 'absolute' truths. avoid use of words like 'innocent,' 'guilty,' 'allegations' or 'accusations.' **REMEMBER: survivors get nothing for telling the truth.**

this stuff is GROUP WORK. you and some trusted others need to get together and commit to this. Taking action on this is NOT shit-talking or gossip, it's being responsible. FIRST set up a secure way to discuss, let others know that you are doing this so work is not duplicated. act as a 'point person' for concerned peers. let the survivor lead on what they want to happen, respect the information they have offered as 'enough' - you do not need 'proof.' do not make them repeatedly retell their story.

NOW contact the person who's been named as abusive and ask/demand that THEY take some action. work with your community to decide what the priority actions should be, here are some examples:

- *publicly acknowledge and engage with the disclosure in a clear and non-defensive way (this is crucial even if they fully deny any wrongdoing whatsoever)*
- *take a step back from social media and other public platforms to reflect on themselves*
- *take a break from being involved in music to consider how they have harmed people*
- *consider why people may not want their presence at events or meetings and comply with requests*
- *educate themselves fully on e.g. sexual consent, emotional manipulation and personal boundaries*
- *engage in therapy or counselling or another form of intervention that addresses abusive behaviour*
- *engage with any relevant appropriate services (e.g. rehab if they raise substance misuse as issue)*
- *inform future partners of their abusive history and the steps they have taken to be better*
- *anything else that the survivor may have requested, (e.g. public statement, private apology)*

meanwhile, you should be actively:

- *making it publicly clear this person's bands or projects (e.g. records, gigs, zines) will not be given a platform until the requested actions have been met. remember more survivors may come forward.*
- *talking to promoters, this person's friends, collaborators and others to make sure this is enforced*
- *challenging vigilante behaviour or other performative displays of machismo even if well-intentioned*
- *challenging any attempts to justify abuse or call survivors' testimony into question - a culture of 'don't talk shit' creates a code of silence that gives a straight up green light to abusive people. don't.*
- *regularly updating (through whatever channels feel appropriate) about the progress of all this.*

this is not a quick fix, the steps above can take time! early intervention is best. keep communicating. if you feel like it's not 'working' remember: a careful response to abuse is *always* better than silence.

NONE of this work needs to involve the state or the police to be effective. the idea that the criminal justice system is the best arbiter of 'reality' is the biggest joke going and no-one is laughing here. Remember: survivors are everywhere, listening and watching those who sit on their hands when a disclosure is made. if you follow the above steps you will be actively reducing the (otherwise very high) chances of this person causing further harm in future and helping to create a more inclusive, generative community.

we can all do better.

bryonybeynon@gmail.com BB 2016