

#MeToo

Upwards of 10 million people have taken to social media to unite against sexual abuse and assault under the rallying cry: Me Too.

The movement gained momentum after over 30 women came forth with accusations against Hollywood Producer, Harvey Weinstein. Big-name actresses like Kate Beckinsale, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Angelina Jolie all came forward with their own experiences with Harvey Weinstein and his unwanted sexual advances. The amount of people coming forward prompted actress Alyssa Milano to share something on Twitter that took the internet by storm.

"If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too.' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem."

This Tweet had the desired effect as it has 65k replies, 23k retweets, and 50k favorites. And those numbers don't even touch the vast amount of people that have posted on their own on Facebook and Twitter coming forward with the hashtag "me too" to signify that they have also been a victim of sexual abuse and/or assault. Although the phrase has been around since 2006, it has only seen national attention in the last few days.

Some have criticized the movement saying that it is not the victim's job or responsibility to highlight the problem and that the people committing sexual abuse should be the ones coming forward. Melissa Rowland of the Woman's City Club of Cincinnati has expressed her opinion on the matter.

"I agree it should not be the survivors job to highlight the problem but in that case who will highlight the problem? I have chosen, as a Survivor, to speak out for my peers who are not in a position to do so for themselves. Men absolutely have a role in preventing sexual assault but first they need to recognize the severity and the prevalence of the problem. The #MeToo movement is doing just that from what I've seen on my Facebook feed."

Many feminists have also shown support for this movement. One feminist and member of FURIE (Feminist Uprising to Resist Inequality and Exploitation) and RVA (Rape Victims Advocates), Keight Yuellig, has taken an interest in the movement.

"Many people used [MeToo] as an opportunity to tell their stories of assault more in depth. It was an overwhelming event. I saw so many "me too" statuses across my Facebook feed. As a survivor, I felt understood, but I have never been so sad to have solidarity. I wouldn't wish assault on anyone, and it seems like nearly every woman I know has experienced assault or harassment in some way."

Both Keight Yuellig and Melissa Rowland have expressed similar opinions on the criticism that some rape and sexual assault survivors are forced to relive their trauma each time they see a "Me Too" post.

Keight says "For those survivors who don't feel safe or comfortable telling their stories, I think that's totally understandable. Unfortunately, sexual assault is a really graphic and upsetting issue, and that's part of why no one wants to talk about it. We have to talk about it though. It's been made pretty clear that nothing is going to happen on its own. We just need to do our best to make sure we're providing safe spaces for people who can't be a part of that discussion because of their trauma, and also to let them know that their experience isn't any less valid than the survivors that are sharing their stories."

Melissa has a similar opinion that “Coming out and exposing the violation inflicted upon you is something that takes a lot of guts and courage and there needs to be a degree of healing before that's even possible, sometimes it's just not possible to do. For someone who is afraid to come out about sexual assault just know that there are those of us who are coming out for you.”

Both women think it is important that someone coming out needs to feel the support of other victims and that it is understandable that some victims want to be left out of the conversation. And finally, that is important for victims to know where to go for support after sexual abuse, assault, or harassment of any kind. Below are the resources referenced by Melissa and Keight.

RAINN

YWCA

Women helping women

National Sexual Assault Hotline

UC Student Life Center