

My Story

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I'm Megan, and I'm one of many women who have been victims of intimate partner violence.

A few years ago, I was in a very abusive relationship. Coincidentally, my former partner and I met only months after the Anti-Domestic Violence Law was passed.

It happened the way many of these situations go: I was charmed, and ignored the red flags I saw in the beginning. Eventually, everything got out of control and I could hardly recognize myself or my life. I felt like I had nobody to turn to, and didn't even know that it was a possibility to report my partner for physical or sexual assault. I didn't think it would matter anyway, as we were in a relationship (not married) and I knew that the police usually treated these matters as personal, even with Chinese, so I thought they would especially not care about foreigners.

When I ended things with my partner, he attacked me and I had to escape our shared apartment with only a few things. I was essentially homeless for a few weeks, as I crashed with friends and struggled to find a new place to live. At that time, I wasn't prepared for what I had to deal with. I never imagined that I would be in that situation, but it is all too common.

After doing a bit of initial healing, I was fortunate enough to find a group of women who had been in similar situations and we formed a beautiful community to support each other. However, like myself, many of these women didn't take any action against their abusers because of the same reason I didn't: they thought it would be futile. Others perhaps weren't aware of the laws/regulations around how to report domestic violence and sexual violence, or were unable to report when going to the police because they waited too long or didn't have evidence.

So I decided to do something to help, because I didn't want any other women to go through what I had if possible. Initially I focused on domestic violence. I did a lot of research, seeking out organizations and information that helped women with these issues. I got some great tips from the head of the Ending Violence Against Women program at the UN Women office in Beijing last year, along with other local organizations such as Equality Beijing. However, I still felt like with the information I shared, I wasn't doing as much as I could to help.

Over the past 18 months, I've heard of many more women who've been raped or sexually assaulted. I've reached out and tried to offer them support by connecting them with mental health professionals through the organization I volunteer with, Female Health Empowerment Network. I also wanted to help them find other resources for victims, but the more I searched online and on Wechat, I realized that there were no good resources available in English. There were articles here and there, but none of them could answer all my questions or provide the kind of information that women would need to know in one place.

Therefore, I decided that I would take on that task, and after much research and support from people like Xiaojie (CandleX founder) and Lorraine (Inward Living), and representatives from Beijing Qianqian Law Firm and Equality Beijing, I managed to put together two resource documents that I believe will be beneficial to women who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual violence.

Please note that I am not an expert or a professional myself, but simply one of you: another woman who has felt unsafe and harassed many times in her life. I hope in reading this, you know you are not alone and there are resources available if you want to seek help.