



P.O. Box 431045
Pontiac, MI
48343

(248) 334-1274
www.haven-oakland.org

LIVE WITHOUT FEAR

Jennifer's Story of Personal Empowerment

Jennifer fell head over heels in love at fourteen. Like a lot of young girls, Jennifer felt like she needed to do anything that she could to keep her first boyfriend happy. Although adamant about waiting to have sex until she was married, Jennifer was coerced into sexual situations and forced to engage in sexual activity.

While Jennifer knew this was wrong, she never defined this unwanted sexual activity as sexual assault. Her definition of sexual assault had been formed by what she saw on television and consisted solely of stranger rape.

Jennifer stated, "At the time, I truly believed that rape was defined by a woman screaming for her life and physically fighting off her attacker. I did not consider the women such as myself who were too scared to scream out loud, but instead screamed inside."

As a result of her trauma, Jennifer made poor relationship choices, had little self-worth, and struggled with promiscuity. She continually found herself looking for love in the wrong places.

While in college, Jennifer sought counseling for the low self-esteem she continued to feel. At that time she also decided to volunteer for HAVEN. During her volunteer training, Jennifer learned to identify herself as a sexual assault survivor.

For the first time, she felt validated. She realized she wasn't alone and that she could use her training for personal healing. Jennifer has been sharing her story and helping girls and women feel empowered and safe ever since. Jennifer is passionate about her work for many reasons but her passion primarily stems from the fact that she can see pieces of herself in the impressionable eyes of those she helps.

To learn more about
HAVEN,
visit our website
www.haven-oakland.org
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