



The Bark | April 3, 2023

Guest Columnist: Michelle Callahan

***Content Warning:** This section will include mentions of violence, sexual assault, and rape. Please skip past if these topics may activate (or trigger) you.

Hello, Students!

Michelle Callahan here, letting you know that April is [Sexual Assault Awareness Month \(SAAM\)](#). This month-long national campaign is designed to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on preventing sexual violence.

Violence is about establishing power and control over another individual (or group of individuals). This power and control links to larger systems of oppression, such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, etc., all of which contribute to higher rates of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse for groups who are already unjustly impacted by these systems in other aspects of their lives. These groups include (but are not limited to) non-Hispanic Black women, American Indian and Alaska Native women; Hispanic women; folks with disabilities; and trans/nonbinary folks.

From small steps, such as believing survivors' experiences when they speak out, to large steps, like advocating for policy changes at the local, state, and federal levels, we all have a part to play in ending sexual violence in our communities—here at Lewis & Clark and in the communities that we call home. Throughout April, here are some ways you can become involved in ending violence on our campus.

- **Participate in the Paper Chain Project:** Set up near the Service Desk in Watzek Library, this is a community-wide initiative to collect anonymous student, staff, and faculty responses to various prompts about supporting survivors and creating a safer community. On the table are slips of paper and writing utensils for folks to answer prompts. In addition, a locked drop box will be placed on the table for participants to put in their replies.
 - Folks can submit their responses from April 3 (today!) until April 16. These responses will be added to the existing Paper Chain, starting on April 17 and displayed in Watzek Library through the end of the month.
 - There is also an [anonymous online submission](#) form for accessibility and comfort purposes. Health Promotion and Wellness staff and volunteers will transcribe the online submissions onto slips for the paper chain.

- Please also note these submissions should not be used to report sexual misconduct/interpersonal violence or name accused students. If you wish to file a report with the college, please visit the [reporting form](#) or email the Title IX coordinator (lmakinbyrd@lclark.edu).
- **Participate in Denim Day:** Denim Day, which takes place on the last Wednesday of every April (this year is April 26), is an international awareness event where folks wear jeans to stand in solidarity with survivors. This event got its roots after the Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans, she must have helped the person who raped her remove her jeans, thereby implying consent.
 - For nearly 25 years, women worldwide have used this campaign to advocate for the end of victim blaming and that no matter what clothes someone wears, their clothing (or lack thereof) is never a substitute for affirmative verbal consent.
 - Aside from wearing jeans, the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness will host a tabling event (time and location TBD), where students can come and ask questions about how to become more involved in creating a consent-centered college campus.

Before I head out, I also want to remind everyone that resources are available on campus if you or someone you know experience an unwanted situation. [Title IX](#) is available for those who wish to learn more about the Title IX process and what it means moving forward with a formal complaint. Additionally, [Confidential Advocates](#), [Counseling Services](#), and [Spiritual Life](#) are all confidential resources for folks who need help and do not want to go to the Title IX Office.

Until next time, friends!
Michelle C.