

The Road to Healing

By Kathy Downes

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Sometimes in life we are faced with things that we don't know how to handle. At Bright Tomorrows, we see this everyday in our work with children and families who have been impacted by abuse and trauma.

Being a victim of a crime – especially child (sexual) abuse - can feel isolating, shameful, overwhelming, and even embarrassing – even though the victim has done nothing wrong. There is the temptation to want to “sweep things under the rug” so as to not draw attention to yourself or your situation.

At Bright Tomorrows, we have experienced first hand being the victim of a crime, as was reported in Wednesday's paper. We have learned the depth of pain, feelings of betrayal, and lack of trust that can result from being victimized by a trusted person. We have also learned the long and hard road to healing, recovery, and even justice.

Through our personal trauma, Bright Tomorrows staff has gained a much deeper understanding of what the children and families we serve experience throughout the investigative and court process. As we sat in the courtroom our hearts ached for the children that we know have had to sit in this same spot. However, they had to talk about very personal and demoralizing facts about their own sexual abuse not knowing what the outcome would be and whether they would be believed or protected.

One of the most healing aspects of the entire process for Bright Tomorrows was the amount of support we received from our Board of Directors, law enforcement, prosecution, victim witness coordinator, and the Judge. These individuals are available to provide this same level of care and support for all children and families victimized by abuse.

Even though the entire process, from the initial report to the final sentencing, can be overwhelming and painful, it is a necessary and important journey for justice to be found.