



November 1, 2021

The Honorable Brittany Pettersen Chairwoman
Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force Colorado State Capitol
Via Hard Copy & Email

Dear Chairwoman Pettersen and Members of the Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force,

To supplement WINGS' testimony on better meeting the behavioral health needs of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse in the state of Colorado, WINGS submits the following items:

1) The attached Non-Profit Starvation Cycle chart

Due to very limited and restricted funding available for victim service agencies, most sexual assault centers, including WINGS, have been chronically stuck in these cycles of starvation, unable to adequately serve the very vulnerable populations we are uniquely qualified to serve, while being asked to carry extreme pressures organizationally by our dedicated teams. These organizations are repeatedly excluded from other funding streams that could help support our work because many leaders do not understand the impact that sexual trauma, especially developmental trauma caused by childhood sexual abuse, has on the lives of adults and that these impacts are often behavioral health and medical/public health related. The existing silos between the care and funding systems in our state (including behavioral health, public health/healthcare and crime victims services, primarily) must be changed to break down these silos and provide the resourcing that organizations need to be able to support survivors of sexual violence in ways that are trauma-informed, culturally and linguistically responsive and accessible - and *sustainable*.

2) Champions of Healing Video Preview

Because services have not been widely available to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse in the state of Colorado due to lack of funding and other systemic challenges, it has been very difficult, if not impossible, for most survivors of childhood sexual abuse to navigate existing systems to actually access the healing services they need. Most are still struggling with chronic symptomology, and many have not yet come to voice on what their experiences have actually been like, in trying to deal with this issue and to heal it in their lives. WINGS has begun an educational video to help amplify these voices, along with providers who want to better serve them. You can watch a preview of this video at the following link: (<https://wingsfound.thinkific.com/courses/champions-of-healing-preview>) to learn more about this pressing need in our state. The entire preview series is approx. 35 min. If time is limited, please watch the "Meet Our Adult Survivors" section and "Acknowledge" section.

WINGS thanks this legislative body for your leadership and action on this pressing issue – appropriately supporting the behavioral health needs of the 1 in 5 adults in our state who are adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Not only is this need acute during the cultural pandemic of COVID; yet it is also a chronic, ongoing need at all times. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions at either 303-238-8660 x 102 (office) or 502-299-1841 (cell) or email me at jenny.stith@wingsfound.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Stith".

Jennifer Stith
Executive Director