

TRANSCRIPT: TARANA BURKE ON HOW THE #METOO MOVEMENT STARTED AND WHERE IT'S HEADED

i *The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

my name is Toronto Burke and I'm the founder of the me2 movement me too is a movement that was founded in 2006 to support survivors of sexual violence in particular black and brown girls who were in the program that we were running it has grown since then to include supporting grown people women and men and other survivors as well as helping people to understand what Community Action looks like in the fights and in sexual violence I was working and living in Alabama at the time and we started this organization called Jess P Inc and that was about teaching the young women who we worked with to helping them develop a sense of self-worth which we differentiated from self esteem right our theory was that you have to build a sense of self-worth before you can have a healthy self-esteem we were encountering numbers of girls who were disclosing sexual violence that was disclosing their experiences and sometimes they didn't even know that it was a sexual violence right they would just tell us things like I had a seventh-grade girl 12 years old say to me once her boyfriend was 21 years old and I thought you know that's not that's not a relationship like that's a crime we put on myspace page up and within days and there was no such thing as viral back then but if there was this would be as close to that as possible within like a week or so we had so many responses from women who are like thank you for doing this this is really

amazing how can we be involved we need help and we realize this is bigger than what we thought you know people call me a leader of this of this movement I accept that as a title eggs I guess but I'm a woman worker more than anything and I think it's just helped me to scale up and to expand the work that I've been doing and the vision I have for this work it's given me a larger platform to speak about it talk about it and and more resources to actually implement some of these ideas me too is essentially about survivors supporting survivors and it's really about community healing and community action although we can't define what healing looks like for people we can we can set the stage and give people the resources to have access to and that means legitimate things like policies and laws that change there support survivors for instance they're great kids across the country that need to be tested so that the survivors who were assaulted can find some sort of justice through that system what are the policies that are in place in the local school around vetting teachers people that work can organize take an examine your sexual harassment policy the me to Congress bill gets rid of the forced 90-day cooling-off period that people who work in Capitol Hill has to have before they can file a sexual harassment claim when that's passed that will set a precedent hopefully for the country a lot of times survivors aren't even asking for people to be fired a lot of times I just want their story to be told they want to be to say it out loud and have some level of accountability we have to talk to survivors who what they need we are the ones who have to define what justice looks like and so the other part of it is around community action we firmly believe that she can organize around ending sexual violence people do everyday there are organizations and groups that do that and I feel like we need to elevate this conversation to a social justice issue we had a documentary that we're planning it to

roll out and just new materials and things of that nature and then when this viral moment happened I thought if me too the phrase me too gets popular in this context that is also around sexual violence and we are not here to ground the conversation and give her some context and we're gonna get lost and this work will get lost and so I definitely panicked at first and then I had another layer of panic because I was like god there's millions of women disclosing their experience or people disclosing the experience with sexual violence and there's no container to process this like there's nobody here to help them to walk through what disclosure feels like what do you do after you put hash tag me - it's it's humbling first of all it's deeply humbling for her to have people invested in this idea that was really essentially started to help our community but it's also it's it's hopeful that you know the world is changing to a place where we can have open discussions about sexual violence and how it affects people millions of millions of people around the world
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