

Sexual Assault Prevention, Mental Health Awareness and PTSD Education Programs

Amy Oestreicher

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Selected Articles...page 2

Sexual Assault Presentation and Broadway Theatre Performance...page 3

Sexual Assault Speaking Topics...page 4

Booking History...page 5

References...page 8

Professional Bio...page 10

Additional Information and Contacts...page 11

Selected Articles on Sexual Assault

It's Okay to Freeze: Healing from Sexual Assault (Huffington Post)

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/its-okay-to-freeze-healin_b_8777146.html

Healing From Numbness (Sammiches & Psych Meds, Manifest-Station)

<https://www.amyoes.com/2015/08/09/healing-from-numbness-a-sexual-assault-piece/>

From Frozen To Free (Dropping Keys)

<https://www.amyoes.com/2015/06/22/from-frozen-to-free-recovering-from-sexual-abuse/>

Music Therapy and Sexual Abuse

<https://www.amyoes.com/2015/08/27/music-therapy-and-sexual-abuse-healing-with-the-voice/>

To the man who molested me when I turned 17 (Role Reboot)

<http://www.rolereboot.org/life/details/2015-12-to-the-man-who-molested-me-when-i-turned-17/>

Five Ways Everyone Can Participate in Sexual Assault Awareness Month (Huffington Post)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/five-ways-everyone-can-pa_b_9396870.html

What to Say (and Not to Say) to a Survivor of Sexual Assault (Huffington Post)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/healing-through-our-voice_b_9541086.html

PTSD: The Illness I Couldn't See (Huffington Post)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/ptsd-the-illness-i-couldnt-see_b_8216634.html

Discovering "The Courage To Heal" (Original Monologue) (The Writing Life)

<https://www.amyoes.com/2016/03/08/podcast-courage-heal/>

Expression Sets You Free: How Playwriting Broke My Silence on Sexual Abuse & Surgeries (Huffington Post)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/expression-sets-you-free-_b_9998816.html

Why I Didn't Testify Against the Man Who Abused Me Before My Coma

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/why-i-didnt-testify-against-the-man-who-abused-me-before-my-coma_b_9612506.html

"Prevention is Possible" for Sexual Assault Awareness Month"

<https://www.amyoes.com/2016/04/04/saam/>

Waking the Tiger: How Do We Heal Once the Trauma is Over?

<https://www.amyoes.com/2015/12/28/waking-the-tiger/>

How Students Can Have The Biggest Role In Improving Mental Health On Campus (Uloop)

<https://www.uloop.com/news/view.php/189655/How-Students-Can-Have-The-Biggest-Role-In-Improving-Mental-Health-On-Campus>

Bridging the Gap: How I Used My Own Detour to Help College Students (Medium)

<https://medium.com/@amyoes/i-applied-to-17-colleges-for-this-how-i-turned-trauma-into-a-different-college-de-tour-3fb57155bad#4hcw3hb1m>

Gutless & Grateful

www.amyoes.com/gutless

Sexual Assault Prevention, Mental Health Advocacy and Broadway Theatre

Amy Oestreicher is a PTSD peer-to-peer specialist, artist, author, writer for The Huffington Post, health advocate, member of RAINN Speaker Bureau, speaker for TEDx, actress, and playwright. She is also a survivor of sexual abuse, 27 surgeries,

es, coma, organ failure, six years being unable to eat or drink, and the PTSD that comes from ten years of trauma.

Knowing how difficult it was for me to speak of my own abuse (especially after waking up from a coma months later), Amy has devised a program that combines Broadway theatre with sexual assault awareness and mental health advocacy, in order to empower survivors of assault and to create a more compassionate, open community. I deliver this keynote to organizations, conferences, shelters, colleges and universities, to promote mental health, provide hope, help, and improve lives.

The program can also be expanded to three components:

Part 1) A 70-minute one-woman autobiographical musical – Gutless & Grateful – a comedic yet poignant story on how I survived 27 abdominal surgeries, organ failure, and sexual abuse. Through interwoven song and dialogue, I share a primal piece of live-storytelling – a powerful message that it's possible for survivors to become empowered by their own identity and be secure in their choices.

Part 2) An educational session/speech where I discuss a compassionate approach to emotional well-being, how to develop a resiliency toolbox, how to cultivate hope, foster understanding, build a supportive community, and be comfortable reaching out to a support system. Individuals will learn tools for coming forward as survivors and as visible allies and leaders for all.

Part 3) A Q&A session to introduce wellness resources. Especially for students, this can be used to discuss Title IX, and other sexual assault and wellness resources on campus.

The program can also be followed by smaller workshops centered on building confidence and compassion through creative expression.

View clips of me presenting Gutless & Grateful, a facilitator guide with learning objectives/key themes, references and a **booking history** at this link: <https://www.amyoes.com/gutless/for-sexual-assault-awareness/>

See a longer portion of the program: <https://www.amyoes.com/gutless-talkback/>

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PTSD AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SPEAKING TOPICS

View additional topics at <https://amyoes.com/in-depth-speaking-topics/>

PTSD and Sexual Assault: For Survivors

What factors lead to individual's ability to assertively cope with and escape from potentially dangerous situations? In the wake of sexual assault, destructive coping strategies can lead to amplified PTSD symptoms and victimization.

Through sexual assault prevention, PTSD education and empathy-building, we assert our innate power to move through trauma. By understanding the psychological repercussions of sexual violence, individuals are empowered to come forward as allies and leaders, creating a community striving towards compassion. Learn healthy coping skills for healing after sexual assault.

PTSD and Sexual Assault: For Professionals Working with Survivors

In the face of trauma, an individual can fight, flee or freeze. For many survivors of assault, the "freeze" response can trigger complex feelings of shame and guilt, intertwined with feelings of helplessness from their initial trauma. When unattended, immobility can lead to destructive coping mechanisms, which create barriers to healing. Learn why understanding the freeze response in trauma is the secret to building a community with an empowered approach to sexual assault prevention.

Finding the Gifts After Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

People need adversity, trauma and setbacks in order to grow, change, evolve, develop as a person, find their inner strength and become a richer, deeper version of themselves. Amy will explain the psychological aftermath of trauma and symptoms of PTSD, and provide means of developing creative, healthy coping strategies.

Mental Health Mindset on Campus

Learn more at <https://amyoes.com/student-mental-health>

Explore the secrets to gratitude, hope, stories and creativity to maximize student success. Learn how to build resilience, and develop healthy self care strategies, Discover how to create a healthy campus with an empowered approach to health through fostering long-term mindsets.

Mental Health Mindset can also be expanded into three components:

Part 1) **60-90 minute multi-faceted keynote:** a comedic yet poignant story on how I survived 27 stomach surgeries, organ failure and sexual abuse. Through interwoven song and dialogue, I share a primal piece of live-storytelling – a powerful message that it's possible to overcome physical and mental health obstacles.

Part 2) **An educational session/speech:** I discuss an empowered approach to mental health, how to develop a resiliency toolbox, how to cultivate hope, and how to thrive with a physical or mental health condition, rooted in a comprehensive understanding of psychology, mindfulness and creative arts therapies.

Part 3) **A Q&A session and creative participation segment:** storytelling, theatre games and resiliency exercises. The program can also be followed by a panel involving wellness faculty to introduce mental health resources on campus. **Students will also be given a Recipe for Resiliency Workbook™** and will receive local and national resources for student mental health and trauma.

Booking History

- Keynote Speaker: Pacific Rim International Disability Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2016
- Keynote Speaker: International School of Social Work Conference, Columbus, Ohio March 2018

Presentations

- Transformative Language Arts Network's Power of Words Conference, Kansas City, MO (Narrative Medicine)
- Eating Recovery Center, Denver, CO (Mental Health, Acceptance)
- Heart of the City: Turning Passion to Business (B:Hive, Bridgeport 2015) (Entrepreneurship)
- Mental Health America Annual Conference 2016, Alexandria, VA (Media, Messaging and Mental Health)
- New England Educational Opportunity Association 2016 (Sexual Assault)
- Transformative Language Arts Network, Sacco, Maine, 2016
- Great Comebacks Eastern Regional Recipient (Convatec) WOCN Conference, Greensboro, NC 2014
- Great Comebacks (Convatec) Eastern Regional WOCN Conference, Meriden, CT 2014
- Great Comebacks (Convatec) National WOCN Conference, Nashville, TN, 2014
- Wound and Ostomy Continence Nurses Society Annual Meeting, NJ, 2016
- Creator of Gutless & Grateful (Mental Health/Disability/PTSD Education performance), Presentations 2012-2016 Colleges Nationwide
- Expert/Features on NBC's Today, CBS, WNBC, News 12, Cosmopolitan
- Co-creator of medical workshops with Adam Blatner, MD
- League for Advancement of New England Storytellers Annual Conference
- Brockport College Diversity Conference (2016)
- Modern Femme Conference (Virginia Beach, May 2017)
- National Student Leadership Diversity Convention (NYC, October 2016)

College Mental Health Speaker/Advocacy Program *(selected colleges)*

- Hampshire College 2014
- Boston College 2015
- Central Penn College 2015
- Russell Sage College 2015
- Haverford College 2015
- Fulton Montgomery Community College 2015
- New York University 2016
- College of St. Benedict & St Johns 2017

Speaking *(selected organizations)*

- Fairfield County Arts Association, Fairfield, CT
- National WOCN Conference, Nashville, TN

- Convatec Great Comebacks Awards, Greensboro, NC
- WOCN Eastern Regional Conference, New Jersey, November 2016
- TEDx Syracuse Glitch, April 2016
- Sharing the Fire (LANES Conference), April 2016
- Great Comebacks Awards, Meriden, CT
- Fairfield County Cultural Alliance
- Coastal Arts Guild “Make Art Monthly”
- Resilience and the Power of the Human Spirit, Westport, CT
- Youth to Youth International Leadership Conference (Bryant College, RI)
- NAMI Ending the Silence Presentations

Gutless & Grateful as a Keynote combining mental health advocacy and sexual assault prevention with Broadway Theatre

Entertainment-Based Presentations

Writer, Director, Performer of One-Woman Show: Gutless & Grateful: A Musical Feast

- Triad Theatre (October 2012, New York, New York)
 - o BroadwayWorld Award Nominee “Best Theatre Debut”
- Stage 72 (June 2013, New York, New York)
 - o Woman About Town’s “Woman to Celebrate”
- The Bijou Theatre (June 2013, Bridgeport, CT)
- Barrington Stage Company (July 2013, Pittsfield, MA)
 - o Part of “Mr. Finn’s Cabaret” series (personally invited by William Finn)
- United Solo Festival (New York, New York, October & November 2014)
 - o “Sold Out Top Pick” – awarded additional performance
- Transformative Language Arts Network “Power of Words” National Conference (Kansas City, MO, September 2015)
- Eating Recovery Center (October, 2015, Denver, CO)
- Hampshire College (November, 2015, Amherst, MA)
- Boston College (February, 2016, Boston, MA)
- Emerging Artist Theatre (March 2016, New York, New York)
 - o NYC Bistro Awards Top Pick
- Chenango Non-Profit Equity Theatre (Greene, NY, June 2016)
- Midtown Theatre Festival, New York (August, 2016)
- Transformative Language Arts Network (Sacco, Maine, August 2016)
- Metropolitan Room (NYC, February 2017)
- Statera Women and Theatre Conference (Denver, CO, October 2017)
- New York New Works Theatre Festival (NYC, August, 2016) *Semifinalist
- 54 Below (NYC, June 2017)
- Licensed to regional monologue competitions and college theatre departments as performance piece

Professional References

<https://www.amyoes.com/references/>

- 1.) “Recently, Amy Oestreicher performed Gutless and Grateful, to a packed house at Hampshire College, framed around her remarkable life journey from teenage ingenue to survivor of trauma and countless complicated medical procedures and finally to a place of gratitude. The production, which received rave reviews in its off-Broadway debut, contains beautifully sung musical theatre numbers as well as honest personal narrative. Gutless and Grateful was co-sponsored at Hampshire by the Theatre Program and the campus wellness center, a useful tool to talk to students about mental health issues and a powerful testament to the healing potential of the arts. Amy’s seemingly unlimited energy and enthusiasm is infectious.” – Talya Kingston, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre, School for Interdisciplinary Arts Hampshire College
- 2.) “You are what every campus needs right now. If we had more people with your desire to get the student body talking, a lot of issues could be brought to light.” – Aaron Ferguson, Disability Counselor, Hampshire College
- 3.) “Amy Oestreicher not only shows us the power of the purest kind of perseverance, but she does so in song and dance, telling her astonishing story of surviving a daunting and lengthy medical nightmares without allowing her challenge to strip her of her dreams. She brings to life the transformative power of music, theater, dance, and storytelling along with many other arts to educate and inspire our souls as to what is possible. It was a privilege to have her perform her breathtaking one-woman show at the Power of Words conference.”
– Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, Kansas Poet Laureate 2009-13, and founder of Transformative Language Art at Goddard College
- 4.) See reference letter from TLAN Coordinator, Terri Grunthner: TLAN Letter
- 5.) One part moving testament to human indomitability, the other a thoroughly satisfying evening of song. While each element is strong enough to stand on its own, combined they illuminate and enhance each other. Rarely have I seen narration and song so artfully meshed, and Oestreicher’s likeability, good humor, interpretive skill, and manifest commitment to what she is saying and singing make us not only understand her story, but also feel it on a very deep level. -Roy Sander, critic for BistroAwards.com
- 6.) I have worked with Amy for several months and truly have seen her aim to make a difference in the college community come to fruition and take form. Amy has a uniquely innovative idea of combining mental health, sexual assault prevention and Broadway Theatre as a way to address the gap between mental health resources and students. Amy is a force of so much that is good in a person and an artist
– Josh Rivedal, Founder, Executive Director of The i’Mpossible Project, International Speaker on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health
- 7.) “Through her theatrical performance of Gutless & Grateful, Amy Oestreicher invites us along for her personal journey through challenging medical, social and emotional

experiences in her life, all the while dancing—not walking—on the eggshells that typically come with discussing tough topics like eating disorders. Amy’s narrative brings her life challenges into perspective, allowing the audience to contemplate life’s possibilities amidst their own pitfalls.”

– Leslie McKay, Executive Director of the Eating Recovery Center Foundation

8.) “We loved your show...it was a wonderful example of how drama is therapeutic. Congratulations, Amy. What you’re doing is not only making a difference in your life and healing, but making a difference in so many other lives as well.” – Rebecca Greene Van Horn – Lesley University Adjunct faculty

9.) “I’m writing to express my appreciation of your wonderfully ingenious operetta. Indeed, I was moonstruck! The Broadway sense of your performance was very, very clever a thing to compose and perform-on the drama of your illness- and authentic at that.” – Lee Goldstein, TLAN Network Conference Attendee

10.) “Thank you for sharing your story from a patient’s perspective. I’m a medical student, and I’ve noticed in med school that many of the students don’t understand the empathetic side of medicine. They don’t realize that they are not treating a disease, they are treating a person, who is likely scared, desperate, and feeling helpless. They don’t realize that treating patients means treating the whole family, because everyone is suffering together, and everyone is worried and feeling scared and helpless. Your presentation alone shows that behind every “interesting” condition or disease, there’s a real person, with a real story.” – Elizabeth Tomey Annual Regional Ostomy Meeting

11.) “I find you an inspiration. You’re proof that we all need to tell our stories. Then your story becomes intertwined with another’s and whether we ever know it or not our personal story may just be enough to give another HOPE.” – Robin Nasitir, Friends of Ostomates Worldwide Foundation

12.) “She is, at once, one of the most independent and one of the most collaborative people I know. She is an inspirational figure to be sure, but her creativity expands well beyond her story.” – David Friedman, film and theatre composer

13.) “Amy has continued to inspire and surprise me, our patrons and other artists through her consummate, ever-flowing creativity, incredible message of strength and resilience, her overwhelming joy and love of life against great odds and her dedication and passion to her creative work. If I were reading this letter, I would think this was hyperbole, but I would be mistaken. She is a force of so much that is good in a person and an artist. She knows what she wants to say, yet is open to input to shape her output and to collaboration with many art forms. In her case, it is a benefit that she is so prolific in her writing, her art and her music. They all inform the work she is doing and it makes her an empathetic collaborator.” – Jeanine Esposito, Founder, Beechwood Arts

14.) “Amy Oestreicher did an amazing presentation to a large group of Jewish high school students at a one night a week Hebrew High School meeting at Congregation

B'nai Israel in Bridgeport, CT. The course title is 'Hope and Survival' and was extremely fitting to her inspiring story. Students felt comfortable enough to reach out to her after her talk, and she was a tremendous support and much-needed lift. " -Carole Rubin, Professor at Mercaz Hebrew High School, Bridgeport, CT

- 15.) It was an honor to have Amy Oestreicher's presentation of Gutless and Grateful on our campus. Her performance was riveting in its candor. Her technique, delivery and artistry were all impressive and equally effective. She took a unique and deeply personal story and turned it into something that every person in the audience could identify with. Amy is a great talent and she carries an important message.

Larry Berger, Technical Director/Music and Dance Hampshire College

- 16.) "She uses her triumphant tale to inspire others to reevaluate their approaches to life." – Boston College (ContactUGBC for a personal reference)

Professional Bio

Amy Oestreicher is a PTSD peer-to-peer specialist, artist, author, writer for The Huffington Post, speaker for TEDx and RAINN, health advocate, award-winning actress, and playwright. As a survivor and “thrivor” of nearly 30 surgeries, a coma, sexual abuse, organ failure, and a decade of medical trauma, Amy has been challenged with moments of extreme difficulty. But, as an artist, newlywed, actress, college student, and overall lover of life, Amy eagerly shares the lessons learned from trauma and has brought out the stories that unite us all through her writing, mixed media art, performance and inspirational speaking.

Her original, full-length drama, *Imprints*, premiered at the NYC Producer’s Club in May 2016, exploring how trauma affects the family as well as the individual.

To celebrate her own “beautiful detour”, Amy created the #LoveMyDetour campaign, to help others cope in the face of unexpected events. Amy has devoted herself to providing college students with an empowered approach to mental health and sexual assault prevention through her traveling advocacy programs and “Student Detourist” movement. In 2015, Amy launched the Student Detourists Outreach Program, enabling students to create outreach chapters on their campuses. “Detourism” is also the subject of her TEDx and upcoming book, *My Beautiful Detour*, available December 2017

As the 2014 Eastern Regional Recipient of Convatec’s Great Comebacks Award, Amy is a passionate voice in the ostomy community, founding the online community Fearless Ostomates, speaking for the National WOCN conference, and writing for the official print publication of the UOAA. Her presentations on alternative medicine, and patient advocacy and healthcare have also been accepted to into international conferences in Amsterdam, Dubai, Hawaii and others. Amy has written, directed and starred in a one woman musical about her life, *Gutless & Grateful*, has flourished as a mixed media and acrylic artist, with her art in multiple galleries and mounting dozens of solo art shows, and continues to share her story through her art, music, theatre, workshops and writings, which have appeared in Washington Post and On Being, with Krista Tippett. Her story has appeared on the TODAY Show, CBS, WNBC and Seventeen, and her one-woman show has been seen in theatres across the country, earning rave reviews and accolades since it’s BroadwayWorld Award-nominated NYC debut.

Amy has collaborated with Beechwood Arts on “Resilience and the Power of the Human Spirit”, using her monologues, art, writing and recipes to express the life-altering detours and ultimately the invaluable gifts of her resilience journey.

Amy is currently touring the country with her one-woman musical, *Gutless & Grateful*, her keynote presentations, workshops and signature talkbacks, which she has devised specialized versions for corporations, college campuses, survivors, healthcare professionals, and artists. She is leading mixed media creativity workshops to promote creativity as a mindset, an essential survival skill. Amy also offers private coaching to help others navigate their own beautiful detours, and prides herself most on ending each night with a gratitude list.

Additional Information

- View *TEDx Talk*: www.amyoes.com/tedx
- Speaking Kit: www.amyoes.com/press-kit
- Additional speaking videos: <https://www.amyoes.com/speaking-media/>
- *The Mighty* Health Articles: <http://themighty.com/author/amy-oestreicher/>
- Huffington Post: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-oestreicher/>
- Writing Portfolio: <https://www.amyoes.com/writing-portfolio/>
- Learn about upcoming book: <https://www.amyoes.com/book>
- Amy in the Media: <https://amyoes.com/media/>
- #LoveMyDetour Campaign: <https://amyoes.com/lovemydetour/mission/>
- **Workshops:**
 - Student “Detourist” Workshops: <https://amyoes.com/detourist-workshops>
 - Creative Expression Workshops: <https://www.amyoes.com/creative-workshops/>



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Celebrating Life's Beautiful Detours by Transforming Adversity to Creative Growth