

Episode 74 - Donna Chaiet

 Tue, 5/25 5:37AM  50:04

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, violence prevention, college, programs, threat assessment, prepare, scoops, parents, primary prevention, campuses, person, violence, classes, women, child, training, students, incidents, talk, problems

SPEAKERS

Donna Chaiet, Moira McCullough



Moira McCullough 00:00

Welcome to the College Scoops podcast. I'm your host, Moira McCullough and today we are talking with Donna Chaiet, founder of Prepare Inc, about personal safety and violence prevention.



Donna Chaiet 00:10

So when we just frame the threat assessment, as being alert to boundaries and behavior, we get them alert to that not to the relationship. And then we also tie in with social justice, meaning we're not teaching them to be afraid of categories of people.



Moira McCullough 00:38

This is the College Scoops podcast and I'm your host, Moira McCullough, we focus on everything college related from the admissions process to where to eat, stay and explore on and round campuses. Our guests include founders, educators, authors and experts in the college space. Join us as these experts share their knowledge, experiences and lessons learned to help you have stress free and formative and tasty college journeys. Whether it's your first or last child going to college, or you're just interested in going to a college town for a game or meal we've got you covered. If you haven't already, please subscribe to the

College Scoops podcast to get the inside scoop, send everything college related, and leave us a review. Thanks to all of our sponsors partners in the entire College Scoops ambassador team for helping us bring valuable content to our community. If you would like to support College Scoops as a sponsor, please head over to patreon@patreon.com/collegescoops and sign up as a sustaining listener, insider or Deluxe sponsor. We have exclusive benefits for our members free ebooks and even a College Scoops care package. Danna Chaiet is the founder and president of Prepare Inc, an educational services company offering programs that focuses on violence prevention, communication skills and anti-bias training prepares recognized for its ability to create programs that are highly interactive, promote equity and custom tailored. Donna is a recognized public speaker and educator, and has conducted workshops for Fortune 500 companies, universities and social service agencies. She's an award winning author, a blog writer, and quoted in scholarly articles and violence prevention. Welcome to the College Scoops podcast Donna thank you so much for joining us today.

D Donna Chaiet 02:25
Oh, this is absolutely My pleasure. Thank you for having me.

M Moira McCullough 02:27
Well, first of all, I could sing Happy Birthday to you but I do not have a good voice. I will not do that. So a thank you for joining us on your birthday. And your daughter's graduating from high school, which is so exciting. So you have a lot going on. So thank you for taking the time to talk with College Scoops.

D Donna Chaiet 02:42
Oh, again, this is my pleasure. I did a workshop earlier today already with a group of 12th graders and I told them being with them was my birthday present.

M Moira McCullough 02:50
College Scoops appreciates the birthday gift we have college students who are interns with us. I am a parent of three college students, two boys and a girl and we have a host of college students that we work with. Violence prevention is something that everyone's heard about, reads and conducts research about but you are an expert and I'd love to have you share some of your expertise and insights with us today to help prepare our students. So first and foremost, why did you launch Prepare?

D Donna Chaiet 03:27

Right? So my background into the world of violence prevention began when I was an attorney, I was right out of law school and I started working at a for a small boutique law firm on Madison Avenue. And they did a number of different areas of law and one of them was matrimonial a family law. And through that work, I represented women, mostly women who were in abusive relationships, and really without the training that I needed to handle their stories. And to better support them. I was you know, thrust into representing women who were you know, in extreme situations, and to cases really stood out for me. And that's where I had my Oprah aha moment. One case was a woman who both of these women we got orders for protection, by the way that is not now standard procedure. But back then it was so we had order to protection for both women. One woman moved out. And as she was painting her home, her husband broke into the space violating the order of protection. And to make a really long tragic story very short. She ended up accidentally killing him.

M Moira McCullough 04:41

How do you even support them even with all that legal training?

D Donna Chaiet 04:44

Correct. And I'm, you know, it literally right out of law school. I'm 24 years old and very young and naive. And it was it was quite traumatic for me and I didn't understand what I now know is secondary trauma. So the matrimonial now but Comes me being a criminal defense attorney, I did what's called second seating because I wasn't a criminal defense attorney. But I was there for the entire trial and supporting her. And then the other client, same thing, order of protection has been breaks into the home, he follows the pizza delivery guy in and in front of his daughter. He's sexually assaults his wife, the daughter runs to call the police. She's taken to the hospital, she's injured, I get a call from the hospital. And she has told me that she is reconciling with him.

M Moira McCullough 05:37

Okay, and then that's a whole entire other matter? I mean, those are, as you said, two extremes you're 24 at a law school and how do you even reconcile that? How do you?

D Donna Chaiet 05:47

Well, that's it, that's first thing, how do you process it emotionally and then support? Right,

those individuals, emotionally, and legally, which, and of course, I had absolutely no training and what to do for them emotionally. Um, so the woman who had accidentally murdered her husband, the attorney I've worked with, did really a fantastic job, we had a fairly good resolution for that. The woman who reconciled I was no longer her attorney, when she reconciled, she asked me for her retainer back on our relationship, professional relationship ended. But these experiences left me with these aha moments. And these were my aha moments. So both of these women, I now realize did exactly what they needed to do to survive. no judgment, no victim blaming, right, and I now can bring that attitude to this. But when I was young, and had no training, I didn't know what to do. And I realized that both of these women did what they needed to do to survive. But both of these women in those moments did not have access resources or tools to help them stay safe, far from reconciliation, or murder. Where was the middle ground? Where were all the skills and tools and information that would have kept them safe in those moments? But then I had a second realization. And my second realization was, how far back in the timeline did we need to go back to have intercepted these moments? And at first, in my naive Tay, I thought, Oh, if just five minutes earlier, if something could have intercepted if, if the pizza delivery guy couldn't go upstairs, but said, Come downstairs, like if anything had shifted, but then I realized that that wasn't the truth. And the truth was that we needed to dial the timeline back to when they were early adolescence. And that's where violence prevention begins. And now we're even working with children as young as preschool age and their families. Because when you're really doing violence prevention, you're operating in three lanes. Lane one is often called primary prevention. And primary prevention is where we're changing systems. We're changing attitudes, we're changing beliefs. secondary prevention is what we do in the moment. That's what people often call me for the quote, self defense, the martial arts, how do you in the moment, intercept this problem? And then the third lane is tertiary. And tertiary prevention is what we do after the fact how do we get support? How do we get help? What do we access so that this doesn't happen again. So as an attorney, I was in the tertiary prevention field. And I decided very quickly that primary and secondary prevention with tertiary is part of it is where I wanted to put my efforts and I spent five years at when I was still an attorney, training and becoming an expert in this field. I became certified and worked with trauma individuals and was trained by a wonderful woman named Shelly neider. Back was one of the first people talking about PTSD. In fact, she was one of the expert witnesses at my trial. So I met her through that. And I trained and became a trauma counselor, I then realized that there were other things that intersected with violence, like social justice, and oppression. And that goes to the primary prevention, what systems are in place that don't work. So I had first hand knowledge, that legal system was broken, it didn't work, it didn't help people or as a protection did nothing to keep women safe. So transitioning to primary prevention. I then also learned about martial arts and I became quite a good martial artist, I trained with the military, I trained with police. I did all sorts of things to

become expert in what people think of as physical self defense, we use the term physical resistance, we don't like self defense, and we don't like the term martial arts not because those are bad. things but they imply something different than what we're teaching and training people to do and prepare. And then I learned a lot about psychological strategy, how people manipulate one another, how they play the long game, the cycle of violence, and really started to understand more deeply about the psychological implications of violence, and then the intersection of drugs and alcohol and mental health and became an expert in those fields as well. So when I talk about violence prevention, I'm talking about a really large bucket of information, and not talking about simple rules and tips. Like don't go out late at night alone.

M Moira McCullough 10:41

I don't even know how you were able to do all of that in this short time. Can you just give us an example? So we can understand it?

D Donna Chaiet 10:51

Yes, exactly. So primary prevention in our classes would be talking about, specifically, when we're doing a relationship, a healthy relationship unit might be doing an exercise on what is the difference between love and a crush? Okay, right. What is the difference between love and being in love? Where do we get our ideas about love? Do they come from our families, from religion? from television, in movies? How does Disney impact what we think about love as? And there's actually been research on this? So we have conversations and get people to understand their attitudes and belief about love? What are the gender understandings of who takes the lead in romantic relationship? Who's the lead? Who's the follower? Who's in charge?

M Moira McCullough 11:45

So are you bringing these programs to schools? And and when you say, you're teaching these and asking these questions to have this conversation, what age are you aiming for?

D Donna Chaiet 11:57

Right? So Prepare has four different curriculum. We have a lower school curriculum where we work with second to fifth graders. And for their the relationship piece we're looking at is friendship, and how do we develop friendships? And how do we choose our friends? What values do we have in friendships? How do those values line up to larger society

values or a family values? And then what happens if our friendships don't line up with those values? What we sometimes people call bullying, but we call pure aggression. Okay, so what happens if there's some pure aggression? What happens if it's direct, right in your face, indirect, behind your back through social media, or a microaggression? Something someone might say, where there's no intention to hurt, but harm is caused. So that's the unit we talked about there. And then we also do other things like what if you're separated from your family at a park? How do you get help? And again, I want to emphasize prepared does not give tips. And in fact, these rules that are reflexive that parents say to young children, like don't talk to strangers don't make any sense from a violence prevention standpoint. Because it's not strangers, who are the only people who might hurt them.

M

Moira McCullough 13:17

Right. And everything we've read, or as parents and the data out there shows that a lot of if talking about rape, it's with somebody that you know, So to your point, almost, we're giving them these false.

D

Donna Chalet 13:29

That's right. advice, right and guidance. Exactly. So it's not false. We want people to be thoughtful around people, right, just like we're thoughtful around knives, we're thoughtful around pools, we're thoughtful around crossing the street, we do all sorts of things that we're thoughtful about that we teach young people, these are the potential dangers without going into extreme detail. Here are the things to shore up the danger. So we swim in buddies, we make sure we know how to swim, we make sure that you know the the there's someone watching us, etc. And it's the same thing with people they know young children already know that people can be dangerous. And so it's not strangers are dangerous people you know, are safe. It's just, we need to be thoughtful, we need to take certain precautions. The other reason why Stranger Danger makes no sense is that if your child is separated from you, the first thing we teach kids is walk up to an adult and ask for help. And in fact, we're literally teaching them to talk to strangers. So where parents are really saying is don't talk to strangers, what they're really wanting to say is don't talk back to don't interact with anyone who is behaving in a way that's against the social norms of the way an adult should behave with a child. That's the ultimate rule. But you can't say that rule to a kid that's an abstract thought, as is the concept of stranger is abstract. So instead, it's just here are the social rules. Here are the things to be learned. These are the new social norms we want you to think about. No one should be asking personal questions. No one should be offering you gifts or bribes. No one should be touching in a way that doesn't feel right or that hurts, or that you've been told is wrong. So when we just

frame the threat assessment, as being alert to boundaries and behavior, we get them alert to that not to the relationship. And then we also tie in with social justice, meaning we're not teaching them to be afraid of categories of people, meaning homeless people are dangerous, not really, mentally, oh, people are dangerous. No, they're not. Those are two groups that are more vulnerable to being targeted for crime than committing crimes. And yet, you know, children, young children will really dig in their heels to me, because their parents have said, you know, be careful of that person. And that person they're pointing to is often someone who's homeless, or has some apparent mental health issues going on. So again, we're substituting stereotypes and bias with this concept of threat assessment. So then we have a middle school program. So it around sixth grade, and to fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh graders, where young people start getting freedom. They're walking to school on their own, they may be riding public transportation on their own, they may have more unsupervised hang time, they may be going on travel teams, where they may be traveling for a day or an overnight camps after school activities. All of a sudden, now parents are dropping off their kids.

M

Moira McCullough 16:45

Yes. We drop off our kids, right and saying thank you to strangers. That's right. And we were thrilled to pay them. And we pay them a lot of money on the travel teams to drop them off, to take them and take them away to different states on overnight trips.

D

Donna Chaiet 17:01

That is correct. So now all of a sudden, and wonderfully, so this kind of you know, Early Middle school age, they get a lot of newfound freedom. And it's an age where young people are starting to be able to think abstractly. And that's a really a wonderful moment, they become very, very wise. But they're still learning in concrete thinking. So we've developed a program that kind of just splits that difference where we're allow them to think in this more complex way. What is love? Going back to that question? What is a healthy relationship? What do you admire? What would you want? What do you dream for? So that's some abstract thinking. And then we layer it in with some concrete rules, which is no one should be touching you without consent. And we make it clear what consent is. It's an explicit, yes, it's morally right, meaning no one is getting hurt. And it's done with enthusiasm. So we keep consent simple in middle school, it sounds simple.

M

Moira McCullough 18:02

And it is such a simple and basic concept. I mean, I just take the healthy relationships

concept, to your point going in at that young age and creating that dialogue. And having that conversation, where there's not a time is of the essence, like you're going away on a trip and I need to cut it short, like I'm going to give you the cliff note version, where you get into making statements that you've just pointed out, you know, don't talk to strangers. Well, it's not that you have to unpack that. And there's a whole other discussion that led up to that statement, which is incorrect.



Donna Chaiet 18:35

Exactly. Yeah, you're right. That's such a good way of saying it.



Moira McCullough 18:38

Which is that parents kind of are like, Oh my god, it's the first time you're traveling on your own. for the weekend, let me very quickly lay the lay down the law. But if you continue the conversation, so that it wasn't this big family meeting, a point where you're trying to throw at them all this level of advice, these rules, these tips, and it was something that was just embedded in your family conversation. And that would make it so much easier, right for, for kids.



Donna Chaiet 19:09

Exactly. So in the same way that you know, again, I'll use the analogy, you talk about pool safety or knife safety when you're in the kitchen, you know, there isn't a sitting down, we not have to have the knife conversation. It just organically happens because you're in the kitchen and you're slicing fruit and you start with a plastic knife, right with something that's soft, and then you might move up to a small paring knife, you know, you don't start with, you know, your Japanese, you know, super blade, you know, you start with something you know, smaller and that's exactly the way parents can think about safety. It's a conversation over time. It shifts as your child's experiences shifts that shifts as their development shifts. And we talk about this in a lot of different settings, but these educational moments. So say for example, you're walking If you do see something that makes you uncomfortable, and you instinctively cross the street, so what we would like parents to do is narrate that, and use the language of threat assessment and Threat Management. So the language of threat assessment might sound like, Hey, I'm not sure if you're noticing, but it looks like that person has been following us. I'm not positive, I'm not scared. But I want to be thoughtful about that. So let's cross the street and walk in the other direction. And let's just see if the person continues to follow us. If they do, then my instincts will be confirmed that Oh, you know what instincts, our instincts are that sixth

sense that something's happening, you may not have words for it, but you have a physical sensation about it. What I felt was like the hair on my arms rose, again, concrete, what is the sixth sense need? Exactly, we cross the street, and we see what happens if the person continues to follow us, you can say, Hey, now I'm more concerned. So let's harness resources, let's dip into a store, let's see if we can find someone who can help us. Let's get back to the car, let's drive home. Let's report this to the police. So and again, it's all a matter of fact, it's no we're in terror, we're panicking, it's, I'm a parent, I can do this, you can watch me and learn. And so in this transition to middle school, what parents often do is, you know, Shadow their children for the first few moments, you know, where they're stepping out into this newfound freedom, giving them the opportunity. So that might mean walking your child halfway to school, and then letting them take the rest of the way and seeing how they do keeping an eye on them, praising them, letting them know you believe in them, they can do this kids have been walking to school forever. And they're no different than anyone else. And we'll learn how to do this safely. And you know, every week, again, you know your child better than me every week, every two weeks, maybe even every day, they get more freedom, they get more opportunity to be on the road, and then you feel good, and they feel good. And you've now just created agency, and you're not rescuing your child anymore. From the big bad world, you're telling them you are capable of handling yourself in the Big Bad world.

M

Moira McCullough 22:22

Well, and that's what we need to do to give them the confidence and the knowledge that they can at each step of the way, whether you know, grammar school, middle school, high school, and knowing that you've given them the tools, the resources, the information, for the threat assessment for the threat management to know that I'm confident I can handle this on my own. And I have the skills and tools to do that and ask for help, and go about it in a way that allows me to live every day comfortably.

D

Donna Chaiet 22:50

Correct, right? Correct. And the language we talk about that is we reduce vulnerability, and we raise resilience. And we do reduce vulnerability by having an understanding of what's going on the reality, not the myths. So it's not dark alleys where violence happens, it's your street, it's in a near school, it's in or near our homes, that's where violence happens. People spend very little time in dark alleyways. So there's not a lot of violence and dark alleyways. So but yet, if we have that in our head is that that's what we need to prepare for is kidnappings or Stranger Danger, then we're not preparing for the reality of what life is. So part of the way we prepare is not just with information and discussion, but what distinguishes prepare is that we teach in adrenaline state learning sometimes called

state dependent learning. And that's a fancy way of saying that we let people in roleplays in realistic practice scenarios, experience the natural biological response of stress and danger. And the reason why that's so important is that in a real life situation, it is very likely you will be aroused, you will be feeling a lot of adrenaline, your front parts of your brain that are responsible for executive function might compress, you may not be able to access, good decision making. But other parts of our brain and body can be activated to be really, really effective, these more primitive circuits of our body and brain. And when we activate those and we practice in that state of activation, we then are more likely to access that in a real life situation. So the best analogy is CPR training with Annie or Risa.

M Moira McCullough 24:39

And I've done that lifeguard.

D Donna Chaiet 24:42

Yes, I have to. I saved a person's life. Seven years after I completed my lifeguard training, I saved their life. I had no conscious memory, but I immediately went into Annie Annie, are you okay? Are you in the red shirt call nine one One, someone's having a heart attack, I immediately began CPR, I saved that person's life, I'm on the phone with 911. As I'm doing CPR, they're helping me coaching me through what to do. I'm doing it, I'm not even aware that I'm nervous or anxious, I'm in complete action mode, I'm taking action, I'm getting validated, the people around me are grateful. One person was like, you're hurting them. And I'm like, I don't think I am. I think I'm doing it right. Because I was doing chest compressions, they're like, you're doing it too hard. I'm like, I'm just gonna keep doing it. And like, I'm just going with my body remembering of working on recessive Annie, my body remembered what to do, not my brain,

M Moira McCullough 25:47

We're talking about a life or death scenario. And the fact that you had the competence, the training, the ability to stay in the zone, and do what you knew, was right, based upon, you know, the training that you had, and focus only on that at hand.

D Donna Chaiet 26:05

Correct. And not let someone distract me from my own instead of knowing. And again, even if I was doing it wrong, I was willing to take the chance that I may break a rib to save her life, right. So that's another you know, it's a risk assessment, you know, I'd rather go a

little too hard. But make sure I'm getting really active breath responses with this person, a lot of people are afraid to take action, because they're afraid of getting it wrong. Not doing it right, being judged, making a scene. So when we can take that thought process out of the equation, because we've rehearsed in class, how to deal with low level problems. So someone annoying you, medium level problems, someone touching you crossing a body boundary crossing an emotional boundary, or high level problems, someone committing a crime against you, or doing something that's dangerous, or trying to get you to do something dangerous. When we practice these responses in these three different categories of problems, people become adept, they become skillful, they become confident, you get confident from practice. And so it's not that I was inherently confident, I was confident because I had training. And I just really, like I said, I keep saying I just instinctively knew what to do, I moved very quickly and very efficiently. And I was surprised at myself for how, how I was able to access that information from when I was a teenager,

M Moira McCullough 27:36

We all don't think that we can, but given the, again, the training and making sure that we have that foundation, then it's believing in yourself. And then and then you're just reacting like as you said, the adrenaline.

D Donna Chaiet 27:49

That's right. And the adrenaline then helps you ride the wave, correct. It doesn't overwhelm you. So the adrenaline makes you stronger. The adrenaline can make you very focused in in the task at hand. So adrenaline is something that kind of becomes your friend, and not something that you're afraid will shut you down or freeze you what sometimes called tonic immobility. So these are natural biological responses that can shut people down because they're overwhelmed by what's happening. So again, it's speaking of adrenaline. So then, the way we do these practice scenarios is that one of the instructors, so the prepare team comes in to your school community center Corporation, we do these programs. We've talked about lower and middle school focus on upper school and college in a moment. But we come in and one of the instructors puts on 40 pounds of protective armor that's custom fit for their body. And so we're learning how to do the physical response, which is quick, decisive, relatively easy to learn and possible to master in short term training, you're doing that full contact, full force, in a context. So it's not, you're in a martial arts studio, you bow to the person before you begin your strikes. We create a backstory, it's part of the scenario, you're in a parking structure, you're in your dorm room, you're leaving your home, you're leaving the library, you know, all of these things that are on you're leaving a job, you're on a date, you're at a party, you know, we

create a backstory in a context or relationship or lack of one with the person. And then we get to practice in like a full context, threat assessment, psychological preparedness, identifying the behavior, where are the boundaries being crossed, and then creating an action plan. And when we first go through it, the first couple of classes, you know, we're where people are talking it through out loud, right and identifying it, this is what I'm seeing. This is how I'm behaving and then we put the plan into action. And by the final classes, we don't have to Say that process out loud. People are again instinctively doing the process. We don't tell people what to do. There are no mandates, it's options and choices. There's no victim blaming, we honor the choice to not do anything.

M

Moira McCullough 30:14

I just am thinking back, I have to tell one quick story way back when I was looking at schools, I went by myself for the first time with two friends. And it was the first time we had, I had been on an adventure, my parents were pretty strict. And we got in the car, we're in Connecticut, or going to Pennsylvania, we take the car, my other two friends had had more freedom, shall we say? So they were kind of in their element me I was not so much. And we go over Tappan Zee Bridge in the car has a flat. So we had to deal with that first journey. Yeah. But we get to now we get to our hotel that we're checking into by ourselves, the person who was checking us in look younger than us, which I didn't know if that was possible. And I remember a car pulled up and it was a truck behind us. With two gentlemen probably in their late 20s. And the hair on the back of my neck went up. And my friends didn't notice. And they're checking we're checking in, and I'm just watching that vehicle. And I'm watching them watch us. And I thinking I'm not feeling a good vibe right now. So as my friends gathered the key, I quickly said to them, I think we're being followed. And I'm scared. And we need to so don't worry that you're imagining it. And we get into the car. And I said No, I'm serious. So here's what we're going to do. We're going to go a room was 10. Right? I said, Let's park at one. Okay, let's park the car bolt, right where I'll athletes one as fast as you can to that room 10. Get in, shut the door, no lights on, and just wait it out, you know, not very scientific time I needed you. But all of a sudden we did that. And my friends. Again. We're saying no, no, I said don't look at the wind. But sure enough, we saw the car circling around, go to our car, park the car. And at that point, we're calling the front desk. And of course that young boy is like, I don't know what to do. And I call the police. Get them here as you can. That all situation and then of course, I'm moving the bed against the door and trying to do everything I can. But what did I do, right? And here you are, you're going to sit, there's no right or wrong. We came out of it. Now, couldn't sleep Of course. The next morning, we had interviews at our school. And I remember going into my interview for college. And the gentleman was very nice and tried to say hello and talk to me. And I immediately told him the whole story. We were pen pals.

I didn't get into that school. We were pen pals for many years at worse. But that was something where I could have used your training. Right? And I know you - no shame blaming.

D

Donna Chaiet 32:52

We never Monday morning quarterback. Anyone ever thought free to though? That would be no that would be the utmost in you know, in victim blaming, I think you did a fantastic job. You saw the problem, you immediately create a created a plan. I really liked that you brought up what your friends thought process was. We call those intuition blockers. They come from Freud. There are five defense mechanisms, denial, rationalization, justification, minimization, and excuse making. And we have those voices in our head, where we say that's not happening, you're being paranoid, which is a form of minimization, or there must be a good reason. You know, they just pulled up, they're checking in as well. And we say these things to ourselves because they comfort us the reality that you were followed, that there might be two men who were targeting you is so overwhelming, that we can't take it in, you were able to take it in, your friends weren't. And so no victim blaming that is again, a very human psychological response to danger. So you not only had to deal with your accurate a threat assessment, and this is never we're now transitioning to the college world. What we're often now doing is working in small groups, where we have to lead the people we're with to understand what we're seeing, and then to agree to take the protective action. This action plan that you came up with what I like about your action plan and here are the concepts I want to highlight is you had many levels and layers there was a tricking and manipulation. Love it. There was finding the quickest route to safety, love it. There was accessing help. Realizing the first person you tried to get help wasn't going to be a help. And that is something I hear often people duck into the store. They go up to the salesperson the salesperson doesn't know what to do. I'm being followed.

M

Moira McCullough 35:02

Right and there there within the last like, there should be your ticket. Right? And you're not taking care of another person.

D

Donna Chaiet 35:08

That's right. So you know, there's a lot of again, parents like duck into a store, ask for help. But that's only part of the process. What if help, doesn't help you. I've also had stories where young people, teenagers walk into stores to manager, I need help. And the manager has said to them, get out of my store, you're scaring the customers. So I literally

have students who've told me they've been forced back outside, where there was, in fact, someone following that. And so now what do you do? So you called the police? Listen, I want to make it clear, the police are not for everyone. We don't all have access to the police, we will not all be treated the same by the police. So how do we then activate the best bystander we confine? How do we select the person that we see clearly and calmly explain the problem and get them to be our ally, you were able to access the police as a white young white woman at a hotel? Great, they would be resource for you. And then again, you did another great step, which is you kind of kept checking about you at Are we really safe. And even though you were in a room, the door was locked. Everyone knows that hotel? Certainly back in the day, those locks were not much of anything. Exactly. How do I grab a piece of furniture and I barricade myself in what I love is not the specifics of what you did. But I what I want people to hear is the concepts the game plan, the strategizing the fact that you had a litany of things to do, the more tools in our tool belt, the more likely we are to stay safe.

M

Moira McCullough 36:48

So is that when you talk about what you're doing with these college groups, you're going in there, I would also like to just ask you to touch on the fact that I have a, I have two sons and a daughter. And I find, again, no judgment, but we give our daughters a lot of information tools. But I remember somebody telling me, you know, a season parent, I always love going to those season parents who've been through it. And they said, Hey, I have three boys, I need to give them the tools and information and resources that they need to be that kind, thoughtful, caring person who can assess, though everything that we have worried that our daughters may be faced with, but as well, our son should be given those tools and resources as well. Can you just talk a little bit,

D

Donna Chaiet 37:39

I will absolutely talk about that. So right up until the middle school years, boys and girls are equally vulnerable to sexual predation, period, end of story. The data has more girls reporting than boys. But that's only the reporting event. So boys are really vulnerable. Once there's a puberty happens, boys become less vulnerable to sexual predation, but not immune to it. And I want to let you know that in high schools and in college, when you look at the data, it's not as high as women, people who identify as female, but it's still ridiculously high for boys. Just because someone is a boy or identify as male that does not make them invulnerable. And well, I'm talking about gender identity, I want to make it 1,000% clear that people who are ninebot, non binary or queer, are more likely be targeted, the rates of violence are extraordinary. And we're extremely proud to be partnering with Hunter College with a huge National Institute of Health grant specifically

geared to trans feminine women, the rates of violence, it's beyond the beyond. I take a digression. So but an important digression. So gender is part of the equation in violence. It's one of the things that makes people vulnerable. But what we want to do with men is really deeply dive into primary prevention, not just the secondary prevention or tertiary prevention. And what I mean by that is understanding what their definition of masculinity is. Does that line up with someone who is, as you say, kind, kind and caring and empathic? Can you take another person's perspective? Can you step outside of your privilege as a man and understand what someone who is non binary or queer or feminine presenting might have to deal with on a daily and regular basis? When we ask young men in high school, what they do to not be raped? They have no answers. They do nothing. When we ask teenage women, what they do to not be raped. When we asked trans individuals, queer individuals, the list is endless.

M

Moira McCullough 39:52

And I would also say though, I'm also looking at it from a bystander standpoint as Yes, which that is I Something that every college student, given the environment that they're in everything that we've read about with different clubs, organizations, fraternities, sororities and just being able to help,

D

Donna Chaiet 40:13

Right. Yes. And you know, there have been a number of hazing incidents that are your once campuses once COVID relented a little bit and campuses opens up, there been a number of hazing incidents, hazing is one of the ways that men are killed on college campuses. And, you know, part of what we also ask college students to do when they transition to their campuses, or work life or gap year, whatever it is, is really do a thorough exploration of like, what's going on on that campus. And it's not just looking at the data on the campus campuses are very reluctant to release that data. They want to keep incidents contained. They don't want to publicize how many people reported ways to get that information might be to go to campus affinity groups, okay? Where people might be reporting in a less official way. So you may end up with lots of anecdotes, but those anecdotes, create a picture, there might be a women's center, where that information might be more available mental health centers might have that information. But as I know, being part of the college process, colleges have a real interest in you know, the shiny, glossy brochure, you know, everything is beautiful, everything is wonderful. It's idyllic incidents, you know, and their view incidents are handled quickly and appropriately. But we know that's not the truth. So, you know, I wonder how many students are picking campuses knowing that information? Is this a campus that safe and I don't want you to

fall for the trap, that blue lights on pathways is really safety? It's good, it's not going to hurt anyone. But you know, that's not where the incidents are happening.

M

Moira McCullough 42:00

No, that's the type of information that we need to get out to get more students and parents. So how can students get some of this information? Or do you have any programs that you are running that we can share with our community?

D

Donna Chaiet 42:18

Yes, absolutely. So we have chapters all over the country. I'm with the prepare organization. I'm the co founder of prepare, we teach at the Grace Church School of preschool division, that's our home base. And it is now you know, we'll timestamp this we're now you know, in the third week of May, or end of May when this'll run and as of July one will be allowed back in our space for in person classes, we will running classes, find us at just google search, prepare New York, okay, if you're in other locations in other parts of the country, you can search for impact. Impact is the trade name for a long, comprehensive program that's offered in Boston, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Colorado, Chicago, Albuquerque, Santa Fe. If you're not one of those patients, if one of those locations has an open for you this summer, reach out to us at prepare New York. And we can either coordinate virtual or hybrid program, our staff can travel, we can come to your college campuses, we work on many college campuses. And this program is really invaluable. I'll also add that although I'm a fan of by standard programming, when I'm a fan of first is self advocacy programs, meaning we all need to know how to stand up for ourselves first. And then from that we can stand up for other people, but by standard programs, or sometimes in lieu of programs like ours. For anyone out there who's familiar with rad rape awareness defense, what I will say is we value everyone who is in the lane of violence prevention. What we've heard and research that's done on rad is that it is often taught by security personnel who have been given short term training, the programs can often be very heteronormative. The programs are often very victim blaming full of taps, and only focus on rape defense. And of course, violence is much larger than rape defense. And again, we applaud these programs but they're no substitute for comprehensive violence prevention, which is done in a non victim blaming social justice orientation.

M

Moira McCullough 44:51

Donna, you have so much to offer. And I mean, it's almost like a podcast series



44:59

Wow. I'm here for you. And we don't do this as webinars. And even though I'm so thrilled and love to be here, and I'm really glad and hope people hear this and learn something from that, we really are passionate that we learn best by doing. And just like you can take the first day program bite through webinar series, you really have to be in person with recessive Annie, you've got to get the defibrillator going, you've got to practice what it feels like, in a scene that's recreated. And that's good education and that's what we're passionate about.

M

Moira McCullough 45:31

I love just the way you look at it, because you bring it distill it down to the education at the three different link the three lanes, there's so much there, and there's so much education that can go on and we have terms that we're using. And even when I just said about the bystander, it's like, no, how can even if it's not violent to you, how do you self advocate and help others? And that is something that as a parent, it's great before you're going off to college, you're like, Okay, do you have your shower kit? Do you have your shower caddy? Do you have your new towel bathroom? And by the way, this is what you need to do. Right? situation? And as a as a 17 year old? How can even take that in? And what do you do with that. So I think the more that we can help our young and growing students to take this information and have these conversations and know where to go to to get trained for violence prevention is wonderful. Donna, thank you so much. And I'm going to be asking you to come back on



46:29

To reflect I will gracefully accept. And thank you for being such a great interviewer and really for showing some authenticity and honesty and sharing your own story. We learned by listening to people and breaking the silence and talking about lived experiences is part of unpacking rape culture, and making sure that people understand there's no shame or blame. Even if your story ended with something unfortunate happening, it would not have been your fault, the fault lies with the people who are aggressive towards you.

M

Moira McCullough 47:00

And that's something I think is very, very important for people to hear that victim blaming and that fault and no judgment. So thank you for that. Do you have volunteer opportunities is are there opportunities that people can reach out to your organization for

that?

D Donna Chaiet 47:14

Yes - so after you've taken our class, if people are looking for activities or community service, we're happy to have you in our classes as assistance. It's always wonderful when we have the first people who take their turn people who've done the class, and they become role models and kind of the bridge between students and and the teachers in the class. So we love to have that. And then at the universities where we teach, these are often offered as senior seminars where you get credit.

M Moira McCullough 47:44

Okay, perfect. So we're going to include all this information in our show notes that people can reach out to, to prepare and in any capacity of what they're looking for, and then have the opportunity to take a class and come back and volunteer and help. Yes, the program.

D Donna Chaiet 48:00

And my final bit of information. As you know, so far we've really been focusing on neurotypical individuals, but I want to make it clear that prepare has been trained in a program called impact ability for people with cognitive differences, learning differences, physical ability differences, and we accommodate the program and in our general population classes, we take pretty much any student so to the extent that they are non neurotypical people out there You are welcome.

M Moira McCullough 48:32

That's so important. Thank you, they will for making that. Thank you, Donna. Have a wonderful day and happy birthday and thank you. Thank you Donna for sharing your story, your insights and advice about violence, education and prevention. As parents there are ways we can start to educate our children at a young age about violence prevention, with primary prevention discussions that focus on changing systems, attitudes and beliefs. Prepare Inc has programs available at the lower school, middle school and college levels. Understanding the threat assessment, getting psychologically prepared. Learning to identify behaviors, and having the ability to create an action plan are several ways we can help our students have the tools, resources and knowledge to reduce vulnerability and raise resilience. You can find all of our show notes and links to the helpful resources

mentioned throughout our conversation on our website at collegescoops.com/podcast. You can learn more about Prepare at Prepareinc.com please take a couple of minutes to rate review and subscribe to College Scoops. Thank you for listening to our College Scoops podcast. Our entire College Scoops team strives to make the college journey a little bit easier, less stressful, fun and tasty by sharing all the inside scoops we have curated along the way. We would love to hear from you about topics to cover and your ideas and everything college related. Reach out to us at collegescoops.com or follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.