

Not Alone

by Abigael Candelas de la Ossa

Content note: This zine deals with sexual violence.

When I started speaking out about sexual assault, people said to me: **"You are not alone"**

I knew it was supposed to make me feel better. But it didn't.

Many people in my community experience sexual violence, so I already knew I wasn't alone. But I wished I was.

If I could have chosen to be utterly alone with that experience, in exchange for knowing that no one else would be assaulted -- that they would be safe -- I would have.

What made me feel isolated and hurt were some people's reactions to my speaking out:

"Keep your head down"

"There may be unpleasant consequences"

"You're the only one bringing this up"

I started turning to work by activists from my community:

"No más violencia de género"

"Juntas somos poderosas"

"Queremos una comunidad libre de violencia"

Being part of a long line of strong, brave, resilient advocates in the movement to resist and end sexual violence made me feel strong and held in solidarity. And I am still speaking out.

So, I just want to say (in case you're feeling hurt or isolated): I stand with you.

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