

Jocelyn Craig  
FRJS Progress Report  
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### Break the Silence Research Project

The project I undertook is a long-term follow-up survey for participants in Break the Silence's Women's Revitalization Retreat for years 2013 and 2014. The purpose of the survey research is to generate a report measuring the intended impact of the retreat program and demonstrating how the program is meeting its stated goals, as well as an evaluation of how the program works in order to maintain and/or improve the quality of future retreats.

I created the survey for the project using SurveyMonkey in consultation with Kristen Paruginog, the organization's founder, based on the stated goals of the retreat program, in June 2015. The survey was designed to measure the outcome for retreat participants in three main areas: connecting with other survivors of domestic violence, supporting personal development, and moving forward in the healing process. The survey included a scale measurement for each of these goals, as well as several open-ended questions to aid in better understanding participants' responses. The survey was sent to all participants of the 2013 and 2014 retreats via email in July, and participants were also notified via a Facebook group for past and present attendees. Follow-ups and reminders were sent in July and August in order to generate more responses. About one-half of all participants completed the survey.

Based on these results, I created an outline for the report. Using a theory of change as a framework for analyzing the survey results, the outline includes the purpose of the report, a simplified presentation of the retreat itself, including its

history, target audience, general form, and stated objectives, an overview of the theory of change being used and a brief literature review on relevant research, a section on methodology, a section detailing the findings of the research, and conclusions. Appendices to the report will include a copy of the survey and a full data set of results obtained.

I am currently in the process of finalizing the report, which will hopefully aid Kristen in understanding more fully how the program has been working and how attendees have responded to and benefitted from the program, as well as in seeking funding from donors for future retreats by being able to demonstrate to donors the measurable impacts of the program. The responses from participants were overwhelmingly positive and have demonstrated the effectiveness of the retreat program and its success in meeting stated goals.

The research has also been very helpful to me as a process of learning and practicing skills in program evaluation for non-profit organizations. It has been an ideal starting project in this regard because of my background in domestic violence advocacy and my understanding of the issues at stake for participants in that regard. It has given me the opportunity to expand on skills I learned in the one-credit writing class with Tom Herman in Spring 2015, when we created a program evaluation for the Feminist Research Justice Symposium itself. This work not only offers insights and an expanded understanding of the workings of non-profit organizations like the ones I used to work for, but also helps me to build skills and knowledge that will be directly useful to me in any work involving non-profit organizations or program evaluation that I engage in once I have completed my

Master's at SDSU. It has really been a great opportunity, and I'm looking forward to presenting the final project and report at the coming Symposium in 2016. I am also really thrilled by how the Symposium in general and this project in particular allows graduate students to connect the work they're doing and skills they're learning as students with the broader community; I think the Symposium builds a wonderful and necessary bridge between the academic and research communities and local organizations and projects. Participating as a researcher has been a very positive experience for me, and I would highly recommend it to other interested students.