Exhibit Content Outline for Adults Visiting with Teens

Note: This exhibition contains explicit material that may be challenging for younger visitors and may be disturbing or triggering for other visitors. Please exercise judgment in deciding whether to enter the gallery or bring others into this space. Visitors are welcome to exit the exhibit at any time.

Before Entering the Exhibit

Please review these main ideas below for yourself and with your teen(s) before entering the exhibit.

What is sexual assault? Building on the "Consent" activities in the lobby, explain the basic definition of sexual assault. When someone intentionally harms your body, that's called assault. "Sexual assault" is sexual contact that perpetrators choose to make without the victim's affirmative consent. (You can learn more about consent in the lobby display.) Sexual assault is a crime. People often don’t feel comfortable talking about sexual assault, which makes it more difficult to discuss it with someone else. Sexual assault is very serious and should be reported to a trusted adult. Remember, no matter what, sexual assault is NEVER the victim’s fault.

What is a survivor? People who have experienced sexual assault sometimes refer to themselves as "survivors," because they have lived through a very difficult experience. Many choose to refer to themselves as “victims” until they feel they have healed enough to identify as survivors. People who support survivors are called "allies."

What is this exhibit about? A group of sexual assault survivors called the "Sister Survivors" wanted to tell their stories. Since the Sister Survivors were assaulted by a perpetrator who was an MSU employee, they worked with the MSU Museum to tell their stories here. The goal is to help everyone understand how to prevent things like this from happening again and help people heal. Most important, the Sister Survivors want to remind every survivor they are not alone. This is a story about people dealing with a very difficult situation and supporting each other.

Please use the exhibit outline below to decide which areas of the exhibit you will experience with your teen(s). Sections marked with “*” include descriptions of abuse or trauma.

Front of Gallery (Sections 1-4)

*1. Something Happened: Talks about the more than 20 years of abuse committed by a doctor working at/with MSU, USA Gymnastics, and the U.S. Olympic team. The abuse was inflicted on kids as young as six years old.

2. Institutional Failures: Talks about the lack of oversight, people who knew and did not act, and lack of proper follow-up at Michigan State University and other places that allowed the abuse to continue without consequence.
*3. Speaking Out and Demanding Truth:* The Sister Survivors show the power of speaking out about sexual assault and abuse in general. Describes the first media coverage and legal suits from 2016. This public information helped survivors to realize they were not alone. Includes quotes from survivors' public statements during the sentencing phase of the perpetrator’s trials.

4. **Words Matter:** How people talk about sexual assault and survivors matters. Some MSU alumni and fans have chosen not to wear Spartan items until MSU changes the way it uses language to describe abuse, works more effectively to help prevent abuse, and reforms their practices.

**Back of Gallery (Sections 5-11)**

5. **Sexual Violence by the Numbers:** Shows statistics about sexual assault in the United States

6. **Trees as Witnesses:** Tells the story of the teal bows and ribbons tied to more than 200 trees on the campus of MSU. Each ribbon honored the heroism of a Sister Survivor, with either her name or victim number (for those who chose not to have their names be public).

7. **Transformations:** Many Sister Survivors are working to transform themselves and the institutions and systems around us. They also cope with life’s stresses in their private lives as they deal with hardship that was not their fault.

8. **Advocacy and Activism:** Many Sister Survivors work to educate the public, fight for legal and administrative changes at MSU and elsewhere, and create a better world.

9. **Global Efforts:** The Sister Survivors’ struggle is part of a larger social movement (such as #MeToo and It’s On Us) in the fight against sexual violence and for human dignity worldwide.

10. **Be an Ally:** Each one of us can offer support - by being an ally or through self-care - and join in the struggle against sexual violence.

11. **It’s Not Over:** Many survivors say they have both good days and bad days, which is normal. Coping and healing take time, support, and self-care. The fight to end sexual assault and hold perpetrators and enablers accountable will continue.

**Resources Available in the Exhibit**

- Brochures about how to recognize signs of sexual abuse
- Sexual assault hotline numbers
- Information about organizations that provide support and services for survivors
- Information about how to respond when someone tells about abuse