Rebels and Natives:

How Columbine and Other Mass Shooting Survivors Aided A Tribal Community After Tragedy Struck

Sherrie Lawson, Director of Development, The Rebels Project
Hedi Bogda, Attorney
Patricia Lenzi, Chief Judge, Cedarville Rancheria

TRIGGER WARNING:

LEAVE THE ROOM, TAKE A BREAK IF YOU NEED IT
The Rebels Project
Video

Our Tragedies
The Rebels Project Video

Heather Martin
Columbine Survivor

• Columbine HS shooting incident
• Heather’s experience
Sherrie Lawson
Washington Navy Yard Survivor

- Navy Yard shooting incident
- My experience

Judge Lenzi
Cedarville Rancheria Survivor

- Cedarville Rancheria shooting incident
- Chief Judge
- First day, first hearing
- My experience
Hedi Bogda
Cedarville Rancheria Survivor

• Cedarville Rancheria shooting incident
• Tribal attorney and judge
• Attorney for Cedarville
  • How I came to work there
• My experience

A Moment of Reflection

What tragedies have you experienced?
Our Injuries

Heather Martin
Columbine Aftermath

- Heather’s injuries
- Heather’s isolation
  - PTSD
Sherrie Lawson
Washington Navy Yard Aftermath

- How the incident shaped my aftermath
- Injuries
  - Isolation
  - PTSD
  - Depression
  - Anxiety

Cedarville Rancheria

- The Cedarville Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe of Northern Paiute people in Modoc County, California, about 30 miles south of the Oregon border.
- Cedarville Rancheria is 26 acres in Cedarville, CA
- Tribal office in Alturas and Cedarville, CA
Cedarville Rancheria

Judge Lenzi
Cedarville Rancheria Aftermath

• Judicial fairness = impartiality = isolation
  • How did this affect my healing process?
  • Isolation
• My injuries
  • PTSD
Immediate Aftermath

- Loss of Tribal Council/Tribal Administrator
- Creation of a new tribal government
- CPS hearing
- Dealing with Press, Investigators and Prosecutor
- No time to heal/grieve
- No psychological or emotional support
PTSD Symptoms

• Re-experiencing
  • Spontaneous memories, recurring dreams and flashbacks

• Avoidance
  • Avoiding distress memories, thoughts, feelings and reminders

• Negative cognitions and moods
  • Persistence sense of blame, estrangement, markedly diminished interest in activities, inability to remember key aspects of the event (other memories), depression and anxiety

• Arousal
  • Aggressive, reckless, or self-destructive behavior; sleep disturbances and hypervigilance

A Moment of Reflection

What injuries do you have from incidents?
“The definition of normal changed on that day.”

(parent)

Our Path to Finding The Rebels Project “TRP”
Growing Survivor Community

- The Need
  - Columbine survivor community
  - Aurora movie theater shooting
  - Feeling helpless, wanting to reach out
    - Desire to support through similar shared experiences

Sherrie’s Healing/Recovery Journey

- Work challenges/Relocation
- Mini-stroke
- Financial devastation
- Search for support
- Joining TRP
Judge Lenzi Healing/Recovery Journey

• 18 months of isolation, fears, nightmares
  • Who might understand me?
  • Can’t talk to Cedarville Survivors
  • How can I keep it from affecting my impartiality?
• Facebook
  • Aurora

Hedi Bogda’s Healing/Recovery Journey

• My relationship with friends and family
• Employment issues
• Physical Health
• Mental health/ongoing stress
• Feelings of mistrust/survivor’s guilt
• Multiple losses in a short period of time
• Lack of resources and support until Rebels’ Project
A Moment of Reflection

What path brings you to this session and TRP?
Our Experiences with TRP

The Rebels Project’s Beginning

- Founding TRP
- Fundraising
- Outreach
- Navigating media requests
- First major event
Sherrie & TRP

- First time connecting with other survivors
- Glamour magazine article
- Joining TRP leadership team
- Self-care in the midst of supporting other survivors

Judge Lenzi & TRP

- Finding others who “get it” means I am never alone
  - Common experiences after separate incidents
- Learning to live with my “new normal”
Hedi & TRP

• First time connecting with other Survivors.
• Knowing that I have others that truly understand what I experienced and what I am still going through is incomparable.
• Yearly meetings in Denver and Facebook posts.
• Development of close connections, especially those who experienced work-related shooting incidents.
• Downside – Their triggers become mine and I don’t feel safe.

Heather Martin & TRP

• Heather’s healing/recovery today
• Current resources offered by TRP
• TRP Vision and future goals
Our TRP-Facilitated Healing

Sherrie’s Journey Continues

• Pre-shooting Sherrie vs. Post-shooting Sherrie
• Healing/Recovery status
  • Mental/Physical Health
  • Work and Career
Judge Lenzi’s Journey Continues

• Learning to live with my “new normal”
  • Feeling strong enough to share my experience and help others
  • TRP inspires me to help

Hedi’s Journey Continues

• The new me...
• What has helped me?
  • My family, friends and employers
  • Rebel’s Project
  • Self Care (physical and mental)
  • My work to prevent and mitigate incidents like mine (Unified Solutions, National Mass Violence and Victimization Resource Center)
• Relapse in recovery
  • PTSD symptoms are back
  • Emergency room visit/fainting episodes
  • Could not attend the TRP visit to Cedarville
  • Hesitation to go to annual TRP reunion
A Moment of Reflection

What will you do to facilitate your healing?
Thank you!

Questions?

Remember to fill out evaluations