

Staff Editorial

We need to teach boys about consent

The #MeToo movement has brought an undeniable increase in accountability for sexual assault perpetrators.

Bill Cosby is currently serving a three to ten year sentence for his crimes. Larry Nassar will serve a minimum of 100 years in prison. And Harvey Weinstein could face life in prison, though his trial is ongoing.

However, sexual assault still remains a prevalent and largely unsolved issue, which is why groups like the proposed sexual assault prevention club are necessary.

Conversations about the issue of sexual assault are particularly important in a high school setting since sexual violence disproportionately impacts young women.

According to RAINN, "Females ages 16-19 are 4 times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault."

This is not to say that sexual assault only affects females, because that certainly isn't true. However, without invalidating the experience of men who have been victims of sexual violence, it is important to note that women make up the highest percentage of sexual assault survivors.

The #MeToo movement is a critical step in the right direction when it comes to addressing perpetrators. However, survivors are still ignored or brushed aside, as was the case with Christine Blasey Ford. Also, America's legal system still fails to properly deal with sexual assault cases, whether it be the national backlog of hundreds of thousands of untested rape kits, or lenient punishment for assault.

The way we talk about preventing sexual assault still has not changed as much as it needs to; unfortunately, these conversations lead to blaming women for their actions.

Women are told never to walk home alone at night, to watch their drinks at parties and bars, and to dress more conservatively so that they won't be assaulted.

Women are also taught how to defend themselves. At our school, classes like Fit Female teach young women to be aware of, avoid, and fight back against perpetrators.

These lessons and types of classes are important and necessary. They can provide tools for avoiding or stopping potentially unsafe situations. However, along with information about preventing assault, our society and our schools need to place equal importance on emphasizing that it is absolutely unacceptable for someone to sexually exploit another human being.

While consent is talked about in our coed health classes, this conversation should stretch beyond a single class that we take for a semester during freshman and sophomore year.

The root cause of sexual assault is not that women dress too provocatively or are "asking for it." The problem is that our society upholds rape culture, a culture where rape is pervasive and normalized as a result of societal attitudes towards gender and sexuality. Even the President of the United States has been accused by 24 women of sexual misconduct without any backlash; there has yet to be a proper investigation or any consequences.

It is also frustrating that women need to be taught preventative measures, because these measures fail to address the source of the problem. Teaching men that it's absolutely unacceptable to touch women without their permission would more directly address the issue.

And part of the issue is that a lot of men don't necessarily know what consent looks like. According to a 2015 survey conducted by the Washington Post, 20 percent of college aged men believe someone has consented to sex as long as they don't say no, and a whopping 50 percent said that someone taking off their own clothes signals consent.

Both of these actions alone should most definitely not be considered consent. Consent has to be freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific.

In order to make any progress and decrease instances of sexual assault, most of the change needs to come from males. Men need to recognize that women standing up for their bodies and against sexual assault does not mean that it's a "scary time for young men in America," as President Donald Trump believes.

The #MeToo movement has made a revolutionary step towards holding abusers accountable for their actions and crimes. But this conversation needs to be extended and continued, as is the goal of the proposed sexual assault prevention club.

Hopefully with clubs such as this, one day we can live in a world where rather than reacting and punishing after the fact, these horrible crimes do not even happen in the first place.

What success should really look like



by Alex Rubinstein

At New Trier, we are constantly inundated with messaging that equates success with elite colleges or athletic achievements.

Even the surrounding community contributes to this culture. Just drive through Wilmette—streets are named after Ivy League colleges. Instead of working to create a culture in which failure is seen as an opportunity to learn, we fixate on being "successful."

There is a standard that we feel we have to live up to, whether that means getting A's, or getting into a well-known college.

We are terrified of failing because we believe that we have to be as close to perfection as possible in order to achieve our goals. However, it is our failures that give us tools such as resilience or determination that we need to be successful.

Learning how to bounce back from mistakes might be more important in order to be successful than breezing through high school without any bumps in the road. However, sometimes the structure

of New Trier prevents us from appreciating failure.

Students are familiar with stress. There is enormous pressure to perform well in extracurriculars and to have a high GPA. We are taught from a young age that failure is something to be feared. We believe that we have to be perfect, or as close to it as possible at all times, and this is a factor in the stress that we constantly feel.

We are so focused on success that we often overlook the beauty of failure.

Failure gives us experience. When we fail, we reflect, and we fix mistakes that we made in order to improve. If we never experience failure in high school, we never learn to recalibrate to avoid making mistakes in the future.

Often, it is just as important to know what doesn't work in order to ultimately succeed. Thomas Edison failed nearly 10,000 times while trying to make an electric light bulb. With each failure, he gained the knowledge of one more avenue that didn't work. It was that accumulated knowledge, developed from nearly 10,000 failed attempts, that ultimately led to his success.

Even Google celebrates failure in the workplace. At Google, employees nominate themselves each month to win a monkey called "Whoops." Google employees share their biggest mistake that they made that month, mistakes that often cost Google millions. Then, the person

who made the biggest mistake wins and gets to keep Whoops the stuffed monkey on their desk for the next month. While this might seem humiliating, at Google, it is almost seen as an honor to win Whoops. This approach also enables Google's employees to listen to and to learn from their coworkers' and their own mistakes each month.

At New Trier, success is constantly highlighted which creates pressure to live up to ok standards. We always talk about getting A's, good test scores, athletic recruitment, and the leads in the school plays. We never talk about getting cut from a play or sport, failing a test, which contributes to the mindset where students feel that they constantly need to be perfect.

However, we should be talking about these things, because the reality is that many students are probably going through something similar. Instead of always trying to ignore or to hide our mistakes, we need to embrace and learn from them. This shift is not going to take place overnight.

In order to normalize failure, New Trier, and the community as a whole, needs to redefine success. Success comes in many forms. It is not just getting into a certain college, or having a perfect GPA, or being recruited as an athlete.

The reality is that failure is a part of life. We, as a school and a community, need to work on embracing it.

Don't dwell on nostalgia as the 2010s end



by Cleo Pool

2019 is coming to an end and with it the 2010 decade is too.

Over the past ten years, our lives have changed significantly. Back in 2010 when we were in elementary school, we faced daily challenges like tying our shoes, counting to 50, and trying to find our parents in the grocery store.

Now as the decade comes to a close, Instagram and Twitter are flooded with nostalgia posts. Videos that have mashups of songs, clips from shows we watched on Disney or Nickelodeon, or objects from 2010-2019 are unavoidable in our feeds. I understand it's sad to say goodbye to this decade, because as we say goodbye to the 10s we leave our childhood with it.

Nostalgia, a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, can be such a fun feeling. Trust me, memory lane is probably my favorite place. It can be so entertaining and somewhat therapeutic to go through old photos or clean out your room and find your Nintendo DS.

It reminds us of a happier and blissful time. A time when maybe life was simpler and more straight forward.

Looking back, we have been through a lot in these ten years. In the Obama presidency alone we faced the Boston bombings of 2010,

the Black Lives Matter movement emerged in 2013, in 2015 same-sex marriage became legal, and the Pulse nightclub shooting occurred in 2016.

During the Trump era, many aspects of daily life have changed. The way we take in news and information completely changed due to the rise in 'fake news'. Twitter became a place for more than just memes, now it is how typical Americans get news from the president.

And now in 2019, we remember the good parts of this decade. Memes like annoying orange from 2011, the dress of 2015, and of course Harambe in 2016, made us the people we are today. This is what our nostalgia looks like.

But I think there is a big difference between healthy and unhealthy nostalgia. Healthy nostalgia can be a good thing, it allows us to remember the good things and reflect on our part. Unhealthy nostalgia is when we get stuck in the past and start to make something seem better than it actually was.

Don't get me wrong, the 2010s were definitely fun for me. How could they not be? I would kill to be 10 again where the hardest decision I had to make is what show to watch after school. I don't want to feel forced nostalgia.

I understand with this nostalgia comes some fear because change isn't always easy. Some may feel nervous about 2020 and with good reason. Think about what life was like 10 years ago and now imagining how different life will be 10 years in

the future can seem very unclear.

If you are nervous, just think about the people in 1999. People genuinely thought the world was gonna end. At least we know, knock on wood, that once the clock strikes midnight on Dec. 31 the world won't end. Fingers crossed.

To me this nostalgia concept is odd. Here we are 16-18 years old living with this longing. It creeps me out I'm not gonna lie. Why do we obsess over the past like this?

I mean sure it's sad, we are about to hit adulthood as the decade changes. But why are we making this a sad thing? Personally I feel like this calls for a celebration.

Think of all that can occur over the next ten years. We have the whole world ahead of us. We have the perfect opportunity to go off and do something that we are passionate about. Come 2020 we get to live the lives we have always dreamed of.

Yet we would rather sit in our self-made sad nostalgia.

I know that my view on nostalgia isn't popular, and I understand why. But I just want to remind you that we have many more decades to come so let's not get caught up in this one.

When we dwell on the past we forget to focus on the present. Although that sounds cheesy, it's important to remember. Right now you miss what it was like to be a kid, but ten years from now we will miss what it was like to be a teenager. So focus on the time we have now, and the future we have ahead of us.

Let's make it the roaring 20s all over again.

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The New Trier News

Published Fridays during the school year by the students of New Trier Township High School, 385 Winnetka Avenue, Illinois 60093.

Correspondence may be directed to the New Trier News Office, Room 011, or by calling (847) 784-2278.

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