

First U.S. Conference on Sibling Sexual Trauma and Abuse Brings Survivors Together to Break the Silence

5WAVES' inaugural "Breaking the Silence" conference at Long Island University on June 23, 2026 was the first event of its kind in the United States.

LONG ISLAND, NY, UNITED STATES, July 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On June 23, 2026, 120 researchers, survivors, caregivers, clinicians, and nonprofit leaders gathered at Long Island University's Post campus for [Sibling Sexual Trauma and Abuse: Breaking the Silence](#), the first conference in the United States dedicated entirely to sibling sexual trauma and abuse (SSTA). Hosted by the nonprofit [5WAVES](#), the experience brought a long-silenced subject into open, collective conversation — and made space for a community that has too often been isolated.



WORLDWIDE AWARENESS, VOICE, EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Nonprofit 5WAVES held first ever conference in the U.S. devoted to sibling sexual trauma & abuse.

“

We [5WAVES] exist to confront and to heal sibling sexual trauma and abuse — and to do it by centering the people who know it firsthand. Survivors. Parents. And the family members who walk beside us...”

*Jane Epstein, Co-Founder,
5WAVES*

The event was unique in uniting survivors and family members, clinicians and advocates, and researchers and students, to focus on a form of abuse that remains widely misunderstood and underdiscussed. The conference featured 20 talks and panels on a variety of themes, including healing, intrafamilial trauma, caregiver support, writing your story, prevention, advocacy, and finding your voice.

Jane Epstein, co-founder of 5WAVES, opened the conference. She reflected on what the gathering represents for the movement. She shared, “We [5WAVES] exist to confront and to heal sibling sexual trauma and

abuse — and to do it by centering the people who know it firsthand. Survivors. Parents. And the family members who walk beside us through all of it.”

Maria Socolof, MS, co-founder of 5WAVES, shared, "A few years ago there weren't any resources available for survivors or families...Every time we encountered someone, they would tell us they thought they were the only one. Our community kept growing and we knew we had to do an in-person event."

The keynote, "Telling Our Stories: Shaping Change Together," was delivered by Risa Shaw, PhD, author of *Not Child's Play: An Anthology on Brother-Sister Incest*. Risa said, "A moment of liberation occurs when survivors realize that our experiences and healing work give us something to offer others — solidarity, the possibility of helping another person heal, and a desire to prevent more abuse. An important act, arising out of that desire, is speaking out. Speaking up and speaking out changes everything. It changes our cells, something in our bones; it re-rights us when we wobble. Speaking out shakes up our view of ourselves, our view of others, our view of the world. Speaking up re-organizes our world. Speaking up re-organizes the world outside of us."

For many who attended, the day was less a conference than a homecoming. Attendees described arriving uncertain and leaving changed — better informed, less alone, and newly determined to keep speaking.

One survivor wrote of finally aligning with a moment he had awaited for decades:

"I'm doing the work. I'm not alone. I'm taking the power back. I'm not broken. I spoke up. I rewrote myself...It was a day I'd been waiting to align with for years. I was among other survivors, and I didn't want it to end..." — Conference attendee and survivor

Another attendee captured the spirit shared across the room:

"I walked away with more information than I had when I first arrived. It was amazing, inspiring, informative, empowering, and helpful." — Conference attendee

The conference could not have taken place without the generous donations of vendors and sponsors. The major sponsors were Not Child's Play (seed money spark sponsor), Cielo Consulting (event planning sponsor), and Saprea (conference wellness sponsor). [View all speakers and sponsors here.](#)

View video recap and learn more at 5WAVES.org/conference. For resources for anyone affected by SSTA, go to siblingsexualtrauma.com. To donate at 5WAVES.org/donate.

About 5WAVES

5WAVES, Inc. is a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to confronting, healing, and preventing sibling sexual trauma and abuse. In all communications, the nonprofit should be written as 5WAVES—as WAVES is an acronym for Worldwide Awareness, Voice, Education and Support. Learn more at 5WAVES.org. Follow on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

About the Breaking the Silence Conference

Sibling Sexual Trauma and Abuse: Breaking the Silence is the first conference in the United States devoted entirely to sibling sexual trauma and abuse (SSTA). Hosted and organized by 5WAVES, this pioneering event was held on June 23, 2026 at LIU-Post. It brought together survivors, caregivers, therapists, social workers, researchers, students, and advocates to break the silence and heal the wounds of sibling sexual trauma and abuse.

Nubia DuVall Wilson

Cielo Consulting

+1 646-357-0428

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