

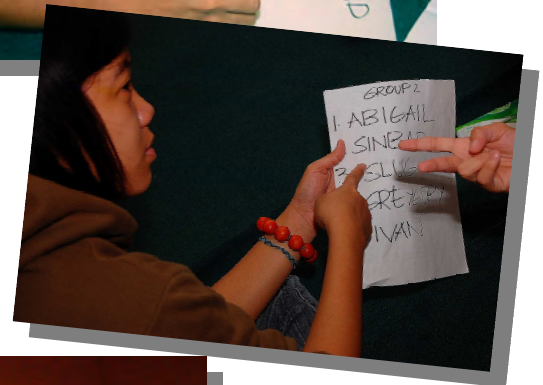
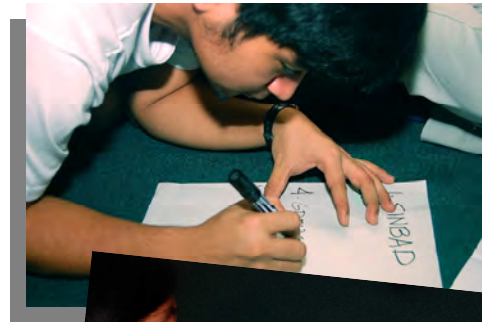
Sounds of the Soul

Talking about Child Sexual Abuse with the Deaf Community



If gestures could produce voices, then the place aptly called “the contemplation room” where we had our CSAP session for 13 selected Deaf students from De La Salle College of Saint Benilde organized by the School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies last March 12-13, would have been filled with audible laughter, debates and conversations. Yet, even with the absence of “sound”, it still felt that I can still understand what they were trying to convey thru the emotions they were projecting, while the interpreter transformed these messages into something more cognitive. For two days, it was like listening to the sounds of their souls.

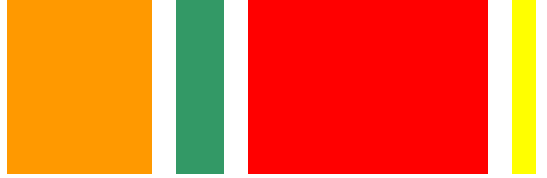
The issue of Child Sexual Abuse revolves around the silence surrounding it. This silence stems from many factors, but can be highly attributed to power, or lack thereof. Vulnerability plays a decisive factor in being a victim of this crime, and admittedly, the participants of the session told me that they truly believe that deaf children are highly vulnerable to this kind of abuse. Although most of them are young adults already, they expressed that they have yet to encounter concepts which were discussed during the CSAP session. During the first day, an activity revealed that in the event wherein a girl was “forced” to be sexually molested because of wearing a revealing dress (The Alligator River Story), majority of them decided that it would be the fault of the girl. But after undergoing the 2 day session, attitudes changed, and they decided that it was after all, the offender’s fault.

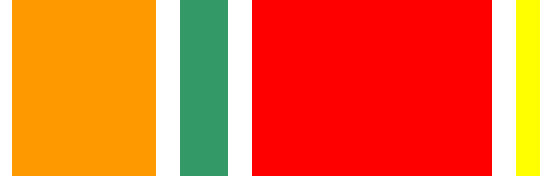


Watching “Daughter” and “A Good Boy” being interpreted and seeing that it had an effect on them despite the limitations the animations had for this particular sector made me realize how important it is for Stairway to reach out and make our materials, particularly the animations, our trainings and the creative way of advocacy, more accessible for deaf children, their parents, and the deaf community in general.









“Break the Silence” spelled out in Sign Language by students and faculty from De La Salle College of Saint Benilde.

The activity is hoped to be the start of a long collaboration between Stairway and SDEAS in order to further the advocacy on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention for the Deaf Community.

Article prepared by Ysrael C. Diloy, one of SFI’s Advocacy and Training Officers.

Special thanks go out to all SDEAS Faculty and Staff who made this activity possible