

My name is Rachael Chamberlin-Bee. I am the founder and president of Safe & Sound Consulting, soon to be LLC. We are a nonprofit educational consultancy that takes a two-pronged method to ending the Troubled Teen Industry, both by providing resources and referrals to concerned family and community members who are looking to remove teens from abusive institutions, and to providing research, testimonials, and alternatives to parents who are looking to send their children to troubled teen facilities.

Some background about myself: I am 29 years old and currently work in insurance marketing. I have a BA in Sociology with a minor in Philosophy from Hendrix College, class of 2014. I obtained paralegal certification through an online program with Duke university after moving to Oregon in 2015 and worked in high-asset, high-conflict family law for a couple of years before ultimately moving on to less emotionally-taxing employment. I am also a Troubled Teen Industry survivor from 2007 - 2010.

I would describe my teenage self as a mall rat. I cut the occasional class, had consensual and protected sex with my age-appropriate boyfriend, and struggled with self-harm. Prior to my freshman year of high school, I had attended a fancy private school at which I did not fit in and where I was bullied mercilessly. I was also the victim of an incident of childhood sexual abuse, as well as date rape. The bullying and trauma, combined with my mother's verbal and emotional abuse, led me to experiment with self-harm. I never had suicidal ideations as a teen or cut myself deeply. I just saw it as a release valve. My parents were worried about my grades and had been convinced by a number of "professionals" that I was literally going to die. So they sent me away. It is important to note that now, I know countless women whose stories mirror mine, except they did not get sent away, and not only did they live to adulthood, they are thriving.

10 days before my 15th birthday, my parents sent me to a now shuttered therapeutic boarding school called the King George School in rural Vermont, where a dear friend of mine was raped by a staff member in her bed, and which lost its accreditation to operate as a school but continued to do so anyway for a number of months. After still not fitting the mold of what they wanted me to be after a year at this bizarre program, I was sent to a wilderness program called Second Nature in the high desert of Utah, where I lived in the dirt for 4 months, not receiving anything even approaching an education, and being forced to eat uncooked food, as well as both experiencing and witnessing medical neglect. After reaching the highest phase of the wilderness program, I was sent to another therapeutic boarding school, the still operational John Dewey Academy, located in Great Barrington, MA. The scars from my fourteen months at this place are permanent and devastating. I cannot think about this place without experiencing cold sweats and full body shakes. Thinking about the things that went on there makes me literally nauseous.

I have been diagnosed with both PTSD and C-PTSD (Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a common diagnosis for victims of prolonged child abuse and neglect) and prescribed medications for symptom management that are usually reserved for combat veterans. Because of the dangerous and clinically unproven methods of this program and the diet they suggested to a completely average sized 16-year-old me, I had to spend the entire summer after my

Freshman year of college in an intensive outpatient program for eating disorders. I was afraid I was going to die this time. The therapist I was given at this intensive outpatient facility (not a TTI program, but a non-residential recovery program for adults with eating disorders under close supervision of a physician located in my hometown) was horrified to hear about what had happened to me in these TTI programs and suggested that I name my then-critical anorexia after somebody from JDA. I was 19 years old, 5'4, and 97 pounds. My hair was falling out and my body was constantly numb and tingly. Because a clinician at the John Dewey Academy instructed me to eat 1,350 calories a day.

The John Dewey Academy was founded by a man who has been accused of being both a sex offender and a cult leader, named Tom Bratter, now deceased. He informed me as well as all of my peers that I would die alone on my back with a dick in my ass and then expelled me from the program after five months of wearing a sign around my neck declaring myself a waste of time and money. To prove I wanted to be there, I was forced to sleep outside with no sleeping bag or bedding, for no more than 6 hours a night and deprived of cooked food. I was forced to perform manual labor all day, and when not doing that, I was to be sitting cross legged in view of everyone who may pass, unable to lean on anything, including my own body. I was then 17 years old, almost 18, and had already been diagnosed with some back issues. During this last therapeutic consequence, I was not allowed to do school work. TTI programs like to withhold access to education as a punishment. If a teen chose to do this on his or her own, it would be truancy.

I was sent back to the wilderness while my parents, who had threatened to let me be homeless after not being good enough for JDA, tried to figure out what to do with me. The educational consultant they worked with, who had been affiliated with JDA at the time of sexual assault allegations, lied to my parents and told them that there was a program, Vista, where I would live with the family of a therapist and only go to the RTC for school hours. This plan sounded great to my parents, who wanted me to be in college the next year as though none of this had ever happened. However, when I arrived at Vista at Dimple Dell Canyon in Sandy, UT, after having been transported from the wilderness and allowed to take a shower at a truck stop, given a Subway sandwich, and not permitted to speak with my parents, it was revealed that there were no "day treatment" beds available and I would be doing the regular program. The regular program also withheld access to school for the first couple of weeks of the program. My father was so infuriated by this bait and switch that he threatened to pull me from the program and let me come home and get a GED. Then a day treatment bed miraculously opened up to me. It was made clear to the entire program's staff by my parents that I was only there to finish what was required of me to get a high school diploma, as no normal school would take me now, given the absolute lack of education I'd received during the previous years. This made me an enemy to everyone at the program: RTC girls who were jealous I "didn't have to do the program", fellow day treatment students who resented that I "didn't have to suffer the way they did", staff who didn't get to abuse me the way they'd like, and the therapist who wanted to keep me institutionalized.

All I wanted was to go to college, but this was not without its own set of challenges. Most schools wouldn't even consider me because I didn't have enough credits. Research was nearly impossible, as I was only allowed to use the computer for limited amounts of time, and with the palpable resentment of all other students who were not allowed to do so. I managed to get myself into a good school, which I graduated from in 4.5 years with a 3.0 GPA. I was Hendrix College's first graduate who had been through a TTI program, a point that was made to me in my interview as an 18 year old prospective student on a sanctioned college visit. Most TTI alumni are too traumatized by the abuse and neglect they experienced at the hands of these institutions to finish a four year program, to hold steady and gainful employment, and to maintain safe and healthy relationships. This is not because they were broken teens who grew into broken adults, but because they were kids who needed love but instead were tortured and indoctrinated and are now unable to function at the levels promised by these programs and expected by society. At 29, I do not know a single grown woman who has emerged from a TTI program and NOT fallen victim to intimate partner violence. This is both because we have been conditioned to believe that abuse is a sign of care, and because we believe that we are worthy of it.

I have a good job. I make decent money. I live in a nice apartment in a nice neighborhood in the city of my choice. I have a husband and friends who love me. But I have nightmares more nights than not. I am incapable of discussing my time in these institutions without having panic attacks. Learned helplessness has plagued me through my adult life. I have allowed myself to be abused on more than one occasion because of the conditioning I received in TTI facilities. At least once a week, I wake up and have to remind myself that I am a grown woman in my own home, and not a helpless child out in the woods or behind the walls of a glorified torture chamber. I believe that regulation and oversight will go a long way in preventing more children from enduring what I endured, and for that I will fight endlessly.