



Some attendees showed their opposition to Lifeline's anti-abortion event on campus yesterday.

PHOTO STEVEN HAWDS/THE URGESEY

Pro-life Silent No More campaign comes to campus

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On Wednesday, March 19, UBC Lifeline and the National Campus Life Network (NCLN) — a network that supports pro-life clubs such as Lifeline — hosted the Silent No More campaign on campus. Four speakers talked about their experiences with abortion for three hours outside Buchanan A.

"It brought about a significant change in my life ... in college and in my relationships. I began to smoke and drink and do drugs," said Dale Barr, one of the speakers at the event.

Angelina Streenstra said she lived in a prison of guilt, self-hatred and depression. "I tried to start over... I changed my name, my address, my friends, my job ... but nothing could erase the memory of the abortion," she said.

"I didn't talk about it," said Elizabeth Sutcliffe. "I felt like I couldn't talk about it. So now I break my silence to give other women the courage to tell their stories and find healing in finally speaking out."

Anastasia Pearse, one of the organizers from NCLN, said the Silent No More campaign is being brought to seven different campuses in B.C. According to Pearse, the goals of the campaign are to educate the public about the aftermath of abortion and to reach out to men and women who may be hurting from the experience.

"It's important to know that there's hope after abortion. We see a need to spread this message on campus, and this campaign is a beautiful way to do that," said Pearse.

Some UBC students disagreed. "They definitely have the right to

speaking and to have their opinions heard, but I think their techniques [such as] the loudspeakers ... are a little invasive," said Sierra Weiner, a second-year English major. "Some women have regrets and for sure, abortion is not a great experience for anyone, but to make that a platform for nobody having a choice is simply not valid."

The AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre was also present at the demonstration. SASC invited people to paint a pro-choice community mural and handed out buttons that said "support not shame."

"We're here to convey the politics of pro-choice as a movement that supports bodily autonomy and the individual person's choice in terms of what's right for their own body. We're not necessarily pro-life, we're here to celebrate choice," said Anisa Mottahed, manager of SASC.

This was one of two events that will be hosted this year by Lifeline in replacement of the Genocide Awareness Project, which has been at UBC annually since 1999.

Their second event, Choice Chain, will take place once per week during the last two weeks of school. Members of Lifeline and the NCLN will hold up photos of aborted fetuses and talk to passers-by about abortion.

Lifeline president Kiera van der Sande said that Lifeline thought Choice Chain was a more "focused" event for the group to host.

However, according to Lifeline vice-president John Flores, that wasn't the main reason for this year's change. "Our old president left, and we were kind of in limbo for a bit of the year," Flores said. "We didn't realize how much logistically would have to go into it, so it was our bad."

"I think we'll have to re-evaluate after how this year goes. I wouldn't say it's a definite no that we'll never do [GAP] again," said van der Sande.

Pro-choice groups did not think the changes were sufficient.

"I think still showing the images is triggering," said Mottahed. "I'm sure there's multiple other ways to engage in a conversation from a pro-life stance, and this is just not necessarily a very empathetic or caring way."

Evelyn Cranston, an environmental geography student and member of the group UBC Activists against GAP, said "What it comes down to is that [Lifeline] basically want to spread these feelings of shame and oppression ... to what is already a more vulnerable population at UBC and that's why I don't think there's any place for them." [@](#)
—With files from Sarah Bigam