



# Charlie Rogers

Herstory/CCW Fellow

We live in a world consisting of more than seven billion people, and although the differences among us are vast, we do share many similarities. One similarity in particular, is that each and every one of us has a story, and it is in the story where lives come to life and life stories effect change. For the past nearly 20 years, I have fought social justice issues by teaching individuals how to orally tell their life stories.

I discovered the power of the lived experience while teaching communication courses at Hofstra University, St. John's University, and Farmingdale State College. Throughout my time teaching, I

worked with hundreds of activists who shared their lived experiences each for different reasons. Some reasons include effecting legislative and policy changes, increasing awareness, healing spirits, connecting to others, and giving permission to any one else to tell their own stories.

My motivation to teach others how to tell their stories stems from my own desire to share my own experiences. For the past decade, I have shared my experiences in the hopes that it would empower others and serve as a reminder that we do not have to feel or be alone. In 2010, I co-created a radio talk show titled Tender Talk Tough Topics which aired on 88.7FM WRHU. This show was partially based on my personal experience as a person of color, as a survivor of domestic abuse and child sexual abuse, and as a member of the LGBTQ community, to name a few.

Furthermore, I have been invited to be a guest speaker at events which were aimed at increasing awareness in many of the above-mentioned areas of trauma. I also facilitated weekly workshops in both the Riverhead and Yaphank Correctional Facility, The College and Community Fellowship for women who were previously incarcerated, 4T's, CK Post and Outreach.

Now I am interested in broadening my skill set by learning how to teach people to write about their lived experiences for the purpose of effecting change and fighting against the many social injustices that exist. Similar to my past experiences where it was incumbent on me to tell my own story if I was going to help others tell theirs, I would now like to work on writing my memoir to once again practice what I preach.

I am currently employed with a domestic violence/human trafficking agency (ECLI/VIBS) where I work primarily as an attorney. However, I have been fortunate

enough to be permitted the opportunity to facilitate workshops and conduct trainings for survivors of trauma. These workshops and trainings are held for the purpose of teaching survivors how to tell their stories. If given this opportunity with Herstory, I see myself facilitating memoir writing workshops for both our client survivors and our clients who are part of the re-entry program. Many of the clients that we serve, wish to share their stories in order to help others by increasing awareness within the Long Island community and beyond. Some of our clients have even been involved in the passage of New York legislation by sharing their own stories with legislators in Albany. I am confident that the Herstory training will not only compliment but will also significantly add to my arsenal in the proverbial fight for social justice and equality for all.