

November 20, 2019

Chair Williamson and Chair Prozanki, members of the committee,

My name is Roy Moore III, and I'm an Outreach Worker for Healing Hurt People in Portland. I also participated in this project.

As a young black male growing up in northeast Portland I witnessed and experienced violence at a very young age, from my older brother being shot in front of me when I was in 5th grade to my best friend being shot and killed in front of my childhood home when we were in high school. I myself was a victim of gun violence in 2005. This is a problem that has plagued my family and community for generations and that's why I do the work that I do, to be there to support someone going through similar situations that I've been through. I know what it's like to be in that most vulnerable moment when you're scared and don't know who to trust, when you're afraid of the people who are supposed to be there to help you because all they ever done in the past was harm you. I can understand and relate and that's why I feel the work I do is so important.

At Healing Hurt People, I respond to the hospital whenever a person of color comes in suffering from community violence. I'm there to support victims and their families, advocate for patients and bridge the gap between them and hospital staff. Although I love the work I do, it's unfortunate to see the victim blaming that I have witnessed a lot of times, to see black and brown people being treated like criminals instead of victims simply because the nature of their injury or because of the way they look. That bias in itself is retraumatizing and it happens far too much. I want to be there to recognize that and to call that out when I see it! I know what it like when your laying in a hospital bed and officers are asking question and hospital staff are trying to figure out how what ever happened to you happened it feels like you're being interrogated when all you want is help and a chance to heal, It's almost like you're being victimized all over again.

The trust between people in my community and the system is broken, I mean at a young age I was taught not to trust the police, the perception is that the system was created to keep us down not lift us up and I believe that prevents folks from seeking and getting the help they need. As a person who's been a victim of community violence, I had more fear around the police showing up than I did of what retaliation would look like for reporting what happened to me, like even if I call the police cause I need help, I could even go to jail. And I recognized that my whole community felt the same way. There was never trust between people of color and the police. I remember hearing stories from grandfather and his brothers about how they'd rather suffer or go without before they'd ask for help. That's because for years we feel like we're not treated with the same humanity as others, we're treated like criminals when we are victims.

Thank you for listening to our stories today.