ACT: AFFECTIVE CATHARSIS THROUGH THEATRE

Marisa Irabli

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The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.
What is ACT?

• A collaborative showcase of student-written theatre pieces with regards to raising awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault.

• Some issues that were portrayed are domestic violence in the home, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, violent crimes on campus, and the effects on the self.

• Students were able to write monologues and 2-5 person theatre pieces to raise awareness about these issues with the ultimate goal of having a cathartic experience.

• Other students were also able to perform these pieces with the same goal in mind.
What is Catharsis?

- **Definition:** The process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions.
Intellectual and Conceptual Foundations

- Psychodrama
- **Catharsis**
- Using theatre as catharsis
- Music therapy
- Dance therapy
- Movement
- The meaning and importance of color
- Light

- How these different types of therapies that were researched were used in ACT.
Affective Catharsis through Theatre

November 8 @ 8pm at Cabaret Theatre
Raising Awareness

• The importance of talking about a taboo subject – domestic violence and sexual assault
• Allows possible survivors, victims, or allies to know they are not alone and there is help
• DV/SA facts of index cards
• Information is power
The Importance of Referrals

- Let people know they are not alone.
- Rutgers facilities
  - CAPS
  - VPVA
  - WOAH
  - WAC
  - Dating violence
  - Sexual assault
  - Women Aware

- Private, individualized folders to do with what they wish
What I Learned

- There are a few key things to have when doing a social-justice based action project –
  - Passion
  - Knowledge
  - A backup plan
  - Flexibility
  - Drive
  - A support system
  - Tenacity
What Made ACT All Worth It

• “Let me tell you, writing this piece was extremely cathartic. When I first started writing, I didn't think I would become as emotional as I did... Something about the idea of it just struck me to the core, and... I validated my own existence to myself, and I dealt with some feelings about the past that I knew I always carried with me but didn't realize how strongly they affected me.”

• “… the production was great. The issues discussed were very deep and brought up awareness of important topics that people face.”

• “Thank YOU so much for being awesome and providing an outlet for students and their friends/family to think and talk about really important subject matter that rarely gets the attention it needs!! It really means a lot to me and everyone else involved who came to see the show that you organized such an incredible night for voices to be heard.”

• “I made my first CAPS appointment after seeing your show.”


