

Problems encountered during this year

Several of our group attended the SNAP annual conference in August of 2024. This was the first conference that was being held following the unexpected resignation of Becky Ianni. Becky had been the primary conference coordinator for around a decade and she had done a marvelous job and enlisted a significant help from both within and outside of SNAP. Her sudden resignation, that was acrimonious, left a lot of despair among the leaders and raised a lot of concerns. Becky had expressed to many of us that she felt her resignation was forced and there has been scant evidence provided to the contrary. During the conference the following concerns were noted. These concerns were ultimately communicated to the board approximately one month after the conference.

- 1) Poor planning
 - a. Hotel had serious issues (broken elevators, bugs, conf room distant from rooms, few restaurants were walkable) and was far from any airport (past planning took all this into account using professionals)
 - b. Many of the standard protocols and feedback were missing
 - i. Comment sheets (breakout sessions or total conference) not available
 - ii. No quiet room. An absolute necessity for survivors
 - iii. No Survivor support sessions. Critical to running a conference for survivors especially first timers
 - iv. Breakout talks were often not related to survivor support
- 2) Leaders' meeting was devoid of board members with exception of Dan on the zoom phone during his presentation. Then he left. We could not interact with him except by crossing the room. Many good ideas and concerns tossed out by leaders but they were not being heard.
- 3) Dan McNevin stated that SNAP's mission was to religious abuse survivors exclusively. This was news to most people in the room and contradicts the mission statement in the bylaws and the 990s
- 4) Dan's financial report was unreadable and did not follow any standard practices
- 5) Dan made claim that no conference made money – this is certifiably wrong. Past conferences always made money according to reports prepared by the accountants. Dan was redefining profit and loss which seemed intended to discredit the previous conference organizer.
- 6) Sexual harassment by new attendee on Curtis and possibly one other person. This harassment was reported to board and nothing was done. We believe that the harassing person was a big time donor to SNAP. Ultimately Curtis was terminated from SNAP. (over the next few months, Curtis did write disparaging remarks to the SNAP board but this

was done on his own accord and members of our group tried to discourage his behavior. We did however understand is bitterness and anger over being terminated unilaterally)

- 7) Friday night meet-and-greet (usually an ice cream social) and Saturday night entertainment (usually a dramatic performance or movie related to survivorship)
 - a. Held in a bar. An absolute no-no given that many survivors are dealing with addictions
 - b. Saturday night was the vice president singing opera and was unrelated to survivor support
 - c. Drunken behavior of some board members
 - d. Verbal harassment by board members of some leaders that they needed to be in the bar. They were in fact working with survivors.
- 8) Questions raised to the president were not answered satisfactorily.
 - a. Helpline- Many reports of the helpline not being answered
 - b. No ED – Shaun is acting ED and president of the board. We understood the emergency need for this but this needed to be resolved ASAP as it is a conflict of interest and strictly against the bylaws.

Approximately 12 leaders gathered and began to organize our thoughts and finally request a meeting with the board to discuss these concerns. We submitted a letter that expressed these concerns in general terms and also proposed some solutions and an offer to help find ways to resolve these issues. Unfortunately, there was a barrage of emails sent to our group, primarily from the Treasurer, Dan McNevin. While Dan was the primary author, we had been told by the president, Shaun Dougherty, that he and the other board members were aware of all of these letters and found no fault with them. The highlights from these

Harassing and Inappropriate Emails are:

- 1) An email threatening civil litigation for libel to one of our members resulting in him being intimidated into leaving.
- 2) Other threatening letters were sent to some of our group causing considerable angst but no one else left, at least not immediately. Eventually 2 other people left over the harassment and gaslighting that was evident in the letters.
- 3) Accused us, without evidence, that we were either encouraging or directly aiding Curtis in his harassing letters to the board. Nothing could be further from the truth. We actively attempted to stop him from doing that and Dan was informed of this. Sadly, Dan refused to believe that and sent more vitriolic and threatening emails to our group. He went so far as to compare us to the Ku Klux Klan and threaten legal action in the state of California where he resides.
- 4) Dan consistently blames any issues with SNAP on the previous BOD or the past ED. While there may be faults with both of these, SNAP thrived and grew under their

leadership. It was not just an organization, it was a community of survivors that assisted and supported one another.

- 5) Dan began to intimate that many of us were, in fact not leaders in SNAP. He cited a section in the bylaws adopted in May of 2020 that read “The assignment of the title Leader is made by resolution of the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Executive Director of SNAP (Article VII. Executive Director) or other Board Director.” He indicated that anyone that had been made leader following May of 2020 was not actually a leader any longer and had to be ‘vetted’ or ‘ratified’. Those individuals identified as not vetted had been recognized by the president of the board as leaders at each and every conference they attended. They had been recognized on the SNAP website as leaders. Some had been given awards at the SNAP conferences. We consider all of these actions as ad-hoc ratification by the board. Dan used this a pretext of claiming that our original letter was erroneous because we claimed to be leaders ... and now he considered us not leaders and therefore not worthy of talking with the board. Each and every leader than Dan considered unratified had undergone an onboarding process generated by the previous ED that included mentorship by another leader, a review of the SNAP leader manual, and a lengthy interview with a board member or the ED. If these unratified leaders are in fact not leaders, then SNAP has been misrepresenting itself for years. We have asked multiple times for a list of who the BOD considers to be ratified and those that are not, we have been met with silence.
- 6) Dan sends scathing email to Becky Ianni and to Melanie Sakoda, SNAP leader coordinator, for their lack of judgement in allowing Curtis to be a member of SNAP. This was insensitive and belittling and quite unnecessary. Both Melanie and Becky had given decades of service to SNAP.
- 7) In multiple emails Dan accuses of us lying despite any lack of evidence and claims that we are behind the harassing social media posts of Curtis. He also says that we should apologize to any and all people being harassed. In fact, we are unaware of these posts from Curtis and have taken action to discourage him. He then compares us to Nazis. This is extremely triggering and leads to several people not just leaving our group but leaving SNAP.
- 8) Dan sends an email that he is running background checks (unauthorized) on several leaders including Curtis. We take this as a form of intimidation because he implies that the background checks will be on people who question him. When told sometime later that running unauthorized background checks on people is illegal and could lead to prosecution, Dan denies ever having said that. The email evidence is irrefutable.

There are several attempts at meeting with either the board or with Shaun. These were basically flawed from the start and

- 1) Multiple stops and starts with actually trying to meet either with the BOD or with Shaun. It seemed Shaun wanted to split hairs and say that we could meet with him as acting ED but not as board president. The first attempt at meeting with him included only David Lorenz. It ended rather quickly. Shaun sent out his version of an agenda literally one minute before the start of the meeting. This agenda had little or no connection with our letter of concern. Shaun insisted we follow his agenda and, having not seen it in advance, caused issues from the start. During this meeting Shaun makes the statement that it is OK for him to be both president of the board and ED because he is 'not related to himself'.
- 2) There was a second attempt at meeting with just Shaun and David. This too ended with very little progress as Shaun would not discuss the issue of leader vetting/ratification as well as some other key issues.
- 3) Shaun and the BOD enlisted the help of a mediation service based in Chicago. While most of us believed this was overkill and a waste of money because no real attempt at having a meeting with us and the BOD was ever attempted. On the day of mediation, most of the WG shows up at 11 ET as scheduled. Some of us changed travel plans to accommodate this meeting. We are placed in a holding room in zoom and are briefed about what will happen and asked to sign a document outlining the responsibilities of CCR. While expected, this takes a lot longer than anticipated. Over the next 3 hours, we are left in our own separate breakout room with an occasional input from the CCR staff stating that they are working out some details with the BOD. We are not told what the delay is or why we are not meeting with the board after 3 hours of waiting. Finally the CCR staff comes on and states that since some of us have not been vetted (or ratified – the CCR staff member was not sure what the correct word was) by the board as leaders, they, the BOD, would only meet with the 4 people who were leaders prior to the adoption of the current Bylaws on 5/20. The 4 who were grandfathered in were David Lorenz, Judy Lorenz, Susan Vance, and Mary McKenna. The ones who were excluded were Sally Zakhari, Nancy Fratianni (leader since 2018), Myra Russel, Teresa Lancaster (SNAP leader since 2007 but never listed as leader on web site. Teresa was asked to be on the BOD by Shaun and Dan at one point), Karen Lowart, Claude Leboeuf, & Frank Schindler. Frank is the only person in attendance who was never recognized as a leader within SNAP. All others have been recognized as leaders either at the start of conferences and/or on the SNAP web site. Now suddenly, without warning, these prominent SNAP associates have been relegated by the BOD as not worthy to even associate with the BOD. This

despite the email from Dan McNevin (1/13) to Frank Schindler telling him that he hopes he is involved in the mediation. We are given the option of only 4 of us meeting with the BOD and the others could be placed in a holding room. After a lot of discussion and emotional venting and given that we only had about 30 minutes left, we chose to end the mediation without ever having talked with the BOD. They pulled a very classic bait and switch. They pretended to meet with us, but when it came down to actually doing so, they simply wasted 4 hours of 12 people's time. We also found out that only 4 members of the BOD actually were in attendance Shaun, Dan, Judy and Paul. Prior to the meeting, no mention of leader vetting being a requirement of attendance was mentioned. It still leaves us scratching our heads over why only vetted leaders are allowed to speak with the BOD. That was never a stipulation before in the history of SNAP. Prior to the meeting, no mention of allowing only 'ratified' leaders was mentioned. In fact, one of the group, who was unratified, received an email from Dan that he was looking forward to being in the meeting with him. **The major take-away is that the BOD claims that the mediation was unsuccessful when in fact, it never occurred because they disallowed two thirds of our group from participation but only after making us wait for 3.5 hours.**

Up until this point, our small group of a dozen people were trying to fly under the radar. We did not want to make waves that would stifle or inhibit the ongoing work of SNAP which is done primarily at the grass roots level by SNAP leaders (whether they are ratified or not). Following the failure of the BOD to meet with us, we decided to reach out to other leaders and engage them. This had a twofold purpose. First were there other leaders that were seeing the pattern of harassment and/or disengagement from the board? Secondly, since the BOD had been refusing to work with us, we thought if we could get 20 or more leaders to join us, then we could demand a meeting with the BOD per the stipulation in the bylaws: 'Special Meetings for any purpose or purposes shall be called by the President of the Board of Directors at the request in writing of one-third of the Directors or any twenty (20) Leaders of SNAP.' When we reached out to other leaders we were surprised at the number of leaders that felt disenfranchised from the organization. We heard repeated stories of people reaching out to the board for either getting help with an issue or volunteering their expertise to the board. These leaders were either ignored (no response or promise of a future response that never happened) or they were met with harassing or condescending responses. Many of these people have joined our group and we now number more than 30 leaders representing hundreds of years of experience and expertise in SNAP affairs. All of us have a great love and devotion to the stated goals of SNAP which are 'healing the wounded' and 'protecting the innocent'. Some of us literally owe our lives to SNAP for throwing us a lifeline at our darkest moments. We know the good that this organization can do and we are concerned that this primary mission is being

abandoned. Our numbers include at least one founding member of SNAP, one past president of the BOD and long time member of the BOD, several members who have successfully lobbied for changes in state laws that protect predators and have been featured prominently in the news. One leader was prominently featured in the NETFLIX series 'The Keepers', one person who runs an organization dedicated to the Coptic survivors. More than a few of us have been recognized by SNAP with awards for our work in advocating for changes to civil laws and calling out Church practices that are enabling predators.

Besides all of the above there are a number of other concerns that have made their presence known along the way. These remaining concerns have become present as our group, which we now refer to as the SNAP Reform Caucus (SRC) has moved forward.

Misuse of Funds: During the month of March, Pope Francis took ill and the Executive Director of SNAP, Shaun Daugherty, decided that he should travel to Rome and remain there until the Pope passes away. This trip required the approval of the president of the board, also Shaun Dogherty. This reveals the significant reason why the ED cannot be a member of the board – it is a serious conflict of interest. Shaun spent nearly a month in Rome spending thousands of dollars of SNAP funds that are no longer available for more local issues. During this time, the pontiff slowly recovered from his illness and Shaun eventually realized after 4 weeks that nothing was going to happen. Many of us felt that his presence in Rome was not only a waste of money but counterproductive in that he was there representing us as someone eager to have the pope die. Criticizing someone publicly while they are on the deathbed is simply not a good idea in terms of public relations. What did SNAP gain from this? We received a lot of pictures of Shaun's meals on social media. Supposedly media contacts were made while he was there but those contacts were either already made or could be made by SNAP leaders that are in Europe. We spoke to one of them and they did not see the necessity of this trip. For many of us, this seemed like a clear boondoggle from an organization that struggles for funding.

Additionally, SNAP spent a significant amount of money on the mediation group, Center for Conflict Resolution. It was a waste of both time and money since the BOD had no intention of talking with our entire group from the beginning. They could have easily avoided this significant expense had they just talked with us.

Executive Director: In July, SNAP finally announced that they had hired a new ED. We were hopeful that this new person, Angela, solve the impasse with the BOD. Angela made it clear that she was in charge of the leaders and that we answered to her and her alone. This was a bit foreboding as this is not how SNAP had been run in the past. She promised to address our concerns at the leaders meeting prior to the

annual conference. In fact, this did not happen. At her request, we sent in a list of our top 10 issues. We also made it clear that many of us could not attend this meeting for various reasons. This list was not even broached at the meeting. Several of our group attempted to provide her with another more concise list of issues and she initially refused to even accept it but ultimately did. She barely looked at it and never brought it up. Instead, attendees were promised a lesson on the SNAP bylaws and the leaders manual.

Inappropriate Termination of leaders: During the leaders meeting, one of our group, Sally Zakahra who was attending remotely, submitted a question in the zoom chat in an attempt to have Angela address our concerns. Angela stated that this was too vague and requested that Sally be more specific. She made the question more specific and then Angela stated that this question was inappropriate. Then following the meeting, Angela informed Sally that she was dismissed from SNAP for the inappropriate comment and for yelling. There is an audio recording of the meeting clearly revealing that Sally did NOT yell. On a later email, Dan stated that Sally will Never be allowed to be part of SNAP. Sally has been a tireless advocate for survivors and even started a Coptic survivor group.

Recently a leader was suddenly terminated because she is bipolar! She is under medical care for this condition and it did not interfere with her work for survivors. She was not given any specific incident for her termination except that she is bipolar.

A long time employee of SNAP, Melanie Sakoda, was beloved by most leaders and we often turned to her for advice and help. Her primary focus was for survivor/leader support but she was a jack-of-all trades. We turned to her especially when we held press events and she helped us craft our press releases. While Melanie did violate one of the rules of SNAP (her reason for termination), we believe that this did not rise to the level of requiring termination and the event happened years ago. We believe the termination was actually because Melanie was communicating with the SRC. This was an act of retribution almost certainly.

Bait and Switch: There is generally a leaders meeting the day prior to the annual SNAP conference. This occurred as expected and Shaun sent an email to all the leaders inviting them to the conference in Harrisburg. It seemed like a general announcement as had been received in previous years. It did not mention any specifics about this being the meeting with the BOD or that this was any special meeting as requested by the SRC. Following the conference Dan sent an email saying that the request from the SRC had been satisfied by the leaders meeting at the conference. This was not just a classic case of bait and switch it is demonstrably false

as none of the issues as put forth by the SRC had been addressed. This is just one more case of gaslighting. Both of the letters can be found in the timeline documents.

Holding leaders in Contempt. It was learned that Shaun vetoed a suggestion that SNAP provide a master email directory of leaders so that they could communicate with each other easily and gain assistance from each other. The reason for vetoing this was that he said leader/survivors are unstable and could have emotional issues and that giving them access to communicate with each other could lead to bad things. Communication among leaders is exactly what SNAP should be promoting. We could learn from each other about press events and legislation and lessons learned from support groups.