♫ upbeat electronic music ♫

#DisabilityToo.

Rachel and Courtney from Rooted in Rights.

RACHEL: Hi, my name is Rachel Miyazaki.

COURTNEY: My name is Courtney Cole.

RACHEL: And today we want to talk about a topic

that isn't talked about enough.

COURTNEY: Which is the impact of sexual abuse

on the disability community.

RACHEL: The #MeToo movement was started

in 2006 by Tarana Burke.

COURTNEY: It sparked a

national conversation,

which led to survivors speaking out.

♫ music continues ♫

Photos of crowds marching.

Handmade signs with hashtags #MeToo and #TimeIsUp.

What you may not know is

that people with disabilities

are twice as likely to face sexual abuse

as their non-disabled peers.

RACHEL: Disability advocates

from all over the world

are starting to speak out about the need

for disability to be included

in the larger #MeToo movement.

COURTNEY: Alice Wong, from the

Disability Visibility Project,

approached us and wanted to

really start a discussion

about how this issue affects

people with disabilities.

This collaboration

culminated in a Twitter chat

that happened on February 21, 2018.

Alice Wong in conversation with Rachel and Courtney via video chat.

ALICE: Hi, my name is Alice Wong.

I'm the founder and director

of the Disability Visibility Project.

When I first saw the #MeToo

movement come out,

especially on Twitter,

it was, you know, really exciting.

It kind of gave permission

for a lot of people, publicly,

for the first time,

to tell their stories.

There wasn't the same kind of

floodgates opening in terms of

stories from the disability community.

COURTNEY: Emily Ladau

tweets: #MeToo and #TimesUp

have been inclusive of

disability only at surface level.

"Disability" is often a

word added among a list

of marginalized identities that a movement

claims to represent,

but substantive dialogue

and allyship are missing.

Vilissa Thompson from Rooted in Rights in conversation with Rachel and Courtney via video chat.

RACHEL: What are some main takeaways

that you got from the Twitter chat,

or main ideas that you saw popping up?

VILISSA: Just the fact that people needed

a space to share their stories.

I think for some people,

it was the first time

or one of the handful of times

that they were able to talk about it.

You know, folks just really supporting each other.

But I think when you get

that type of response

from those within your own community,

I think it means something of value.

COURTNEY: Were there any

specific stories or comments

during the chat that

really hit hard for you?

Alice.

ALICE: Well, I do think a lot of the stories from

people who have been institutionalized,

I think that's a missing

piece that part of the larger

#MeToo movement doesn't understand.

People who rely on, you know, personal assistants

just to get out of bed, just,

you know, to be a part of society,

they don't realize how

much imbalance there is

in the power dynamics.

These are all, kind of, relationships that

can easily lead to

coercion, abuse, and violence.

RACHEL: @GeorgesDryad

tweets: All the advice --

"run, fight back" -- is for non-disabled women.

What if you can't run?

What if you can't fight back?

Where's the advice for us?

Vilissa.

VILISSA: You know, it's so easy to

tell somebody to come forward

but when it comes to having intersected

disability identities,

that's not easy.

You know, there are certain communities,

such as people of color,

those that are LGBTQ,

those with psychiatric disabilities,

have a very genuine and

understandable and realistic fear.

COURTNEY: Alaina Leary

tweets: I'm a disabled sexual assault survivor.

I've written publicly

about being a survivor --

often my disability is erased

or abled status is assumed.

It's also assumed I'm straight

and my assailant was male.

Alice.

ALICE: You know, there are

so many different intersections:

disabled person of color, disabled femme,

disabled womxn of color,

whether you speak English,

whether you're monolingual or not.

These are all huge factors in terms of

not only just being taken seriously

but also being believed.

I think the purpose of all these stories

is to really motivate us and

politicize us and to,

to activate us and

to get us passionate

to get us to care about one another

and also to think about the work ahead.

We all have the power to do something.

And I do think stories are that spark.

Courtney.

COURTNEY: Whether someone identifies themself

when they tell their story

or tells it anonymously,

for the rest of the community,

it shows that we exist.

We're out there and we're

experiencing this abuse

too.

Rachel.

RACHEL: For anyone thinking that,

"Oh there are already

so many stories out there, my

story won't make a difference",

you can't tell your story enough.

Even if a hundred other womxn say "#MeToo",

your "#MeToo" will still be valid

and still be just as important.

COURTNEY: If you want to share your story

there are a few ways you can do that.

On social media, you can share

your story @RootedinRights

and use the hashtag #DisabilityToo

You can send us a letter,

or you can submit an audio, video,

or written piece online.

RACHEL: You can find all this information and more

at RootedinRights.org/DisabilityToo

ALICE: We can't be the only ones doing this

and that's part of the idea of visibility

is that hopefully people will see it.

They'll be moved by it and

they will carry this forward.

The work has just begun.

COURTNEY: Share this video.