

SNAP Concerns

SNAP Leaders

Background

- There seems to be a lethargic feeling within SNAP and especially among leaders which approximately dates to the resignations of Becky Ianni & Zach Hiner.
- During the 2024 Conference and Leader's meeting, there were a number of concerns noted by a small group of leaders
- On two Occasions during the conference, these leaders scheduled a time to meet with Shaun to discuss our concerns.
 - In both cases Shaun failed to show up and claimed he was too busy.
 - Following the first no-show, he was seen in the bar buying shots for a number of people
- Incidences of sexual harassment/impropriety were reported to Shaun and there seems to have been nothing done.
- In general, the conference had more than a few issues or areas of concern
- Following the conference, a dozen leaders met to discuss these and other issues and a possible course of action
 - This group sent a letter to the board stating our concerns and offering ways to assist
 - For 8 months, this group has been trying to have an 'audience' with the board and the board has not just refused to meet with them, but sent condescending, vitriolic and threatening emails

Concern: Issues with the conference

- The Friday Social (usually ice cream) and Saturday evening entertainment were scheduled in the hotel bar.
 - This shows a complete lack of understanding that many survivors are dealing with addictions
- There were no evaluation forms for any of the breakout sessions or the general conference
- No support groups were scheduled. These are essential elements at conferences.
 - There was a 'group' support session in the main conference room that was cut short
- Saturday entertainment did not seem optional
- Hotel accommodations were questionable (roaches, broken elevator, neighborhood...)
 - on-line reviews of the hotel would have revealed all of this

Concern: Reports of Sexual harassment

- VP (Eduardo) made sexually suggestive overtures to one of the new attendees while posing for photos
- During the conference a SNAP 'member' reported to board members that they had been sexually harassed by a woman who 'appeared' intoxicated
 - Reported to President (Shaun) who did nothing
 - Reported to VP (Eduardo) who claimed it wasn't a big deal
 - Shortly after report, same woman was seen at the bar drinking with Eduardo and Shaun at Saturday evening event
- Reports of sexual harassment by the same woman to another survivor was made to Sally Z who has been attempting to pass this along to the board but they have refused to talk to her.
- During the last 8 months that this group has been attempting to engage the board, they have insisted that any mention of sexual harassment not be part of the agenda
- Along with sexual harassment, there are cases of public verbal assault on two leaders by Eduardo because these leaders were not in the bar listening to him sing.

Concern: Leader vetting

- During our 8 month saga of trying to engage the board, they arbitrarily decided that any leader who came onboard after May 0f 2020 (date of the latest bylaws) has not been properly vetted and that they are not considered leaders
- Those in our group that became leaders after the 5/20, were told that they were not welcome to participate in any negotiations with the board
- Determining that many leaders were not actually leaders raises serious legal and ethical concerns:
 - Were meetings lead by these unratiied leaders sanctioned SNAP support meetings ?
 - Did these 'leaders' misrepresent themselves when holding vigils or engaging with the press?
 - Why were these 'leaders' recognized at conferences and on the SNAP web site as actual Leaders when they were not ?
 - Why does the current board not recognize the vetting process of the previous board for bringing in new leaders (e.g. questionnaire, interviews, mentoring, leaders manual) ?
 - Why is the board 'rolling' out a new vetting process without any input from the leaders ?

History – Significantly abbreviated

- 8/15-18 SNAP Conference in Houston. Multiple concerns.
- 8/20 Working Group begins to form to collect info & plan course
- 9/18 Letter sent to BOD. Quick response from Shaun & Dan. Multiple emails from Dan disparaging group and letter. Insists we email him individually. States most of us are not leaders bc we are not properly vetted.
- 9/24 – 10/30 Shaun can't meet until late Oct. Shaun's brother dies.
- 10/26 Shaun & Dan ask for agenda – it is in the original letter of 9/18.
- Dan begins series of emails – accuse us of encouraging Curtis's abusive behavior, KKK, Nazi's, Gun violence, threatens legal action.
- 11/20 Attempted meeting between Shaun & Dave. Shaun sends agenda 1 minute prior to start of meeting. Insists we follow it. Useless!
- 12/17 meeting between Shaun & Dave. Discuss issue that ED cannot be related to board members. Shaun insists he is not related to himself.
- 12/20 Dan email stating the BOD can change Bylaws to suit their needs
- 1/21 – 2/3 Shaun engages professional mediator
- 3/1 First of two 4-hour mediation sessions. BOD stays in breakout room by themselves for 3 hours. We finally get word that they will only meet with 4 members bc the others had not been properly vetted per Bylaw process (Bylaw has no process for vetting). Dan had actually emailed Frank prior to meeting – 'looking forward to meeting with you'
- 3/5 email from Dan attempts to rationalize why there was exclusion – He, Dan had never spoken to them, they never went through ratification process (wrong), had not signed leader's manual (wrong).

Recent letter from BOD

Letter Statements

- Board engaged CCR
- First discussion on 3/31
- Worked during session
- Expect to finalize agenda
- No Bylaw changes
- Leader declaration in conflict with Bylaws
- Clarify their status
- Next mediation in May

Fact

- No need to engage CCR if they had only met with us.
- No discussion on 3/31. After 3 hours of waiting, BOD refused to meet.
- **8 Members of our group were forbidden from participating in discussion (not ratified)**
- Board is making their own agenda and dismissing ours
- Email from Board suggests they might change Bylaws
- *“The assignment of the title Leader is made by resolution of the Board of Directors...”*
- No further mediation has been confirmed (date and agenda unsettled by BOD)

Path Forward

- We believe that the current SNAP leadership (president, vice president & treasurer) is not acting in the best interest of the organization
 - They have refused to talk with some of the most active SNAP leaders in the organization
 - They have arbitrarily determined that some of these leaders are not proper leaders and are not worth engaging in any discussion with them
- We are concerned for the health and well being of this organization that we love and, for some of us, has saved our lives
- To that end, we believe it is imperative that you write to each member of the board and make the following assertions:
 - When SNAP has declared someone to be a leader at a conference or on the website, that is sufficient for them to be a leader
 - The board must listen openly and honestly to all leaders and survivors
 - The board should not negate the certification of leaders by previous boards
 - The board must investigate all allegations of sexual abuse/harassment within the SNAP ranks
 - The current board leadership should consider resigning if they are unable/unwilling to engage with SNAP leaders – including those onboarded after 5/20

Backup – Further concerns

Condescending and vitriolic emails

- The following accusations were made by the treasurer after he received our initial request to meet with the board. No further emails were sent to the board or him by our group
 - Demanding that the Group “correct” our original signed letter which should have been accepted as-is by the Board.
 - Accusing the Group falsely of supporting a dismissed leader’s social media posts offensive to the Board. Assumptions were made about the Group which were reckless and defamatory.
 - Comparing the Group to those who stood by and let the Nazis kill the Jews.
 - Comparing the Group directly to the violence of the Ku Klux Klan,
 - Comparing the Group, to people supporting gun violence.
 - Threatened us with law-suits that were ridiculous and predicated on assumptions that were unsupportable by facts
 - Former board members/employees were impugned multiple times
- There are many more examples of irresponsible attacks on the group and have been documented
- None of the current board members spoke up to condemn these wild accusations. Certainly, the president should have put a stop to it or at least condemned it

Logistical Issues

- Executive Director position
 - The executive director position was suddenly vacant and filled temporarily by Shaun – Fine
 - When question about hiring an XD, Shaun indicated that they needed 3 years salary in the bank before pursuing a replacement – despite the fact that they had a budget line for an XD
 - Shaun stated he intended to work as both board president and XD for the foreseeable future
 - When confronted with a bylaw restriction that the XD cannot be related to anyone on the board:
 - Shaun, without a hint of irony, claimed that he was not related to himself
 - Dan, the treasurer, simply said that they could unilaterally change the bylaws (this is true but unethical)
- Help Line – This phone line has been in operation for years and was funded by private individuals
 - It has been staffed by a group of ‘leaders’ that respond to any calls that come in. For some leaders it is the only way that they can contribute and feel it is part of their mission.
 - Unfortunately, the bill was not paid and the line stopped working
 - This has occurred in the past and was easily fixed by a quick phone call to the benefactors
 - Shaun reported that he did not know the benefactor (he was told) & spent months trying to fix it on his own. Including flying to Chicago for 3 days. It is still not back in full operation. Shaun is the only person with access.
 - Conversations with individuals from other organization reveals that calls to the helpline are not being fielded. Survivors report that they gave up trying to contact SNAP. The mission of SNAP is NOT being fulfilled.

Financial Question

- While maintaining a position that SNAP is near financial insolvency, the following actions were taken by the board
 - They hired a high-priced mediation service to mediate with our group
 - Rather than just schedule a meeting to discuss our issues
 - The first mediation lasted 4 hours and the board never talked with the group and at the end, declared through the mediators that they would only talk with the 4 'ratified' leaders. 3 of the 'banned non-leaders' have been with SNAP for many years
 - Boondoggle to Rome since the Pope was in critical condition
 - Board President (Shaun) approved the trip for 3 members, including the Executive Director (Shaun again!)
 - Planned to stay there until the Pope dies – which could be a long time.
 - Provided the Vatican with a zero-tolerance policy – where have we seen that movie before. The Vatican has broken every Canon law on child abuse.
- There seems to be little financial transparency.
 - When asked for the P&L reports (standard info for non-profits), we were told it is confidential
 - Informed at the 2024 Leaders' conference that no conference has ever made money. This flies in disagreement with the 2023 conference ledger prepared and approved by the board and the 2017 financial audit report – both showed moderate profit for the respective years.

Other Issues

- Resignation of Becky Ianni
 - Becky posted her side of the story which most of us have read
 - We were told that there is another side to the story but confidentiality forbids board members from talking about it
 - When informed of this, Becky sent an email to the board releasing them of that requirement
 - Dan McNevin then accused Becky of not letting the past go.
- Web site is outdated and included leaders who have long since left SNAP. This was only corrected after our initial letter was sent to SNAP
- Monthly leaders' meetings on the East coast are no longer taking place
- During the open discussion at the leaders' meeting, no board member was in attendance to record/respond to all of the suggestion being put forth.

SNAP Business

- Web site is outdated and included leaders who have long since left SNAP. This was only corrected after our initial letter was sent to SNAP
- During the leaders meeting, Dan McNevin, in reply to a question, unequivocally stated that SNAP's mission was ONLY to survivors of religious institutional abuse
- SNAP is significantly misrepresented on Guidestar
 - The office positions and employees are at least 3 years old – 10 board members!
 - Executive director (operations) is independent of board
 - Mission statement not in line with the bylaws
 - Indicates that SNAP does peer counseling
 - Office location in Saint Louis
 - Claim leaders are trained biannually
 - **Last audit report is 2019**

Why are we no longer leaders?

- According to the bylaws of 5/20: *“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. Leaders report to the Executive Director who coordinates the day to day activities of SNAP.*
- When we sent the first letter, one of the early responses from Dan was that we were not all leaders because the board has not properly vetted us according to the procedures in the bylaws.
- While we vehemently disagreed with this, it was actually irrelevant – Survivors have concerns
- The BOD conveniently ignores the following:
 - Most leaders did, in fact, go through an ‘on-boarding’ process (questionnaire, interview, mentoring & manual)
 - De-facto approval was given by the board (previous) when they were recognized as such at conferences or by placing their names on the web site
- Some indication that the BOD intends to ‘roll out’ new vetting process that includes background checks.
 - They are not willing to discuss this until they complete their roll out
 - Background checks are illegal unless the person consents in writing (emails indicate that they are in violation)