

## Teal Talk, S2:E1 – Public Policy Advocacy for Advocates with Emily Gemar

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 0:00

Welcome to Teal Talk, a podcast brought to you by the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence – that's OAESV for short. We're your hosts, Taylr

Laurie Hamame 0:17

and Laurie,

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 0:18

and each episode, we speak with professionals in the field to dive deep into the intersectional issues that affect survivors in Ohio.

Laurie Hamame 0:24

Before we begin, we want to give a content warning that we will be discussing sexual violence and other issues that may be upsetting and triggering. If you need help, please feel free to call our resource line at 888.886.8388 during regular business hours, or the Ohio Sexual Violence Helpline 24/7 at 844.644.6435. Please take care of yourself.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 1:07

All right. Hi, everybody. We are so excited to be recording our first episode of season two of Teal Talk. I'm Taylr Ucker-Lauderman, my pronouns are she, her, and hers, and I am the Chief Officer of Communications and Engagement here at OAESV. I had to repeat my title three times to my dad yesterday because he said it's so hard to remember, which I totally agree, but it has to encompass all that we do. So, I'll say a little bit more about myself after our co-host introduces herself.

Laurie Hamame 1:41

Taylr, it's so funny that you mentioned that because I had this Mandela Effect moment with my title the other day. I didn't know that there was an 's' after communications. I thought it was communication. And I was like, 'Whoa, I've been saying my title wrong this whole time.' I'm Laurie Hamame. I'm the Communications and Content Coordinator here at OAESV.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 2:04

I'm sure there was intention behind that too, when I, you know, created that title. There's many types of communication — that's why. A little bit about me, just since this is our first episode. I have been with the Coalition since 2019. I started as the Director of Communication, and then that position really evolved into my current position. So I've loved my time here, seeing the coalition grow, seeing the communications team grow, this podcast, and just all that we've been doing the past four years. The Coalition itself has just grown immensely before that and since then. It's just been really cool to see what we've been up to. The audience will learn a little bit more about me, too, as time goes on, I'm sure. Little snippets here and there.

Laurie Hamame 2:55

Definitely. So about me, I officially joined OAESV in October 2021 after loving my work as an intern for about a year and a half. I've always believed in the power of storytelling and words and communication. But I never really considered wielding the power of words to establish empathy and change until I worked my first job as a news reporter. Then I had this wild idea to complete a master's degree in public health to merge these two fields of communication and my passion for advocacy and trauma healing. And so, then I found OAESV, and I've been here ever since. My main tasks here include content creation, event support, and social media strategy.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 3:41

Love that. Yeah, I've been an advocate, I've been a teacher, I've been a communications person. And I just always say that that trifecta is my best offering to the world. That's how all my skills and specialties come together. And I love it. And I love that that's what I get to do here at OAESV. All right, so let's learn a little bit more about the guest that we have with us today. We're so excited to have an OAESV staff member, a fellow staff member here. So we have Emily Gemar here with us. Emily is the Director of Public Policy at the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence. She has worked and advocated alongside survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual violence in diverse communities across Ohio, Arizona, and Washington, DC. Emily approaches public policy from a survivor-centered, anti-oppression framework and currently works with state and federal lawmakers to shape funding streams, legislation, and administrative rules. She provides training and technical assistance on a variety of public policy matters, as well as state and federal legislative advocacy. Emily holds two Master's Degrees in law and social work respectively, from Arizona State University's College of Law and Ohio State University's College of Social Work. Emily is based in Columbus and enjoys spending time with her family and rescue dog, Bodhi. We love Bodhi. Emily, would you like to say more about yourself?

Emily Gemar 5:07

Sure. Hi, everyone. Like Taylor said, I'm the Public Policy Director here at OAESV. In this role, I have the privilege of advocating for policy change with survivors, rape crisis centers, and more in Ohio. And I'm really excited to talk more about that today.

Laurie Hamame 5:26

We are so excited to have you. Public policy is definitely a topic that can feel both overwhelming and intimidating. We're really looking forward to using your voice and having your expertise to kind of make that a little more simple for folks. So today, we're going to talk a little bit about how advocates and rape crisis centers can be involved and what the process looks like to meet with legislators or advocate or influence system change. So let's dive right in.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 5:55

Yes, thank you. First I just want to see like, okay, we're recording this on a Tuesday. We're just past the middle of the month. How's everyone doing?

Laurie Hamame 6:06

What a loaded question.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 6:10

Maybe the question tells you a little bit about how I'm doing.

Laurie Hamame 6:14

Yeah, I feel like time is flying before my eyes. And with April right around the corner, like our efforts and advocacy and everything is about to just hit the gas, and I'm ready to hit the brakes.

Emily Gemar 6:29

I think Laurie summed it up. I feel a little bit like a hamster on a hamster wheel, hurtling towards April, and ready to participate in all of the fun things. And also, let's be honest, sometimes stressful things that Sexual Assault Awareness Month has in store for our field.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 6:51

Yeah, I feel like it's like, it's an exciting month, because there's a lot of activity, there's a lot of opportunities to be talking to people and teaching them about this issue, and things are, like, abuzz in our field. And also, there's still the really crappy reason why we're still raising awareness, and we're still teaching people about this stuff. So it's always bittersweet, I think, doing this work. Like we can love our work, and we don't want to have to do the work anymore. Right? As we kind of transition into our topic, do you want to say anything, Emily, about what you've been up to with your work, since we are getting into April, and we're getting close to Advocacy Day.

Emily Gemar 7:26

I can. We're at a particularly busy point in our legislative session in Ohio. That means it's the 2-year session that our state legislature operates in. And so we have just begun in January of 2023, getting lots of new bills introduced that tackle a variety of different topics that impact you, me, all of us. We are also seeing a lot of activity around our state operating budget, which you might not think, 'Wow, that really relates to the movement work that we're all doing.' But it does in a pretty big way. And so we advocate for increased state funding for rape crisis centers, so that they can then provide quality, comprehensive services to survivors in their local communities. So those are two of the big pieces of the pie right now — getting new legislation introduced that address a number of different things that impact us, and advocating for increased state funding in the budget.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 7:26

Thank you. So we do have some questions prepared for you to really dive deeper into this topic. And so we want to help folks in the field and anybody else, really, who wants to listen to this episode, understand a little bit more about public policy advocacy, what that is, and also what that can mean for advocates and other people working in the anti-sexual violence field, particularly in Ohio. So can you tell us a little bit about why it's important for rape crisis programs for advocates to be involved in public policy advocacy?

Emily Gemar 8:57

Well, like I said earlier, public policy really impacts you; it impacts all of us in a number of ways. I think often when we think about policy or public policy, we think about federal or state legislation, but the policy decisions that often impact us the most are made at the local levels — so we think about our city, our county, and our state — and it's there that our individual actions can have the biggest impact. We know that policy occurs at all of these different levels. And each level has different ways that you can engage. So I think it can be helpful to think about policy in terms of big P policy — so federal state laws and regulations — and lowercase p policy — so, county, city, township, whatever smaller local micro level that you're on. But frequently these policies are enacted at these levels, and they're informed by people like us, and I think that's the really important piece to always have in mind is that these issues are brought up for a reason, and if we are not informing the issues, if we are not the one one's bringing up the issues, who else does that leave? It leaves people with interests that may not align with ours, it may leave the door open for folks who are advocating to reinforce systems of oppression to not advocate with social change at the forefront of their cause. And so because these policy decisions impact us so much, or they have the capacity to impact us so much, it's really in this space that our individual actions can have the biggest impact.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 10:29

Yeah, I feel like that's one of the things that has impacted me so much since I started working here, and going to Advocacy Day and stuff is like, the legislators are just people too. They often have other areas of expertise. They have other work that they've done before they became legislators. They don't know literally everything. They might know about a lot of different things, but they need experts in the different fields to really inform what's going on. And since being in this work, I've realized like, okay, if we don't do that, who's going to do that, right? If it's not the people that are most closely doing the work, then legislators are just going to do whatever they think, and sometimes that's going to be great. And sometimes, maybe it's not going to be in line with what we would want to see. Or like you said, people who are doing oppositional work can really have a negative impact on that. So yeah, TLDR: legislators are real human beings also, and we don't have to be so intimidated, necessarily. They can be our partners, and like our equals, and they might also look at us in that way of like, wow, you know, that's the people doing this work and they know they're experts.

Laurie Hamame 11:38

Yeah, this topic can feel pretty heavy. So just to add a little bit of humor, I found this meme this morning that said, 'Millennials, chillin', watching their 173rd historical event in real time, wondering if they should make their car payment.' And there was a point in time when it felt like news regarding survivors of sexual violence was in the news, one after another. And it was really overwhelming. And a lot of people sat there and were like, what can I even do? How can I even help? How can I make a change? I'm just one person. So Emily, I'm wondering how can advocates influence system change efforts and public policy?

Emily Gemar 12:20

I think that there's no real limitation to that answer. I think the answer is that the limit does not exist, to quote, my favorite, maybe, millennial movie, Mean Girls, for those who are not aware. There are just so many ways that advocates can influence systems change efforts — that may include public policy, that may encompass public awareness raising. I think some of the most concrete things that we think about when we think about public policy activities are meeting with legislators, informing legislation, educating our legislative body, like Taylr mentioned, about the things that we have expertise in. And if there's one thing I think you should take away from this podcast episode is that you're an expert. I know we aren't always encouraged to think of ourselves that way, but as a victim advocate, as a prevention educator, as somebody who's working on a lot of cases, whatever you might be doing — you're an expert in what you're doing every day, and you're an expert in how local conditions and even conditions outside of your local area are impacting the survivors that you're working with. And that information is really invaluable to legislators. They may come from a teaching background, they may have been a first responder in their work, they may be a lawyer or a local business owner, and now they are a state legislator, or a local legislator. And so I think it's really important to remember that folks don't know what they don't know. And you can be a really important part in bringing a different perspective to how they think about an issue. That direct involvement with legislators and legislation is one piece of public policy work. If that's not something that you feel is within your wheelhouse, or that you're just not quite ready for, engaging your community to do this work is also a piece of public policy work. So if you realize

and look at your skills and your comfortability level and you realize, I just don't know that I want to meet with legislators, maybe that's something I don't want to do. Maybe I don't want to read legislation and inform how it reads how it shapes a certain issue. But maybe I really want to get involved with voting advocacy in my local area to make sure that we have local officials who really represent our community well. Maybe I want to do community engagement work with my local university groups that I work with as a prevention educator, and I want to help them understand some of these legislative issues, even if maybe I don't want to inform or advocate about it. Maybe I want to help educate my community on it so they can do that work as well. So I would say that's another public policy realm that I don't think frankly, I talk a lot about or that we talk a lot about, but it can be a really invaluable piece of making sure folks are informed that they have the tools they need to take action.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 15:08

Yeah, there's power in numbers and organizing people is hugely important. Okay, so what about kind of in the reverse? How does public policy shape sexual assault response services and prevention work, things like that?

Emily Gemar 15:23

You know, I think breaking this into pieces might be helpful and start with how does public policy shape the experience that survivors have and that advocates have? And you know, this can really look differently depending on, you know, different circumstances and situations, but I would say broadly, the law impacts all survivors and their families and their local communities whether or not we even have certain acts of harm classified as crimes, all starts with legislation. Public policy can really determine whether victims have access to certain legal remedies. So can they report it as a crime? Can they pursue charges? Those are two key areas that I think public policy can really impact, especially in our state, with some of the statute of limitations reform issues that we've experienced. We know that public policy can help influence whether survivors feel safe going to court or accessing certain systems. For some victims, changes to the legal system might be very relevant, but we know that our scope is much wider than courts in the legal system. So again, like expanding our scope, we know that public policy can mitigate or reduce certain barriers for survivors to different options. The law can influence what kinds of choices survivors might have in regards to getting the health care they need following assaults. We know that it can influence how protected a victim's privacy or confidentiality are, which in turn impacts advocates; advocates are often tasked with safeguarding client information and keeping it private and confidential. We also know that the law can determine or influence how survivors feel safe at work, or school, or if they even do and what options those systems are required to provide to survivors. So those are, you know, several different areas. It really is an endless list that we can discuss. But I think certainly survivors and advocates are incredibly impacted by policy changes.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 17:30

Okay, so what about how it shapes the rape crisis programs, or like rape crisis centers, another way to phrase it? How does it impact them?

Emily Gemar 17:38

Well, I think the most, maybe, direct line, in how public policy influences rape crisis centers or rape crisis programs is that they receive grants and funding from the government — that can be local, state or federal government — and that funding really allows them to provide the essential, what I consider to be life saving, services throughout Ohio. And that's all shaped by public policy. So when the government makes decisions about where are we spending money, how much of that money is spent — that is all related to public policy. And that's one of the things that we all have a voice in. It's not, again, the thing that I think we focus on a lot is, 'Oh, I can use my voice to shape the Ohio Operating Budget', or 'I can use my voice to determine what my local city council spends \$200,000 on'. But that's absolutely something that rape crisis centers can be doing and, frankly, are doing a lot of the time successfully. That federal and state funding can be used to fund trainings and community initiatives that prevent sexual violence. It can fund first responders that work through our Sexual Assault Response Teams, which we call SARTs or CCRTs, or Coordinated Community Response Teams. It's a little bit of acronym bonanza over here sometimes in my brain. So absolutely, policy shapes all of these types of services that rape crisis programs provide.

Laurie Hamame 19:03

Such good information so far, I just need to sit and soak it up. But you did mention something earlier that I do want to wrap around to. So when you said some people don't want to meet with legislators. I was like, hi, it's me. I'm the problem.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 19:21

Laurie's a big T Swift fan.

Laurie Hamame 19:24

Yes, I'm just looking for a way to drop a reference and every episode, like a little easter egg. So Emily, you know, there are some people who are afraid to meet with legislators, but what would it look like to actually do that? Maybe you can make it feel a little less intimidating.

Emily Gemar 19:40

So that is the hope. And Laurie, I know this about you, so I was thinking partially with you in mind when I mentioned some of these other options. I think the good news is — we're in 2023. And sometimes that can feel like 'Oh, we're in 2023.' But I think the good news is that we're in 2023 and a meeting with a

legislator can look how you want it to look. It can be a phone call that you set up prior or that you just call in randomly to their office, you can have an in-person meeting with them. If we're talking about state legislators, you can meet with them at the Ohio State House in Columbus. You can also meet with them in district. So legislators have districts that they represent; you can find it by going onto the state legislator websites, or by going onto the Secretary of State website in Ohio, to find out what your district is and who represents you. But the legislators will have certain days of the week that they are in their office in their district. So if you are in Mount Vernon, Ohio, and your legislator that represents that district is there, they will have a certain number of days. Usually it's two to three days that they are in that district, so you don't have to travel to Columbus, if that's an issue. And then part of, you know, being in our lovely virtual world that we're now in is that you can schedule Zoom or virtual meetings with your legislators to have face time with them. I would keep in mind, and this could be great news for some of our folks that are less inclined to meet with legislators, that legislators and their staff typically have limited meeting time available. So it's not necessarily that you're going to be expected to facilitate a meeting that's a full 30 to 45 minutes to an hour long. It might look more like 10 to 15 minutes, depending on their day and their schedule, and how much information you have to share and discuss. When you're looking at deciding what to discuss and what you can realistically cover, I would keep that 10 to 15 minute timeframe in mind and know what you're asking of them and really have that tailored list ready to go. Another really effective, I think, low-stakes way to use time effectively with your legislator is to invite them to tour your rape crisis center. And that like I said, it can be a really great low-stakes way because you will have your colleagues there, you'll have folks from your community there, likely, and it can just be a really great way to inform them about what your services are, what you're doing. An alternative to that is to invite them to visit a community event that you're hosting or participating in. SAAM is right around the corner, and we know that a lot of our centers are hosting maybe like a screening of a film and having a panel discussion. Maybe you are hosting a community event that's focused on prevention of sexual violence. You can invite legislators to these events. And if you know their schedule, and you know what days that they're typically in district, you can plan around that. And so I think these are really effective ways to find alternatives that fit best with your comfortability level to meet with legislators. I would say my final tip, my two final tips, I'll limit myself to two. The first is take face time with legislative staff. Don't be, I would say discouraged, if you can't meet with a legislator because their schedule doesn't permit you to. Legislative staff are really the backbone of the state legislature. And they're often the ones that have really updated information about issues. They are really great at taking information to their bosses, who are the legislators and senior legislative staff. I would really be enthusiastic with meeting with the legislative staffer and inviting them to events as well because that really gets them involved. And then my actual final tip is remember that your elected official works for you. They are elected to serve the district that they are effectively responsible for advocating for, and so just as they are responsible for advocating for their district, they are beholden to you as a constituent. And so if it helps to get face time with a legislator, you know, frame things in a way that really reiterates that you are a constituent in their district, and you are trying to communicate with them about a problem or an issue, or something else that's come up that needs to be addressed. And I think you'll have success when you frame things in that way.



So we talked about how meeting with a legislator can be overwhelming and public policy just in general can be overwhelming for people. There's a ton of policies to keep up with. There's the 24/7 news cycle. There's understanding policy language. There's the reality that policy affects our lives so directly and it's just a lot. So what are some strategies that can help people feel less intimidated or overwhelmed in getting involved and just, like, understanding what the heck is going on with public policy?

Emily Gemar 24:44

Absolutely. So I think there are some different ways that we can collectively try and, you know, reduce our level of overwhelm, in participating in this policy advocacy, I think what I just said collectively, really, is one piece of that. I think using our voices collectively, whenever possible, can really help alleviate some of the level of intimidation. So knowing that you're doing something with at least a pair, a partner, or in a small group can be really helpful knowing that the burden isn't just on you to know all of the things to be the official expert or the official representative. So making connections within your agency, within your community of people who have similar views on an issue as you, I think, can be one really helpful concrete way to start. I think putting in the work to develop relationships with your legislator, and or the legislative staff. Although that is probably the thing that seems very intimidating, in the long term can really reduce your level of overwhelm with the system with the legislative system, if you really think about it. And I know, we've spoken to this idea, you know, even though it can seem unapproachable, it is really no different than getting to know a new acquaintance, or colleague or friend. So attending things that you know your legislator will be at, or inviting them to attend things that you're hosting can be, I think, a really effective way to get to know them. Sending them information periodically about what you've got going on, and you know, making asks when appropriate for your legislator to do certain things, are really great ways just to stay in contact. I really do think that being informed is one of the most tried and true methods of reducing overwhelm. I think sometimes being aware of all of the very stressful things that are happening in our world that often intersect with public policy and law is really hard. But I also think that staying informed and really knowing what this means and not being subjected to the 24-hour news cycle where you have pundit speak, and you know, people framing an issue in a way that really benefits them or their messaging can be very helpful. It's very easy to hear a 10-second take about a controversial bill and become very overwhelmed with what that means and what it could mean. But I think staying in the present and trying to think of, 'what can I do to learn more about this? Who can I contact for support? What is my little circle of, you know, advocacy support and engagement support, who are those people?' can be really helpful. And if you think about what I've just said, you can probably tell that my background is victim advocacy. I didn't just stop being an advocate when I started doing public policy work, if anything, my actual hidden title is advocate. I think the same skills that we communicate to clients, as survivor advocates, are some of the same skills that we should really be using with ourselves. If folks are familiar with like safety planning or pod mapping, you know, who's in your pod? Who's got your back? Who can you go to when things feel very overwhelming, or you've had maybe a difficult interaction, and you need to process? I think those skills can be very helpful when the world seems like it's melting around you. It's like that meme, if we're continuing on the meme theme, the meme where the dog is sitting with the pizza box, and it's like everything is on fire. When you feel like that, who is in your corner, who's got your back? And also just recognizing like, where can I go to get the information that I need? And if you're not sure, I will shamelessly plug myself and my colleagues as resources to help you understand what this policy is that's

being talked about, how it might affect me not only as an advocate, because we recognize that that is not all that you are, but as a person in my local community, as a queer person, as a person of color, as a person with a young family, maybe, how does this impact me holistically? And we're absolutely here to help with that work as well.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 29:13

Okay, you read my mind with, like two of the follow up things that you said. Because I think, you know, okay, there's knowledge is power. And then there's like, ignorance is bliss. And finding that balance. Yeah, advocacy principle 101 is options and choices. We can't control that or how it necessarily affects us. But we can control like our response, right? We can look at what our options are and decide what we are comfortable with doing, like finding where we do fit. And so I love that all throughout this, you've given a lot of different options for people to see what works best for them. And then of course, being the Chief Officer of Communications & Engagement, I'm a big fan of our website, I'm a big fan of our resources. There are a lot of opportunities for people to learn more. Emily puts up a lot of factsheets, a lot of information that will summarize the jargon and the difficult to understand stuff or the stuff that you just don't have time to go read, even if you want to. So you can find that on our website — [oaesv.org](http://oaesv.org). And then also, if you're an OAESV member, you can attend the First Friday calls that Emily holds, where she also gives a lot of really great information. It's a one hour call once a month. Do you want to say any more about any of those resources that you offer?

Emily Gemar 30:29

Sure. Like Taylr said, we're a big fan of simple resources that can help you get information you need quickly. And so one of those things is the legislative fact sheets. We are getting ready to publish our legislative fact sheet series starting documents — they will be out at the time that this episode is out, which is really great — to explain, kind of, the first set of bills that have been introduced in our new General Assembly, which is our new legislative session. We'll also have documents that explain, you know, what OAESV's budget ask is this year, and how does that impact and inform rape crisis services. And then just to add on to what Taylr said, you know, our First Friday calls are the first Friday of every month. They focus on a number of different issues. It's typically myself and potentially members of our team who are talking through different legislative issues, but we also have had legislators and other special guests join us in the past, and we look forward to that in the future as well.

Laurie Hamame 31:32

You know, something I love about what you've shared is it perfectly encapsulates our mantra or slogan of there's power and strength in the collective. You know, if you feel overwhelmed by getting involved, bring a friend, bring a co-worker. It's really helpful when you can bounce ideas off of someone or just share in that collective energy. So I just really love that idea you shared and just power and strength in our collective knowledge. Emily, you've shared so much today, but is there anything else you want people to know?

Emily Gemar 32:06

Definitely. So some things that I don't think I've mentioned yet, but that I think are really important to know as you're navigating, you know, how do I get involved? Do I want to get involved? What does that look like? As you're navigating those questions, just to keep in mind that OAESV is the training and technical assistance provider for rape crisis centers, but also survivors in Ohio. So if you have a request, whether it's 'I need training on this', or 'I need to ask you a question', and you know, potentially get a resource out of it, or at the very least in answer, please reach out. I am here to help you understand legislative issues to help you determine what your advocacy will look like. If that looks like needing help scheduling a meeting with a legislator, I'm here for that. If it looks like needing help writing an op-ed or needing help writing legislative testimony, or if you need me or if you want me to be your buddy to go to the statehouse, I am absolutely down for that, and, you know, ready to support you. And I will also just add that there are ways that our communications team as well can be really supportive and navigating some of these issues because public policy is, I think, one piece of our external communications. And so learning about influencing policy through media engagement, as well, is another thing that our team is really equipped to help you with. So those are some of the ways that I think we don't always talk about, are ways that we can support, but want to keep that at the forefront of people's minds. I can be reached via my email. Also, you can snag some time with me at our upcoming Advocacy Day event in April. OAESV is hosting its 11th annual Advocacy Day at the Ohio State House, which is kind of astounding to think that we've made it to 11 Advocacy Days so far. It's incredibly exciting. It is on Thursday, April 20. It is a whole day event, so be ready to come down to Columbus and meet OAESV staff for our morning event in the statehouse atrium where we will have legislative speakers and other speakers from our local communities really get us energized and engaged to participate in Advocacy Day. And then the later half of the day will be reserved for legislative meetings where you will get to meet with your specific state legislators and advocate on different topics impacting sexual assault survivors and rape crisis programs in Ohio.

Laurie Hamame 34:46

And me, Emily and Taylr will be there to sign autographs. We've learned so much today. I think the point that has stuck out with me the most is that legislator's are just people and we're pretty much their boss. When I had my first legislator meeting, I walked in, and there were two of them. And I was like, oh my goodness, double the nerves. And there was a point, even though I rehearsed and prepared, I got flustered and tongue tied. And I worried that they would look at me and look down on me. But their response was super supportive, and they were like, 'It's okay. Just start over, take a deep breath.' I was like, wow, they actually want to hear what I want to say. Right? That's their job. So thank you so much for making it seem even less intimidating today, Emily.

Emily Gemar 35:36

Absolutely. They're just people. And if you can remember that they had to campaign for these legislative seats. So they've also had their fair share of saying things incorrectly in front of large crowds going door

to door sometimes and getting flustered. And so they absolutely understand that the pressure that can happen when you're getting ready to do your pitch or your ask, and your brain kind of, you know, goes on vacation for a few minutes.

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 36:04

Right. I think something that's stuck out for me in this conversation is, like, remembering how much public policy does affect our lives and our work. I think so often, it's easy to feel like the state house is so far away, or these things are so far removed, and you know, maybe that your vote doesn't matter or something, but it matters so much. I think a lot of times people really don't realize how vastly policies affect, like everything that we do, or what we can do or can't do or the funding that goes to certain things. So it bothers me when people are like, 'Oh, that doesn't affect me directly.' Well, even if it's not directly — well, it is directly, but even if it weren't directly, even indirectly — is huge for these things because of how involved our government is and so much that we do. So just remembering that it is important, because if you're not speaking up somebody else is, and you may not like what they have to say. So please do what you can what you feel comfortable doing in regards to public policy.

Laurie Hamame 37:11

Awesome. Well, Emily, we want to thank you so much for being here with us today. Just as a word of note, email address, [egemar@oaesv.org](mailto:egemar@oaesv.org). Emily would love to hear from you. And if you'd like to register for our Advocacy Day registration is open until April 7. And you can do that at [oaesv.org/advocacyday](https://oaesv.org/advocacyday).

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 37:35

And if you want to get a hold of any OAESV staff member, you can go to [oaesv.org/staff](https://oaesv.org/staff). So staff. And you can find names, photos, you can put a name to a face, our titles, and topics that we can help you with if you're an OAESV member in regards to technical assistance. Or if you're just a community member, we can often help with items too, especially if you're a survivor or co-survivor, and our email addresses are listed on there as well. So thanks, everyone.

Emily Gemar 38:08

Thanks, everyone.

Laurie Hamame 38:09

Thanks, folks.

Laurie Hamame 38:19

Thanks for listening to Teal Talk. We hope you enjoyed our deep dive into intersectional issues affecting survivors in Ohio. If you like what you heard, subscribe and leave us a five star rating and review. recommend us to a friend, and follow us on Instagram and Facebook @oaesv and Twitter @OhioAllianceESV. If you'd like to learn more about us and the services we offer, sign up for our email list, or read a transcript of this episode, visit [oaesv.org](http://oaesv.org)

Taylr Ucker-Lauderman 38:49

Want to share a comment or ask a question for a future episode? Just click on the link in the show notes to leave us a voicemail. And remember we're here to help. Feel free to call our resource line at 888.886.8388 during regular business hours, or the Ohio Sexual Violence Helpline 24/7 at 844.644.6435 See you next time!