



# We Are Not Alone



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A Teenage Girl's  
Personal Account of Incest  
from Disclosure  
Through Prosecution  
and Treatment

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**Jade Christine Angelica, MDiv**

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#### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All of the characters in the *We Are Not Alone* workbooks are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or events in their lives, is entirely coincidental.

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For Chrissie,

With compassion for your suffering  
and reverence for your vulnerability.

I am humbled by your resilience  
and awed by your commitment to healing.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Jade Christine Angelica, MDiv**, Director of The Child Abuse Ministry, has been working on behalf of victims of child sexual abuse since 1987. A graduate of Harvard Divinity School, Ms. Angelica leads workshops and training sessions for religious leaders and communities, develops programs and conferences, preaches, lectures, and writes on the topic of child sexual abuse. From 1989 to 1993, Ms. Angelica researched and developed special projects for the Child Abuse Unit of the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In order to provide a sorely needed court-oriented resource for adolescent victims of child sexual abuse, Ms. Angelica wrote the first edition of *We Are Not Alone: A Teenage Girl's Personal Account of Incest Through Prosecution and Treatment*, which was printed in 1992 with a grant from the Massachusetts Bar Association.

Also during her time at the Child Abuse Unit, Ms. Angelica realized the importance of involving faith communities and religious leaders in the multidisciplinary efforts of prevention and healing of child sexual abuse. She is also the author of *A Moral Emergency: Breaking the Cycle of Child Sexual Abuse*, a handbook for religious leaders.

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# Introduction

Renee Brant

I am honored to introduce you to *We Are Not Alone*, a sensitive rendering of a teenage girl's experience in the criminal justice system. You will soon meet Jane, a sixteen-year-old girl who was sexually abused by her father. In the wake of her disclosure she meets many professionals. Each has a role to play in the complicated drama that unfolds as Jane tells school administrators and protective service personnel what happened, begins therapy, and winds her way through the criminal justice process.

The author, Jade Angelica, based Jane's saga on the accounts of many teenagers who generously shared their experiences with her. A "child-friendly" and healing spirit permeates *We Are Not Alone*, and I commend Ms. Angelica for her remarkable capacity to empathize with and learn from the teenagers she interviewed. She translated their experiences into a most readable narrative. In addition, *We Are Not Alone* provides examples from actual encounters with dedicated professionals who labor daily on the "front lines" offering protection, comfort, therapy, support, and legal representation to victimized children and their families.

Contact between children and teenagers and the criminal justice system increased significantly in Massachusetts in 1983 following the passage of the new Child Abuse Reporting Law. This law required the Department of Social Services to report certain cases of severe child abuse and child sexual assault to the district attorney's office. As a result, a tremendous influx of cases involving child and teenage victims poured into the criminal justice system. The unique

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Renee Brant, MD, is the founder of the Sexual Abuse Treatment Team, Children's Hospital, Boston, and is in private practice in child and adolescent psychiatry in Newton, Massachusetts.

needs of young victims challenged professionals working within the system. These professionals rose to this challenge by developing specialized, interdisciplinary child abuse protection teams and units such as the Middlesex County Child Abuse Division within the Family Protection Unit of the District Attorney's Office.

The people and systems interacting with sexually abused children have a significant impact on these young victims. Those professionals involved in child abuse investigation, protection, and prosecution can become a part of the problem if they are insensitive to the needs of child and teen victims and their families. In Jane's case, however, the child-friendly and knowledgeable helping professionals she met played a significant role in her healing and recovery. Nothing can undo the trauma of child sexual abuse. However, victimized children and adolescents can have a contrasting and profoundly healing experience in relationships with adults when the adults are attentive to the victims' needs, protective of their vulnerabilities, empathetic to their feelings, and validating of their experiences. Thus, in the best of circumstances, professionals can offer child and adolescent victims a trustworthy, respectful relationship which can help them overcome the isolation, shame, and stigma of sexual abuse.

*We Are Not Alone* serves multiple purposes. It is a resource for teenagers who are facing the unknowns of the criminal justice system. It provides a guide that introduces teenagers to the key players and procedures of the legal process, and a map for them to follow as they travel through the justice system. It also offers teenagers a peer, Jane, with whose thoughts, feelings, and reactions they can identify.

The central message of *We Are Not Alone* is its title. Teenagers reading this book will hopefully experience connections on various levels. They will learn about the network of professionals who are available to help and support them, and they will have a means of identifying with other teenagers who have traveled this difficult road. Through Jane's experiences, teenagers who have been sexually abused will find a path to realizing and understanding their own feelings and perceptions. They will find a comfort in knowing that "we are not alone."