

# MAGIC & MONSTERS

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## FILM *viewing* GUIDE

Provided by Darkness to Light



## Exploring the Setting: The Children's Theatre Company (CTC)

### 1. How was the Children's Theatre Company described by participants?

- What words were used to describe the atmosphere at CTC? (e.g., magical, sparkling, incandescent, transformative, a place of belonging)
- How did the environment at CTC make the participants feel about their talent and potential?

### 2. Magic:

- What words or phrases were used to describe the magic at CTC? Reflect on the contrast between the initial positive view of the theatre and what you later learn.

#### **Insights**

The theatre experience provides opportunities for young people to grow and experience the arts in a way that can be life-changing. These experiences engage student's minds and bodies in learning new skills from set design, costume design, dance, vocals, improvisation, and acting. The priority of the theatre should be providing a safe space for children to thrive.

## Monsters: Abuse and Denial at CTC

### 1. The Artistic Director's Role:

- How did the Artistic Director rule over the theatre?
- What tensions existed in the culture under the Artistic Director's leadership? Consider the balance between perfection and control, beauty and tyranny, praise and exploitation.

### 2. Sexual Abuse at CTC:

- Was the community aware that sexual abuse was occurring?
- What did the interviews from the documentary reveal about the culture of denial?

### 3. How Did This Happen?

- What factors contributed to the lack of action when abuse was known or suspected?
- How did fear, denial, and institutional culture play into the failure to address the abuse?

#### **Insights**

How do individuals move through the fear and denial? How do we develop courage and create institutional change?

Adults are responsible for creating safe spaces for children to learn and grow. How do we start? Be aware. Observe interactions between children and adults. Ask questions about your concerns. Don't assume someone else will ask your question. Take child sexual abuse prevention training. Commit to continued learning. Commit to taking action.

### **Institutional Culture and Choices:**

#### **1. The Role of Courage:**

- What were the key choices that individuals and institutions made to either confront or ignore the abuse?
- How did the lack of courage among those in power affect the situation at CTC?

#### **2. The Impact of Manipulation:**

- Consider how various groups within CTC were manipulated. Can you create a list of these groups and how they were impacted by the abuse?

### **The Survivor's Journey:**

- What challenges did the survivors of CTC face in coming forward?
- Why do survivors often wait decades to speak out?
- What factors contribute to the delay in disclosure?

## **Insights**

An institution is comprised of many individuals with varying life experiences. Individuals create culture, and they can change culture. It's about choosing an action or a series of actions and moving forward with courage.

Individual courage can change conversations and elevate accountability, leading to institutional change. It is a long process but well worth the effort. Consider the perseverance of the CTC survivors!

## **Facts on Child Sexual Abuse:**

### **1. Child Sexual Abuse Statistics:**

- Reflect on the statistics presented about child sexual abuse:
  - 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 13 boys will experience sexual abuse by the age of 18.
  - 1/3 of sexual assault victims never come forward.
  - Only 1/3 of victims disclose as children.

### **2. Barriers to Disclosure:**

- What factors might prevent a child from disclosing abuse? How does trauma play a role in this?
- How does Marci Hamilton's quote on the average age of disclosure (52) provide insight into the survivor's experience?

## **Insights**

Here are some ways to cultivate courage:

Learn the facts. Share the facts. Open conversation about child sexual abuse eliminates stigma. Develop empathy for survivors. Listen thoughtfully when survivors speak.

Embrace small prevention steps. Commit to increasing the size of your prevention footprint through your words and actions.

## **Institutional Courage:**

### **1. What is Institutional Courage?**

- What key factors stand out to you in this definition of institutional courage?
- How can an institution demonstrate moral action and a commitment to change?

## **Institutional Change:**

- What changes must an institution make to move forward with integrity?
- How do individual actions contribute to cultural transformation in institutions?

### **Insights**

The Center for Institutional Courage on Institutional Courage:

It is an institution's commitment to seek the truth and engage in moral action, despite unpleasantness, risk, and short-term cost. It is a pledge to protect and care for those who depend on the institution. It is a compass oriented to the common good of individuals, institutions, and the world. It is a force that transforms institutions into more accountable, equitable, effective places for everyone."

<https://www.institutionalcourage.org/the-call-to-courage>

## **Survivors' Non-Monetary Requests:**

### **1. The Survivors' Call for Change:**

- What were some non-monetary requests made by survivors of CTC to create a positive cultural shift?
- Have these requests been honored by CTC? What progress has been made?

## Creating Change in Institutional Culture:

### 1. What Can You Do?

- How can individuals contribute to changing institutional culture? Reflect on the power of personal choices and actions.

### 2. Practical Steps for Change:

#### For Youth-Serving Organizations:

- Take child sexual abuse prevention training and engage everyone in the organization.

#### For Parents:

- Ask questions of the institutions that serve your children.
- Advocate for changes in laws regarding the statute of limitations for abuse.
- Continue educating yourself on how to protect children from harm.

#### Your Commitment:

- What will you commit to do to support change and ensure the safety of children?

### **Insights**

An institution is comprised of many individuals with varying life experiences.

Individuals create culture and individuals can change culture. It's about choosing an action or a series of actions and moving forward with courage. How do individual actions contribute to cultural transformation in institutions? Individual actions you can take. Serve on a committee or on the Board of Directors. Volunteer during performances.

Hold yourself and others accountable for prioritizing the safety and well-being of children. Have ongoing conversations with people at all levels in the institution about best practices for protecting children.

## Conclusion:

- Reflect on the importance of intentional choices and courageous actions in transforming institutions and protecting children.
- How will you take part in the process of creating change and healing?

**Thank you for your commitment to making courageous and intentional choices for a better, safer future. Let the change begin.**

***For questions on this Viewing Guide, contact [media@D2L.org](mailto:media@D2L.org)***

