

**"As a company, we are passionate about bringing original productions to the stage that highlight mental health, healing, and hope. In an off-Broadway style, we create an immersive audio visual experience along with realistic dialogue and dynamic, relatable characters."**

## **Main Topics of Awareness**

- **Bullying (including cyber bullying) and the intricacies of how people become who they are.**
- **Chronic Illness and its effects on mental health.**

## **Who Are We Giving A Voice To This Year?**

- **Individuals who may find themselves in codependent and toxic relationships.**
- **Individuals who may experience domestic abuse and/or parental neglect.**
- **Individuals who have lived with suicidal ideation.**
- **Individuals who experience daily pain and complications due to chronic illness.**

# Origin/a note from our director:

In my writing, I always seek to provide realistic dialog, relatable characters, and hopeful content. In the same way that we respect our actors as young artists, we also strive to provide them with meaningful and believable stories and characters. "Hurt people hurt people." I'm not sure who first said this statement or where it was first written, but I have found it to be painfully accurate.

I have had the title "But Why?" on my mind for a while now. The idea of giving the backstory to how a bully became so aggressive first came to me when I was in graduate school preparing for my Masters in Social Work. I had begun my internship and had been working with youth who had emotional pain that was surfacing as behavioral issues. Some of these kids were saying hateful things to their peers, giving their parents the silent treatment, lashing out with sarcastic remarks, and even becoming physically violent. These were all reasons that they were brought in to see a counselor. I was overwhelmed when I had intake sessions and would first hear of their drastic behaviors. It was daunting to think that I was supposed to be the one with answers.

BUT, when I learned WHY they behaved the way that they did, my empathy grew and it all began to make more sense.

I also learned that my job wasn't to fix things. There was so much power in just listening and letting these kids get things off their chests. Sometimes, healing begins when words are spoken and pain is acknowledged by a listening ear.

It was such an amazing experience to produce "But Why?" and "Invested" on a smaller scale as two single-scene plays in our Rest in The Echo production last year. I felt that there was much more of a story here. It all tied together and these characters needed more of a voice. I hope that this year, we all better understand just how deep pain can go. Healing can go even deeper, if we are willing to take it there.