



Our Voices Too

Creating a safe space

Ideas for the development of participatory group work
to address sexual violence with young people

Developed for the Our Voices Too Youth Advocacy Project

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Introduction and context

Group work in the context of addressing sexual violence

Working in groups challenges the individualisation of problems and solutions. It ensures 'public' issues rooted in structural injustice and oppression are not solely considered as personal or solely private problems. In the context of sexual violence group work may have an important role for challenging individual narratives that foster self-blame and shame. Group work also has a role in approaches which seek to empower individuals – enabling collective action to create change and challenge injustice. Participatory practice, community development and rights based approaches often work with and through groups, seeking to shift relationships of power and enabling participants to take on leadership roles.

Group work and peer support are also well recognised components of trauma informed practice with adults – responding to the recognised benefits of those affected by trauma of connecting with others impacted by similar experiences (SAMSHA, 2014). However, to our knowledge, it is less well developed practice with children and young people affected by trauma – particularly in the context of sexual violence (Brodie, 2017). There are good reasons for this – mostly rooted in concerns about exposing young people to additional risks through contact with other potentially traumatised young people. However it is our experience at the International Centre that there are ways of working in groups with young people affected by sexual violence that can be both safe and beneficial if appropriately planned and supported.

For the last decade aspects of the International Centre's research addressing sexual violence towards children have explored the role of group work with young people in participatory research practice and through learning about the contribution of group work in therapeutic or support work. This work has included both UK based projects (including 'Be Healthy'; 'One of the Gang'; 'Making Justice Work'; 'Learning from the Experts' and the Young Researchers Advisory Panel¹) and a number of pieces of work with young people across Europe and beyond (including 'Our Voices Too', SVRI conference 2017, 'LEAP', 'Our Voices', 'CATS conference 2013/14, Eurochild Conference²).

As part of the Our Voices Too project (funded by the Oak Foundation) we worked with three partners to develop group work based advocacy projects with young people affected by sexual violence. Our partners were: Different & Equal in Albania; the National Center for Child Abuse Prevention (NCCAP) in Moldova and ATINA in Serbia³. At the outset each partner had different levels of experience and confidence working in groups. As part of this project we were asked to support the partners by developing a four part toolkit for the group work⁴. Given that many barriers to group work in this field centre around 'risk and vulnerability' of participants, the first part of the toolkit was about '*creating safe spaces*'. This focuses on supporting facilitators and participants to think about how they could undertake participatory group work addressing sexual violence safely.

The document that follows is part one of the toolkit and it builds on work from the earlier LEAP project (Billingham, 2016) – part of the Our Voices programme of work. This attempts to capture our own, and partners, learning about promoting safety and managing risk when undertaking group work in this field. We consider it a working document and recognise that it will benefit from revision and refinement in the future. However, we are sharing this resource to both document elements of the Our Voices Too project and to support wider learning and feedback on this topic.



1 For details of these projects see reference list

2 As above

3 For more information see: <http://differentandequal.org/sq/>; <http://atina.org.rs/en/>; <http://cnpac.org.md/>

4 To hear more about the toolkit, please visit the 'Our Voices' podcast series

Before you start: a foreword for facilitators

Protection through participation

Young people who have opportunities to take part in participatory group work addressing sexual violence repeatedly tell us they value the following opportunities that it brings:

- a chance for their voices and perspectives to be heard and considered by others
- a focus on their strengths and abilities
- connection with other young people
- peer support and mutuality
- contributing to helping others and learning new skills (Hamilton *et al.*, 2019; Cody, 2015).

We think that when done safely, participatory practice can have lots of tangible benefits for young people affected by sexual violence and make an important contribution to their wellbeing.

Trauma informed approaches

When working in group settings to address sexual violence, young people's wellbeing must be the absolute priority, recognizing that each individual will have different needs. When we know that the young people we are working with include those directly affected by sexual violence our approach must consider the potential impact of trauma and mobilise appropriate resources⁵. Planning a project needs to draw on the support and expertise of different stakeholders. These include practitioners who know potential participants individually and have trusting relationships with them; wider networks of services which provide specialist support; and young people (potential participants) themselves.

Reflective practice

It is also important to understand that creating a 'safe space' in which to do participatory work cannot be achieved through a prescriptive set of activities. Instead, participants' and professionals' wellbeing must be an ongoing concern that shapes the way all aspects of a project are done, supported by a wider organisational culture. When we talk about wider organisational culture this includes leadership having an understanding of, and commitment to the time and resources required to do this work and actively supporting it. Safety and wellbeing needs to be thought about before, during and after any activities undertaken within the project and supported by a culture of reflective practice. Safety also needs to be understood in its broadest terms: it is not just physical safety that should be considered, but also psychological and relational safety (Shuker, 2013).

Managing risk

What's needed to create a positive and safe approach will be determined by the needs of individual contexts, project aims and participants. It is also important to recognise that we can never anticipate and avoid every possible risk. The approach we are advocating is not about complete risk avoidance. Every organisation will have different thresholds for what they feel comfortable and confident managing. Supportive management and regular reflective supervision for facilitators are vital. They should provide opportunities and support for staff to reconsider plans and respond to changing or emerging needs.

Group work theory and practice

Undertaking participatory group work for advocacy with young people in groups requires a different skill set, expertise and facilitation skills to one to one work or therapeutic group work. Groups can be particularly dynamic, and often unpredictable contexts to work with. Ensuring facilitators have some basic knowledge of both 'group work theory' (including the stages and phases of group development) and the practice literature is likely to be important (Trevithick, 2005).

Applying principles in practice

Finally it is important to note that for reasons explained above, the section that follows is not meant as a 'how to' guide, but rather a set of guiding principles and descriptions of some activities that have helped put some of these principles into practice in the International Centre's work. We have also created a draft framework (see page 5) to help you think about how these principles might apply at different stages of a project.

It is also important to note that this document was developed specifically to support the development of the Our Voices Too Youth Advocacy Project⁶ with three partner NGOs in Eastern Europe. Although initial feedback on its implementation was positive, the document is by no means exhaustive and it may contain significant gaps. We hope and expect that other readers will bring many of your own ideas and strategies to build on this and share your learning with ourselves and others. We hope that readers will engage in future dialogue about related practice: share their own ideas and support us to refine this document in the future⁷.

⁵ It is important to recognise that most victims of sexual violence will not have identified themselves as such and therefore it may be helpful to assume that in any group of young people there may be individuals who are directly affected by these issues.

⁶ See www.our-voices.org.uk/about/projects/our-voices-too-2016-2019

⁷ Please sign up to the Our Voices mailing list to receive updates about the programme and details of opportunities for dialogue and sharing www.our-voices.org.uk/network/about-the-our-voices-research-and-practice-network. For direct feedback email camille.warrington@beds.ac.uk

Draft framework

Framework for creating a safe group environment for and with young people

- For use with supporting guidelines
- Developed for participatory research and consultations to address sexual violence



Some key principles

Below we've listed a number of key principles that we have found helpful to promote safe practice in our group based participation work with young people affected by sexual violence. However this is not an exhaustive list and there will be other principles that are relevant too.

To start with, think about the degree to which these things are present (or possible) within your own organisation.

■ Working in 'trauma informed' ways

- recognising the signs/symptoms of trauma; acknowledging the impact of traumatic experiences and actively seeking to avoid re-traumatisation (see SAMHSA, 2014).

■ Detailed collaborative planning

- working with both young people and colleagues to anticipate potential challenges, identify individual needs and put in place strategies and resources to respond or mitigate risk.

■ Ongoing reflective practice

- including a commitment and time to capture ongoing feedback and learning from all stakeholders and adapting and refining plans.

■ Staff supervision and organisational support

- ensuring that those supporting young participants are themselves supported and any risk they are dealing with is shared and held by the wider organisation or team.

■ Shared decision making

- as a key component of safeguarding this includes sharing decisions about how to respond to unanticipated events, allegations or circumstances that arise, and working together to help identify how best to support participants and other vulnerable individuals.

■ Partnerships and links with wider support networks and resources

- recognising that this work can't be done in isolation by any individual or organisation and wider resources will need to be drawn upon.

The remainder of this section explores six stages of project development depicted in the framework. It suggests possible activities at each stage that may help to foster a sense of safety and wellbeing among participants.

1 Set up	Planning a project
2 Engage	Initial engagement (of potential participants)
3 Start group	Bringing young people together for the first time
4 Maintain	Ongoing facilitation and group maintenance
5 Communicate	Sharing project outputs and representing the work to wider audiences
6 Close	Ending a project and/or young person's involvement

Section 1: Project set up

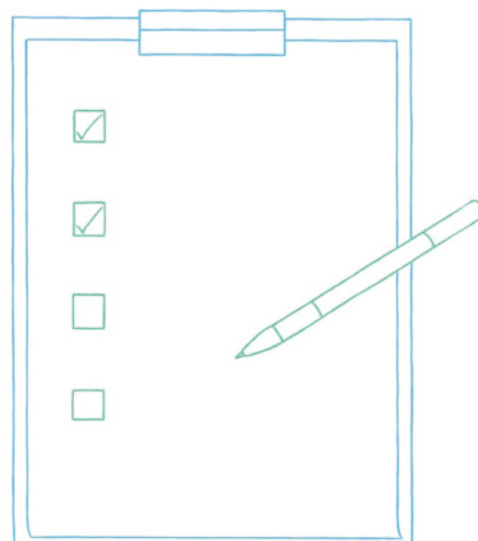
Initial considerations

Before young people are engaged in a project it is important to undertake detailed planning, along with risk and needs assessment; and identify resources needed to run a safe project. As a minimum we suggest:

- i) **Developing a set of clear objectives.** These will help communicate the purpose of the project clearly to potential participants and those who engage them with the project. This helps ensure plans are realistic and appropriate and most importantly enables young people to make informed choices about taking part.
- ii) **Developing inclusion criteria.** Making decisions about who the project is for and what language you will use to explain this is vital. This also means thinking about who would not be eligible to take part – considering for example whether the project is for young people known to have experienced sexual violence or broader groups of young people such as those identified as ‘at risk’ or young people interested in activism on this subject? Also think about other criteria such as age, sex or gender identity.⁸
- iii) **Developing an initial project risk assessment or register.** This process is designed to anticipate possible challenges and ways of responding to identified risks. Although risk assessment should be an ongoing process (and one which young people themselves should be involved in) it is still important to do initial work on this as it may determine who the project seeks to involve.
- iv) **Identify and link with support networks.** It is important to recognise that no one individual or organisation has all the answers or necessary resources. Building relationships and alliances with other organisations means access to different types of support for participants if required, alongside support and advice for staff.
- v) **Creating a safe context for the project.** Where and when the project will take place is an important consideration to promote inclusion and safety. If the project venue is hard for people to travel to or a potentially stigmatizing space then it will have significant consequences for the project. Similarly the timing of project activities will have consequences too depending on the childcare, study or work commitments of potential participants. Creating safe contexts also means considering how the group will respond to diversity and support different individuals to participate comfortably and confidently.

vi) **Considering practicalities.** Alongside a consideration of the venue other practicalities such as food, refreshments, travel expenses, bathrooms, childcare and resources also need considering as these can often become barriers to attendance. Alternatively, if people do turn up but feel tired, hot and hungry you’re unlikely to ever get the best from them.

vii) **Leadership and facilitation skills and style.** Ensuring at least some staff have experience of running groups with young people will be essential – alongside some knowledge of group work theory. There will be value in enabling staff working together on this project to develop clarity about their approach to facilitation, participation and leadership and to plan together.



⁸ More is discussed about this in section two of this document.

Resource example: a planning checklist

The table below is an example of a set of questions developed to help plan a project to promote inclusive and safe practice. The questions required will differ for every project and should be adapted for your own needs.

PROMPT QUESTIONS		Y/N	POSSIBLE ACTION
Venue	Is the space you're using private? Will it be free from interruptions?		
	Could attendance at the venue be exposing or stigmatizing for potential participants?		
	Is the space comfortable? Can you do anything to increase a sense of comfort?		
	Is there enough space for the type of activity you're planning? Are there 'break out' rooms in case someone needs time away from the main activity?		
Travel	Is it safe and easy for potential participants to travel to/from the venue?		
	Are there any resources available to support participants to travel to the workshops?		
Food	Have you planned refreshments: snacks, meals and drinks?		
	Is there a separate space to eat food?		
Timing	Does the timing of the project activity prevent anyone attending?		
Staff	Are there a minimum of two facilitators for any group work? And possibly additional staff to provide one to one support if necessary?		
	How might existing professional relationships between facilitators and potential participants affect the group dynamics? I.e. Is there value in identifying facilitators who aren't involved in case management?		
	How do the identities of staff impact on the group dynamics and relate to the potential participants?		
	Are additional staff needed before/after or during activities?		
Partnerships and external resources	What relationships are in place with other service providers to enable potential participants' access to additional support or advice if required?		
	Do any partners or outside agencies need informing about the group (or agreements putting in place) in anticipation of referrals or requests for support as a result of the group work?		
Additional resources	Do you need any additional resources to help create a safe space or respond to distress – including resources for facilitators to access additional support/supervision?		
Additional needs	Do any potential participants require any specific resources? e.g. Wheelchair access; a prayer room; a space to take medication; translation of materials; resources adapted for accessibility?		

Resource example: a risk register

One approach to managing risks within a project – both for participants, staff and organisations – is through the development of a risk register. This is not meant to be an exact science – or a way of raising anxiety – but rather a helpful process to encourage reflection and planning. It can help staff to feel prepared and confident about what they're doing and to assure others they've thought it through properly.

Draft Risk Register Template

KEY

Likelihood		
1	low likelihood	To determine the likelihood of this risk ask yourselves ‘How likely is this risk?’ or ‘How often is this likely to happen?’
2	moderate likelihood	
3	high likelihood	
Impact		
1	low impact	To determine the impact or severity of this risk ask yourselves ‘How severe is this risk?’ or ‘Will it result in distress/injury or trauma/death’ and think about physical and emotional impact.
2	moderate impact	
3	high impact	

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT (IF NOT ADDRESSED)	SCORE (LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT)	ACTIONS TO MINIMISE LIKELIHOOD AND IMPACT	ACTIONS TO RESPOND IF RISK OCCURS
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Section 2: Engaging young people

Creating a safe process means considering and planning for potential risks that may emerge when working on advocacy projects relating to sexual violence in groups of young people. Potential risks will vary depending on the individuals taking part but may include: stigma; retribution for speaking out; feeling silenced; conflict with family members; conflict between group members; hierarchies of oppression; being 'triggered' – including somatic responses; and vicarious trauma.

It is important to consider and take these seriously while not letting them feel overwhelming or even preventing organisations trying to undertake participatory work with young people. Remember young people have a right to be involved in informing responses to these issues and our role is to find ways to support them to do that safely. From learning from our own work we've summarised five key (broadly chronological) stages of this process of engaging young people at the beginning of a project. These are shown in the diagram below and each discussed in a bit more detail.



5 planning stages for engaging young people

1 Deciding who the project is aimed at?

Engaging young people starts with a decision about who can (and possibly can't) take part. What criteria will you use? Is your approach restrictive or inclusive? Is it targeting specific groups? There's no right or wrong way but deciding your criteria and being clear about the rationale is a crucial first step. This involves considering which needs you can manage and respond to and which you can't.

2 Risk assessing potential participants

Everybody is different and will have different needs. An individual risk assessment process helps assess if it is safe and appropriate to invite a young person to participate in the project⁹. This may involve a structured conversation with a professional who knows a potential participant (possibly the individual who has referred them) to consider whether the project has the right resources in place to enable them to safely participate in group work or advocacy.

For some young people it may simply be that the timing of a project or activity isn't right. For example if a young person is involved in a police investigation or a witness in a prosecution, their involvement in an advocacy project may not be advisable (or feasible) until the case has finished. For others there may be specific risks associated with working in groups.

3 Sharing information about the project

Before young people 'sign up' to take part in a project it is important they know as much as possible about what they're agreeing to. Expectations should be managed and risks pointed out clearly. Be honest about the subject matter and help young people make an informed decision as much as possible. This may involve sharing information in writing or verbally but the message needs to be clear and consistent. This is also a chance for young people to ask questions about the project and for expectations to be managed.

4 Clarifying boundaries

Another important aspect of information sharing is clarifying boundaries. As a participatory project it is important to facilitate participant involvement in decision making as much as possible but there will probably be some aspects of the project that are non-negotiable and it is important to be honest and open about this with all participants. Setting or identifying clear boundaries about what participants can (and can't) influence from the outset is much more valuable than giving young people vague messages that they are in control before they find out that's not true. (*The exercise 'mapping the project' provides an example activity to explore these boundaries in more detail at the next stage of the project*).

5 Getting consent

Whether young people's consent to participate is captured verbally or in writing it is important to recognise consent as an ongoing process (rather than a one off event). This means young people must be clear about their right to opt out at any time and feel free to do this without guilt or anxiety.

6 Individual support planning

Once young people have agreed to take part, it is helpful to offer them opportunities to identify and share any specific needs or adaptations either directly with project facilitators; verbally or in writing through a '*getting to know you form*'; or indirectly with support from another professional. **This is NOT about putting pressure on a young person to share any personal information they do not want to.** Instead it is about planning with young people what they think would be useful for those facilitating a project to know. It is about recognising that some aspects of a project may need to be tailored to individual needs to support more inclusive participation. What could enable each young person to contribute most fully and safely? What would help them feel in control and get the most out of the experience? Sometimes these conversations are called 'reasonable adjustment' discussions.

Example questions that might inform these discussions are listed in the resource example on the next page.

⁹ If these discussions involve sharing confidential information about a young person, without their consent, think about whether there's a way of doing this anonymously/without identifying them.

Resource example: Individual risk and needs assessment

Points to be covered in initial conversation with worker who knows young person (prior to young person being formally approached to join project)

SOURCE: Adapted from Beckett, H. International Centre risk assessment process

Please note that this form is for reference and should be adapted for use in your project context – for example you may wish to add further questions or identify those which are not relevant.

DISCUSSION POINTS FOR ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS	
Young person's initials	
Gender and age	
Key or lead worker's name	
Estimated time the young person has been supported by the project?	
Significant communication needs/preferences? (E.g. needs for translation of materials or use of sign language). <i>If YES – can these be met by the project?</i>	
Specific needs for support with transport to the project venue? <i>If YES – can these be met by the project?</i>	
Potential need for third party to be present during workshop? <i>If YES – can this be managed?</i>	
Is there significant potential for emotional distress? <i>If YES – could this be adequately minimised? (explain how)</i>	
Are there any known specific risks of young person being 'triggered' that facilitators should be aware of?	
<i>If answered YES to above – does the young person have any strategies for responding to being triggered they would be happy to share with facilitators? (details only to be shared with young person's consent)</i>	
Is there any known specific risk of someone finding out about involvement in this project and this leading to potential harm?	
Are the project activities likely to have a negative impact on any therapeutic treatment?	
Are the project activities likely to impact on any current legal processes?	
Is the young person likely to have any difficulties working in a group environment and/or due to other members of the group?	
Can a worker identify potential benefits of a young person's involvement in project?	
Is young person assessed as able to provide informed consent if information is given in appropriate format?	
Is there anything else facilitator should be aware of to ensure a young person can participate meaningfully and safely?	
Which worker will agree to actively 'check in' with the young person at agreed points in the project to check they are okay and get feedback.	<i>(Write name of worker)</i>
Any questions or concerns on the part of the worker?	
Agreed next steps to approach young person	

Resource example: Topic guide for considering reasonable adjustments

Example questions for a 'reasonable adjustment discussion'

- Do they need support with travel or childcare?
- Do they need to take regular breaks?
- Do they have any needs associated with their religion or culture?
- Are there any issues for them with literacy or writing?
- How do they like to be addressed?
- Do they have any dietary requirements or feel okay about eating with others?
- Do they have any disabilities or learning needs they'd like us to know about?
- If they've experienced trauma, do they have any particular triggers and if so are there any strategies that they find useful for us to know about in response to this?
- How would they like staff to respond if they become distressed or disassociate?
- What else gets in the way of them feeling safe?
- Is there anything else that they think it would be helpful for us to know about them?
- What else?

Resource example: Getting to know you form

SOURCE: Adapted from NSPCC Participation Team 'Getting to know you' form

***Information collected on this form is requested from Youth Advocates on a voluntary basis. It should form part of a process of ensuring all reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs, have been considered and, where possible, responded to.**

We want to make sure that when you're involved with us you are safe, and we can plan the work in a way that feels comfortable and supportive for you. You do not have to answer any or all of the questions below and you may prefer to talk to us in person about these questions.

Partners to add information here about how this information will be securely stored and shared in line with GDPR regulations

Name of young person	Contact number
Date of birth	Email
Address	

Introduction

- 1 Why would you like to be involved in [NAME OF PROJECT]?
- 2 Do you have any hopes or concerns about joining the [NAME OF PROJECT]?

Meeting with other people

- 3 Is there any preparation or support we can give you before or during your involvement in the project to help you feel at ease? (e.g. being in a group with other young people)
- 4 Being involved in [NAME OF PROJECT] means that you will be sharing your views and hearing from others. Sometimes you might hear information that you disagree with or you might find upsetting. What could we do to support you if this situation happens? (e.g. you could talk to someone, we can give you some time alone)
- 5 We would like to make sure that your involvement in the [NAME OF PROJECT] is a safe and positive experience. If you think it is useful for us to know about any health needs you have please complete the following questions.

HEALTH NEEDS	YES	NO	COMMENTS
6 Are you on any medication?			
7 Do you have any allergies or medical requirements?			
8 Have special dietary needs?			

- 9 Are there any other difficulties or challenges that you are having that you would like to share and think it would be helpful for us to know about (you can write these here – or talk to us about them).
- 10 Do you need us to provide any resources to help you attend project activities? (E.g. halal food, prayer mats, information in large font etc.)

What happens now?

Before we can invite you to take part in a project, we need to ask you to share details of one or two helpful adults in your life – people we could contact in an emergency. **At least one** of these people should be a professional (e.g. support worker, social worker, teacher).

Name	Name
Relationship	Relationship
Contact number	Contact number

Section 3: Starting the group

Before you start: a note about group work theory and practice

There are lots of youth work and group work resources available that explore the different stages of group formation, participatory practice and consider questions of group leadership and facilitation style (see for example Westergaard 2009; Chambers, 2007; Jacobson and Rugley, 2007; Trevithick, 2005, Dynamix, 2002). Approaches vary depending on the purpose of the group and the organisational or project aims. This toolkit does not seek to capture this theoretical body of work but we would always recommend consciously considering your approach and drawing on wider resources to inform this element of project planning.

Whichever approach(es) you draw on there are likely to be some helpful elements to starting the group, identifying and creating boundaries and managing expectations. We share a few of our ideas about these steps below. Many suggestions here are not specific to work on sexual violence but include additional reflections on specific considerations for responding and addressing sexual violence with young people. The list is not exhaustive but will hopefully prompt you and colleagues to think of more strategies to support safe working practices.

Setting the scene

'Health warnings'

Talking about, and working together to address sexual violence can be extremely positive but it doesn't mean that it isn't sometimes difficult. While it is important not to assume how people will react it is vital that we acknowledge that sexual violence can be a sensitive and challenging topic to talk about or work on. The project may raise emotions or affect how participants reflect and think about personal experiences. If participants have experienced trauma there may be known or unknown triggers for them in the work that you are planning to do. Acknowledging this at the beginning of the project is important. It helps:

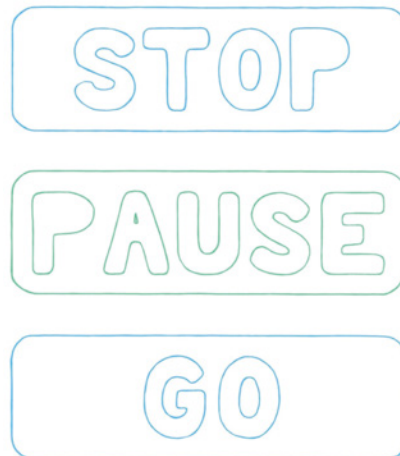
- participants make informed choices about taking part
- communicate your commitment and confidence to respond to these challenges
- offer participants an opportunity to share any strategies they use for coping, and
- provide an opportunity to remind the young people of support networks available to them.



Safety protocols

Facilitators 'pause button'

Having a safety protocol that you explain during ground rules is an important start. This can be as simple as saying the facilitator can press the 'pause button' to call a break at any point (this may involve the use of a physical symbol or card or just a verbal instruction to 'pause'). If necessary this 'pause button' can be used as a way to get things back under control. If introducing the concept of a 'pause button' it is important to acknowledge that nobody likes to feel they are being 'shut down'. However, the facilitator should explain that the 'pause button' is only used for the wellbeing of the group. It also offers the potential to return to a discussion at a later time (rather than closing down a discussion topic entirely. If this mechanism is explained fully at the outset of the project it will be easier for participants to accept its use and understand the reasons for working in this way.



'STOP; PAUSE; GO' Card's for participants

SOURCE: Warrington et al. (2016)

Some people use a physical card system to help participants with early recognition of emotions without participants having to voice them (e.g. red, yellow, green, for 'stop, pause, go'). A participant can go pick up a card at any moment during the workshop. Introducing the cards is also a visual way of the facilitators acknowledging the fact that things can get emotional or intense before the workshop starts – helping manage participants' expectations.

Exercise 1: Group agreement and confidentiality

Type of exercise	Group discussion
Aims	Ensure young people have defined and understand how they want the group to operate
Time	30 minutes
Materials	Post-its, pens, flip chart paper

SOURCE: Billingham (2016)

- Explain that when we're doing group work we make a simple agreement to help everyone feel safe. This is based on how we want the group to run; how we want people to behave towards each other; and how we will manage any difficulties, if and when they occur.
- In pairs or individually give everyone a few minutes to think or discuss statements they'd like to include in the 'group agreement'. Give an example – e.g. *'to listen when another person is talking'*. Explain that these can include rules for facilitators.
- Ask people to share their ideas in turn. After each idea is presented, check:
 - Does everyone understand what this rule means?
 - Does everyone agree that it should go into the group agreement?
- Keep asking for ideas that have not been discussed yet. Encourage the group to clarify statements or concepts as they could mean different things to different people. E.g. *'Respect – What is this? What are people doing if they are being respectful? How would we know if someone is being respectful?'* Finally check if any key ideas are missing and suggest any you think they should consider.
- Bear in mind that sometimes potential 'rules' may be difficult for people to rigorously stick to and therefore try to choose words to describe a realistic rule for the group. For example it might be better to say *'we will try to avoid talking over other people'* rather than *'never talk over someone'*.
- Developing a group agreement also means thinking about how the group want to uphold it? Are there rules which would mean some kind of 'sanction' for people continuously breaking them? This is not about being unnecessarily strict but about making the idea of a group contract meaningful.
- When complete, ask everyone (including facilitators) to sign or mark the agreement.

Facilitator notes: Any discussion about confidentiality should include an acknowledgement of the limits of this – both in terms of the legal duties of facilitators and the limits of control within a group setting. Legal duties and their interpretation vary in different countries but a standard approach is that professionals have a duty to pass information on if something makes them worry that someone is at a 'significant risk of harm'. Young people involved in services are normally aware of this but it is important to repeat it.

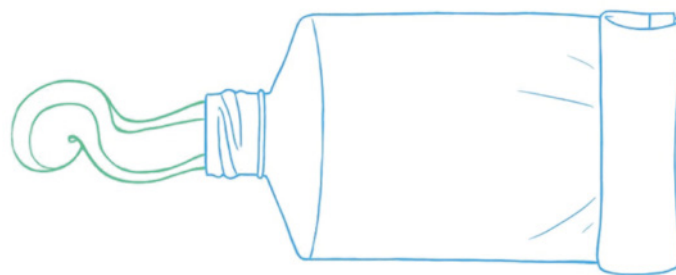
It may also be helpful to point out that group work is different from one to one work. If young people want to share personal information in a group setting encourage them to reflect on how this might impact them and how it might affect others. Offer alternative opportunities to share personal experiences one to one before or after a session. Facilitators may need to set boundaries or expectations about this – while being careful not to shut down participants from sharing experiences if they need to. Given the stigma, secrecy and self-blame associated with sexual violence it is important participants do not think that people don't want to hear about their experience.

Some ideas of things that could be in a group agreement

- **Respect different viewpoints** (no right or wrong answers)
- **Listen to each other** and try not to talk over each other
- **Everyone has a right to silence** – its fine just to listen and you do not have to speak if you do not want to (e.g. don't put pressure on others)
- **Respecting privacy of other group members/ maintaining confidentiality** (remind participants of limits to this as explained during consent section and explain we will come back to talk a little bit more about this)
- **Supporting each other to have space to speak** (i.e. if you're a confident speaker making sure you allow some space for others to speak if they wish to)
- **Mobile phones – silent** and if have to answer calls take outside room
- **Anyone can choose to leave at any time**

Exercise 2: The toothpaste exercise

Type of exercise	Group activity
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Support understanding of boundaries of confidentiality in group setting■ Help young people make informed choices about what they share
Time	10 minutes
Materials	Tube of toothpaste, sheet of coloured paper/card



SOURCE: Billingham (2016)

Task: Ask a participant to squeeze out the entire contents of a toothpaste tube onto a sheet of paper. When they have emptied all they can, ask them to hand the empty tube to another participant and ask them to put all the toothpaste back into the tube. Explain the following rules:

- They are not allowed to tamper with or damage the tube in any way.
- They have to get every last 'smear' of toothpaste back in the tube.

The group will soon come to the conclusion that it is impossible to put all the toothpaste back.

Discussion: Ask the group to reflect on what this exercise represents in relation to confidentiality and disclosure of personal information? Key reflections to draw out include:

- Once they say something in the session, they cannot take it back.
- Once a facilitator has heard information from young people that raises concerns, they cannot pretend they have not heard it, and they must act on it and in some cases break confidentiality.
- Emphasise that they are in control of what they choose to disclose in the session but they should make their decisions regarding sharing personal details based on the knowledge that there are boundaries to this confidentiality.
- You should also assure them that this is not about 'silencing' anyone – you are very open and willing to hear what they want to tell you, should they want to share difficult experiences in this setting – it is simply about helping them make really informed choices about doing this and helping them consider what to share in a group setting and what to share in one to one settings.

Facilitator notes: It is important that young people are clear that it is not possible to guarantee that people won't speak outside of the space and this should inform their decision to disclose. It is important however, to emphasise that group members can share information if they want to, particularly if they want help. There may also be things they want and need to speak about but do not want to make a personal disclosure. Helping them talk in the third person and avoid using real names in their discussions can be useful to help them speak about issues that affect them in a way that feels safe for them. Alternatively offering them opportunities to speak to staff on a one to one basis outside of the group is also important.

Learning point: During group work, if young people share personal experiences, it is normal for other participants to compare these to their own experiences and this may evoke strong feelings. For example, when exploring the criminal justice process for victims of sexual violence, participants who have especially poor experiences or do not have a sense of justice, may find it difficult to hear from others whose cases have been properly investigated, reached court or resulted in a prosecution. Anticipating, acknowledging and responding to these feelings is important and one way of minimizing distress.

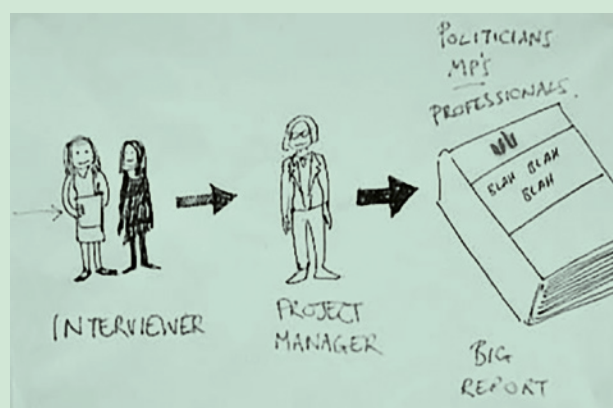
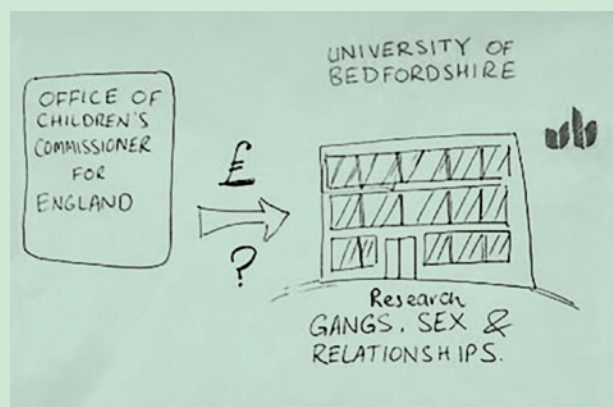
Exercise 3: Mapping the project

Type of exercise	Group discussion
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Help participants understand the advocacy project ■ Clarify the power relationships in the project and the limits and potential for participant influence
Time	20 minutes
Materials	Picture/symbols of stakeholders and/or diagrams on flip chart paper; pens

SOURCE: Warrington and Billingham (2013) Gangs Film Project workshops

- Ask the group to explain their understanding of why they are there and what they will be doing. At this stage you do not need to correct them, just capture all their ideas on flip chart paper. Once they have finished, explain that you will now explain the project in more detail. Explain that it is important that the young people involved have clear expectations about what they are getting involved in.
- Using hand drawn pictures or symbols create a map or diagram of the project to help explain who the stakeholders are and the relationships between them. Some questions you may want to address are:
 - Who is funding the project?
 - Whose idea was the project?
 - Who is 'in charge' (locally, nationally, and internationally)? And what does 'in charge' mean?
 - Who has a say in how things are run?
 - What is their role?
- This should provide an image that you can return to repeatedly to remember and reflect on the project. If you take a photo of the diagram you can give everyone a copy.

Facilitator notes: In a project focused on young people's participation it is important to think about power. One way of doing this is by trying to explain the relationships of power that exist between different stakeholders. It is an opportunity to clarify that some parameters for the project have been set prior to young people getting involved.



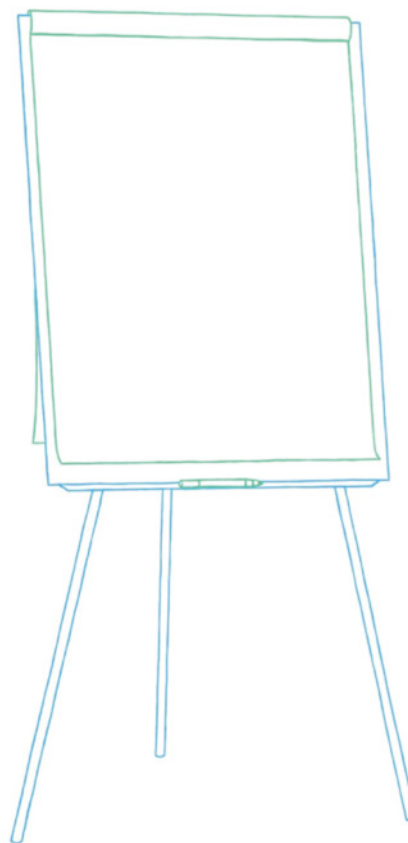
Example illustrations to map stakeholder relationships in participatory film project connected to research on gang associated sexual violence

Exercise 4: Hopes and fears

Type of exercise	Group discussion
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Identify and address young people's concerns about the project in the group setting■ Begin to identify individual and shared hopes for the project to shape its direction
Time	20 minutes
Materials	Flip chart paper and pens, post-its

SOURCE: Billingham (2016)

- Ask the young people to work in pairs with the person sitting next to them. Ask them to talk about what they hope to get from the project. This could be anything – little or small. It could be hopes for themselves, for the group, for young people in general, for wider society. They could put their ideas on post-its.
- Using flip chart paper draw two columns, one titled 'hopes' the other titled 'fears'. Ask the group to feedback their ideas from their discussion on their hopes. Go around each pair and ask them to stick their post-its in the 'hopes' column. You can ask them to elaborate on their post-its if more detail is required. Once everyone has shared their hopes, reflect on the complete list. Are there any similarities across the hopes?
- Next ask them to work with their partner again and this time to discuss any fears they may have about the project. Again, these could be anything: that they are worried they may not be able to make every session; that they find it difficult to trust people; that they aren't very good at speaking in groups; that they do not want young people to continue to be stereotyped or their efforts to go ignored.
- Once the pairs have had five minutes to discuss this, repeat the feedback session. Ask them to share their post-its once again. You should try and make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak without putting pressure on people if they do not want to. As much as you can, use examples of what is going to happen in the project and how you will be working (young people led, experiential and participatory) to put their minds at rest and deal with their concerns. Where the concerns need some more thought about logistics, resources and delivery, you may need to explain that you will go away and get more information before you can address this.



Facilitator notes: Young people may have similar fears, and it can be useful to highlight this and make it clear that they are not alone with their concerns, and that it is ok and reasonable to be worried about new experiences. Assure the group that, even if they haven't expressed their concerns, they can do this at any point and that they may find this easier as they get more comfortable in the group setting.

Section 4: Maintaining the group

Ongoing facilitation

As noted earlier groups are dynamic and constantly changing. A range of resources mentioned earlier provide both guidance on the practice and theory of group facilitation and the different approaches to this (see for example Trevithick, 2005). Central to all group work theory is recognition of the different stages or phases that groups go through and the different needs that will align to these stages. Having knowledge of these stages will be helpful and important, alongside feeling able to respond to changing and sometimes unpredictable dynamics.

Below are some suggestions of strategies we have found helpful when working with groups of young people to talk about sexual violence. Many are generic to all group work but some specifically address the needs of individuals affected by trauma. The list is not exhaustive but will hopefully prompt you to think of more strategies to support safe working practices.

- Always ensure there's a minimum of two facilitators present in a group with experience of working in group settings. Think about whether anyone else is needed to support staff or any young people on a one to one basis? Does there need to be other staff who know about the project either present in the venue or available by phone while group work takes place?
- Plan roles for each facilitator before hand – e.g. who's going to respond to an individual's needs that may emerge, and who will continue to facilitate or hold the group? Who is observing how young people are responding while the other takes the lead in talking or facilitating?
- Start each session with a brief reminder of the group agreement/contract.
- Have a bank of short 'games' to break up each section. These can be both scheduled games and ideas used spontaneously to respond to changing dynamics. Games have an important role at lots of stages of groups. For example they can be used to 'break the ice'; to energise tired groups; to calm people down; build trust; develop skills; and manage group dynamics among other things.
- Provide a 'calm box' containing a range of objects that participants can play or fiddle with quietly during activities to help them stay focused. These might include some putty; string; stress balls; stretchy toys; lavender hand cream.
- Put in place break out rooms or spaces to enable participants to take 'time out' if and when they require it. Make these spaces comfortable, quiet and private.
- Be prepared to deviate from a session plan or objectives if it is clear that a group needs some space to talk/reflect or address other priorities.
- Anticipate some conflict – and do not be afraid of it but feel confident and prepared to respond calmly and have strategies for de-escalating conflict.
- Plan strategies for dealing with behavior which contravenes the group contract or crosses the boundaries of safe or acceptable behaviour. Ensure facilitators and participants have a shared understanding of where these boundaries are.
- Maximise participants' sense of choice and control at all times. Make sure participants have a clear idea of what is planned for each session and the timings alongside the wider project schedule and avoid surprises.
- Create easy ways for participants to let facilitators know if they need a break or want to stop or pause a discussion or activity (see 'stop, pause, go' cards example above).
- Finish sessions with enough time to have a proper reflection or closing activity.



Example of a 'calm box' (sometimes referred to as a 'sensory' or 'regulating box' used in interviews with children addressing sexual violence – original idea from <https://triangle.org.uk/resource-categories/kits>

Group facilitation techniques

Adapted from: International HIV/AIDS Alliance resources (now Frontline AIDS <https://frontlineaids.org/welcome-to-frontline-aids/>)

DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE	PURPOSE
Open questions	Stimulate many ideas and opinions, avoids leading answers.
Body language, use people's names	Encourage people to contribute, encourage a sense of validation and respect.
Listen carefully	Understand clearly how to lead the discussion, keep focused on the group agenda rather than your own.
Encouragers e.g. nodding	Encourage people to keep talking, physical sign you are listening.
Rephrasing	Clarify what a person says/show appreciation, shows you are listening, gives yourself time to think/reflect too.
Redirecting question	Get others involved and get more views, shows you are interested in all opinions.
Probing questions	Draw out more information and views, help people notice things they hadn't thought of before.
Observing and reacting	Encourage people who are silent, demonstrating you are dealing with unfair/un-equal group dynamics.
Summarising	Help people understand and reach agreement, shows you have listened.

Feedback and review

Given the unpredictable nature of group work, building in mechanisms for regular feedback, debrief and review are vital: with young people; with staff; and with management. Key tasks might include:

- Regular structured debriefs between each session
- Activities to enable young people to reflect on and feedback about the workshop process and content
- Chances for young people to help revise and plan future workshops
- Ways of recording the ongoing learning that emerges from group processes
- Collaborative planning and risk assessment between facilitators before each session
- Structures in place to enable shared decision making between professionals when/if difficult issues or dynamics arise
- Regular staff supervision
- Regular individual 'check ins' with each participant after each session – providing young people with an opportunity to feedback anything that they didn't feel able to share in a group context.

Games and grounding strategies

Sometimes it is easy to forget the importance of games and to avoid them if you're running out of time and want to get on with the 'real' work. In our experience games are very important. They help: break the ice, energise people when they're feeling down, and perhaps most importantly 'ground' individuals if they have been triggered and are experiencing flashbacks or are dissociating. They can also diffuse tension; raise spirits; bond a group and teach new skills. Always have a few up your sleeve and ask young people to teach you more!

Grounding strategies

It is well worth giving 5-10 minutes at the end of every session for some grounding exercises. These can often be integrated or combined with a closing or reflection activity. There are many of these out there so it is best to find one that you are comfortable leading but essentially it is just a way to bring back physical awareness and a sense of being 'in the moment' after a session that may have been focused on emotions and/or has been experienced as quite intense. This could be a guided meditation or an exercise like 'group counting' or group juggling described below.

Exercise 5: Group counting

Type of exercise	Calming, team building, and grounding activity
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Help to calm and settle a group■ Encourage listening and collaboration■ Bring people back to a focus on the present using their senses
Time	10 minutes
Materials	None

Facilitator notes: This game can be really helpful if the group enters the setting with different levels of energy, stress, excitement and anxiety. You may want to set the target number lower to start with and then raise the target to 20, 30 etc. It can get very funny and frustrating for the group and there is often a huge cheer when they finally reach their target number.

SOURCE: Various. Adapted from Billingham, A (2016)

- Explain that this game involves them counting to 20 as a group. It means that they must say numbers in sequence as individuals until they collectively reach 20. There are rules:
 - They have to stand in a circle with their backs to each other;
 - An individual cannot say more than one number at a time. For example, one person would not be able to count '1, 2, 3...'
 - If more than one person speaks at a time, for example two people attempt to say '3', then the group must start counting from 1 again and try to work their way up to 20.
- Allow the group to attempt the group counting and let them find their own way with it initially. You should just be the person telling them they have to go back to 1 as a result of people talking over each other. The group will probably not get to 20 straight away. Once they have given it a go, stop the group and ask them to reflect on:
 - What's happening when it works and you count as a group as you are meant to?
 - What are you doing well as a group? Where is it going wrong?
 - What's stopping you from getting to 20?
 - Are there just a handful of people who are doing most of the counting?
 - How can you make sure that as many people in the group are counting as possible?
- They should start to identify the strategies that are helping or hindering them from reaching their group goal. For example, are they trying to count too quickly and getting flustered, or are they not 'sensing' when someone is going to speak? Ask them how you can 'sense' if someone is going to speak if you can't see them? Can you hear people's breathing or notice them getting ready to speak? What do they need to do as a group to be more 'in tune' with each other? For example, listen, be aware of other people and their small movements and signs.

Exercise 6: Group juggling

Type of exercise	Energiser, name game and/or grounding activity
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Learn people's names■ Break the ice■ Bring people back to a focus on physical awareness
Time	5 minutes
Materials	5-6 identical balls

SOURCE: Beadle, D (2009) ECPAT UK participation project. Unpublished

- This exercise can also be used as an introductory game to help people learn each other's names and break the ice – or as a means of focusing on the 'here and now' and physical awareness – after an intense discussion.
- The facilitator starts by throwing the ball to someone and as they do they say their own name. The person who catches the ball then throws it on to someone else (who hasn't yet had the ball) and says their own name. This continues until everyone has had a chance to catch the ball and it is then thrown back to the facilitator who started the game.
- The group are then asked to repeat the exercise but this time they do not say their own name – they say the name of the person they are throwing it to. Everyone should try to throw the ball to the same person they threw it to before – so the ball is going around the circle in exactly the same pattern each time (stress that it is fine if people forget a name – the group can help to remember each other's names). Repeat this exercise a couple of times until everyone is feeling confident.
- On the third or fourth round, the facilitator will introduce a new ball – still throwing it to people in the same order but creating a scenario where there are two balls going round the group. More and more balls can be introduced until everyone is throwing and catching balls all the time – but always in the same order. It usually descends into chaos but is a lot of fun and makes people laugh.



Responding to difficult or challenging incidents

Group work can often catalyze strong emotions in individuals. Even when time and thought has been dedicated to creating a safe and calm space, conflict and unpredictable feelings or behaviours may arise. What is important is how you plan for it and respond to it.

One important issue is that practitioners remain calm and confident when responding to difficult issues. It is a way of containing others' anxieties and ensuring that participant's sense of safety is upheld. Any challenging incident requires follow up. This might include:

- debriefing for facilitators – with each other and/or an independent perspective
- opportunities for young people to reflect, challenge or share their views on what has happened
- written recordings of an incident and actions taken
- support from management regarding any key decision making or onward referrals, and
- group problem solving – supporting young people wherever possible to be at the centre of responding to challenges or difficulties.

The resources which are identified and put in place at the outset of a project will be key here – particularly any services or professionals who can offer support; advice or onward referral if required.

Dealing with an allegation or disclosure of abuse or risk of significant harm

Where a disclosure of a risk of significant harm is made, or a facilitator has concern for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, each organisation will have their own procedures in place for responding in accordance with their laws and professional obligations. The following guidelines from NSPCC are considered good practice in the UK for responding to a disclosure of abuse from a child. They may provide a useful reference.

DO	DON'T
■ Remain calm, accessible and receptive	■ Allow your shock or distaste to show, or panic
■ Listen carefully, without interrupting, and take what you hear seriously	■ Probe for any additional information (inappropriate questioning may influence how the allegation is received by others at a later date)
■ Give time to allow them to say what they want to say	■ Do not make assumptions. Do not paraphrase or offer explanations or justifications for actions
■ Acknowledge their courage and reassure them that they are right to tell	■ Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
■ Let them know that you will do what you can to help	■ Promise that everything will be okay
■ Explain that you will need to share what they have told you and explain what may happen as a result	■ Agree to keep the information secret or promise that complete confidentiality can be maintained.
■ Act immediately in accordance with local child protection policies	■ Delay in getting emergency help if needed

Adapted from NSPCC: Dealing with a disclosure

See also <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/let-children-know-you-re-listening>

Section 5: Communicating your project

Recognizing and anticipating implications and risks

At some stage, most participatory projects, including advocacy focused projects will involve sharing outputs from the project, or talking about the project with wider audiences. This could take place through presentations, workshops, leaflets, animations, campaign posters, lobbying materials, meetings with professionals, online discussions or another form.

When a project focuses on sexual violence, sharing aspects of the project with wider audiences needs particular care and thought.

Sexual violence and stigma

The topic of sexual violence is highly political, contentious and often stigmatised – in ways which are often specific to a locality, community or group of people. For any individual, association with the issue of sexual violence – for example as a survivor, advocate, campaigner, or practitioner – can have significant implications and risks. These risks will vary according to each individual and may be impacted by that person's gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, religion, disability or peer group and they may impact at an individual, organisational and/or community level.

Recognizing and anticipating the risks and implications of this work is vital. It will form the basis of decision making and planning about how and where best to safely share outputs from the advocacy project.

Choosing an audience and medium or context for dissemination

Aspirations for influencing change need to be carefully balanced with ethical and safeguarding considerations. Different audiences and contexts will have different implications for young people's safety and wellbeing. Take time to talk these through with both professionals and with young people.

Considerations for practice

There is no single way of getting this right – just a need for time and ongoing discussion to help people make informed decisions and recognise the diversity of needs that may be present in a project. Some important things to think about may include:

Implications for individuals of association with the topic.

Considerations for young people about associating oneself with the issue of sexual violence (either as an advocate; campaigner; expert by experience or survivor). These need to be discussed and thought about in relation to individual participants and their wider families and communities.

Acknowledgement versus anonymity. Balancing young people's right to be credited for their work with their potential needs for anonymity can be hard and this needs to be discussed with participants. Is there a way of properly acknowledging and celebrating young people's achievements without adding to stigma?

There are lots of different ways that young people may be able to share their work – each offering different levels of anonymity.

While a small number of young people may be safe and comfortable sharing their work on a face to face basis – others may be able to contribute more anonymously producing written, audio or visual outputs and through the use of pseudonyms.

Considering implications in the future. Outputs which identify participants or contributors may have a life which extends well beyond the duration of the project and current funding. Support young people to consider how they may feel in the future about being associated with the project and topic. Also if outputs are shared publically and remotely is there a chance that they can be used or quoted by other people in a way that could feel frustrating or unhelpful – how would they feel about this?

Managing individual versus group issues. Projects need to consider whether there may be tensions between different young people's wishes: if one young person wishes to identify themselves as a survivor of sexual violence – will that have implications for other young people's identities (who may not want to be identified) and how can two equally important needs be managed? Can you find ways to describe a group that do not implicate all members as having a shared experience (if not everyone feels able to be publically associated with the issue)?

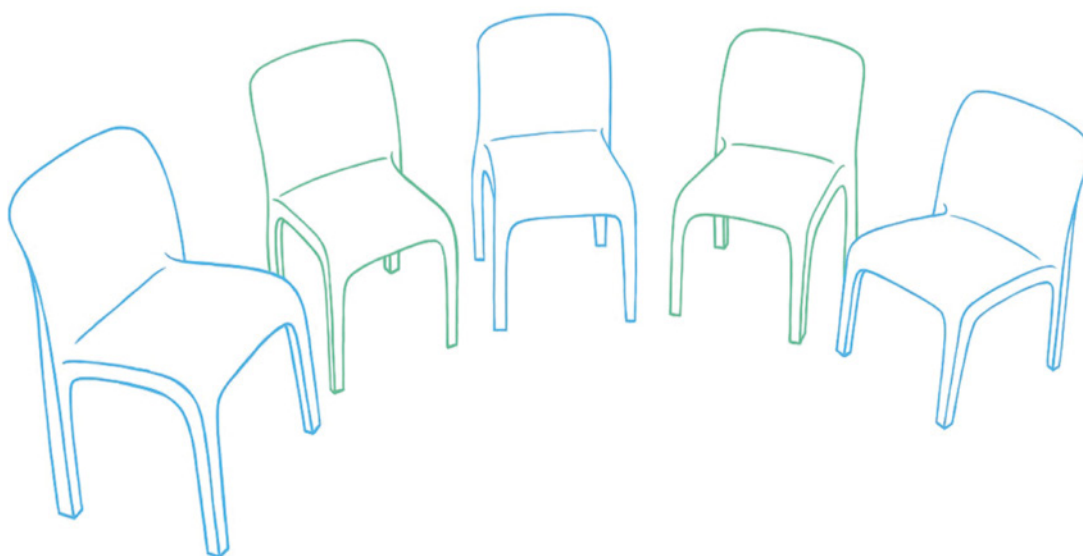
Audiences. Audiences – whether professional or otherwise are often extremely curious about the backgrounds of young people involved in projects addressing sexual violence. Considering ways to manage this is important. We often spend time preparing young people and forget about the need to prepare professionals or other adults who come into contact with a project.

Review and rehearse

Whatever the context for sharing the project or advocacy work – written leaflet; performance; facilitated workshop etc. – it is important that opportunities are planned to enable all stakeholders to review the content and format. This is an opportunity to check people understand and are happy with the message; its tone; and how it is being shared. There may be specific risk assessment activities that are helpful to do with young people at this stage – exploring any implications for themselves; others and their wider communities now and in the future.

It is also important that young people know ahead of time (ideally at the outset of the project) who the other stakeholders are who may have a say (editorial control) in the final outputs at this stage – and under what terms they are allowed to ask for changes to be made.

Below are a few ideas of techniques we've used when planning and preparing for dissemination.



Exercise 7: Our Shield: creating a safe group identity

Type of exercise	Group discussion
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help participants develop and agree on a safe shared group identity to use in public settings
Time	45 minutes
Materials	Pens, big sheets of paper (pre drawn shields with 4 sections)

SOURCE: Starbuck L and Warrington, C (2013) AYPH Be Healthy Project

- Explain that you would like the group to think about how they would like to be represented publically. It is important that they can create and control the 'narratives' of their identity, or the stories about them as advocates, especially when they are associating themselves with the issue of sexual violence through their work. Do they want to be known as young people affected by the issues; or simply interested in them? Do they want to be known as 'experts by experience' or avoid any implication that they are directly affected? (This may include considering how their community is represented, as they may want to change a negative reputation or prevent myths being perpetuated.)
- Ask young people to work individually, or in small groups. Explain that you would like them to create a group identity considering how they would like to be seen by the outside world. On large pieces of paper ask them to draw a shield split into 4 quarters. In each quarter they should write or draw responses to the following:
 - Why did we take part in the project?
 - What are our strengths - what have we brought to the programme?
 - What's special about us (that we want others to know)?
 - Who do we speak for/represent?
- Give 20-30 minutes to complete the task. Come back together and ask people to share their shields. Use ideas from the individual shields to develop a whole group shield – only including content that everyone feels comfortable with.
- Following this work it may also be helpful and possible to develop a single statement to describe the group in any work that will be shared with the wider public.



Facilitator notes: Ask them to consider why it is so important that young people define their own identity in relation to the project. You should also ask them to think about how this might be important over time. When they are older, in jobs or with families, what identity would they like to look back on? You could show some examples of where this exercise has been used on a project with young people who had been victims or witnesses in police investigations or court processes. For example, see: Making Justice Work. <https://www.beds.ac.uk/ic/recently-completed-projects/making-justice-work/>

Exercise 8: Scenario planning

Type of exercise	Group planning and risk assessment
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Help participants anticipate and plan for risks associated with dissemination and public engagement ■ Create a collaborative risk assessment
Time	45 minutes
Materials	Scenario cards (adapted to suit the project)

SOURCE: Warrington, C & Factor, F (2013) Dissemination planning tool for Gangs and Sexual Violence Film Project. Unpublished.

- Cut up and place the individual example 'scenario cards' in a pile (or make your own). Sit in a circle and take turns to pick a card. Read it out and the whole group discuss possible responses or ways of avoiding this happening. Make sure someone records the group's ideas for responding and this can be typed up and turned into a 'planning/risk assessment tool'.

"WHAT DO YOU DO IF..."

1 Someone asks you directly if you, or others in the group, have ever experienced sexual violence or exploitation.	2 You have a strong emotional response (e.g. upset, shock, anger) to something that is said at the event.
3 Someone asks you directly if you, or others in the group, have ever had direct involvement in criminal activity.	4 You start sharing a very personal story and then regret it. You wish you hadn't shared so much with people that you don't know.
5 Someone asks you a question that you do not feel you can answer (or you do not want to answer).	6 After you speak or present your work there is a big silence – no one asks you any questions or responds.
7 Someone in the group or audience says something that you disagree strongly with.	8 Someone else in your group starts talking and won't stop – they are saying things that YOU had planned to say OR they are taking up the time allocated to you.
9 You feel like someone is giving you accusatory looks – or you are picking up 'bad vibes' from someone.	10 Someone makes a negative comment about your work or presentation.
11 Someone challenges you about something you have said – they do not agree with it and they tell you why they think you are wrong.	12 You see someone you know in the audience who you didn't expect or want to see. You do not want them to know you've been involved in this project.
13 You feel really nervous in front of the audience and forget what you were going to say.	14 A disagreement or argument starts up between two other people present at the event.

NOTE: These are examples only. You should adapt them to suit your group and project activities. Ask young people to think of their own scenarios – things that they might be worried about.

Exercise 9: 'The world's worst...' – collective risk assessing

Type of exercise	Group discussion, group risk assessment
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Help participants anticipate and plan for risks associated with dissemination and public engagement ■ Create a collaborative risk assessment
Time	45 minutes
Materials	Flip chart paper, pens

SOURCE: Warrington, C: Used during planning for young people's attendance at Council of Europe meeting about Lanzarote convention in Rome. Unpublished.

- Explain to the group (practitioners and young people) that you're going to imagine the world's worst version of the event or activity that you are planning. You can emphasise that this is supposed to be fun (not an attempt to raise anxieties!!).
- You might want to split into groups to do this – separating young people and facilitators works well. Now ask each group to spend 15 minutes imagining a version of the event or activity that you're planning where everything goes wrong – the 'world's worst version'. Ask the group to list or draw on a flip chart paper all the things that they fear might happen. (NOTE: Its fine for people to have some fun and go into the realms of fantasy during this conversation – talking about monsters; earthquakes etc. – but remind people to also spend time focusing on things that might actually happen!).
- After 15 minutes bring both the groups together again and ask them to share their ideas. Let each group take a turn to share one of their thoughts. This is interesting if you've split the groups into young people and facilitators – often there are many shared fears – but also some that will be specific to young people and others for professionals. Usually this will provoke lots of laughter as people describe crazy scenarios – but remember behind every crazy scenario there is usually a legitimate fear.
- Once you've listed all the different fears on one piece of paper go through each one as a group trying to problem solve:
 - How could this be avoided (or the chance minimised)?
 - What could be put in place to help people respond if it did happen?

Facilitator notes: Doing this with young people and facilitators together provides an opportunity for everyone to share concerns or anxieties – including those associated with professional responsibilities that young people might not be aware of. Similarly it is an important chance for professionals to recognise the issues that might preoccupy young people – that might otherwise be overlooked or minimised.

After the discussion a facilitator (or young person) can type up the discussion and share copies with all stakeholders as a risk assessment, or list of agreed strategies to remind one another.



Section 6: Endings

Properly planned endings

Planning how a project will end (or individuals will leave) is as important as thinking about beginnings. For many participants endings can be difficult. Young people affected by sexual violence may well have experienced a higher number of difficult endings than other young people – both in relation to relationships and professional involvement.

If this project has been a particularly positive and supportive experience it may feel distinct from other relationships in their lives and feel hard to leave. Alternatively for anyone who has found participating difficult or had to leave suddenly, there's a danger that it can feel like another 'failure'; an experience of letting people down – or of being let down.

Finding ways to properly mark individual and projects endings positively, and to acknowledge young people's contributions is therefore vital. There are lots of different ways of doing this and groups of young people will have their own ideas about how to mark or finish a group. There's no right or wrong way to end a project – but planning it and talking about endings from the outset of a project is key – ensuring that people's expectations are managed and disappointment avoided.

Acknowledgement

For many young people affected by sexual violence, education or training experiences have been disrupted. As a result they may have few qualifications or evidence of their skills and knowledge. Opportunities to record, acknowledge (and where possible accredit) young people's contributions to a project like this are valuable. There are lots of ways of doing this: certificates; written references; lists of skills and knowledge acquired. This is equally important for those who leave a project suddenly or early.

Follow up/Keep in touch

Many projects – and particularly advocacy projects – have impacts that happen long after the main part of a project is over. Many young people will have experience of research, consultations or projects which they've been involved with failing to keep in touch with them or follow up. In thinking about how you may keep in touch:

- Think about what level of ongoing contact or follow up is realistic (how might this be affected by changing funding; staff changes etc.).
- Communicate clearly what you can and can't commit to.
- Develop a simple and accessible way of communicating any medium term identified impacts of the project with key stakeholders at planned intervals (e.g. 6 months and 12 months after the project ends).

Exercise 10: Creating a web – ending game

Type of exercise	Whole group activity
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Help participants reflect on the project and experience of working together■ Develop and reflect on the sense of working together as a team – recognising mutual dependencies
Time	5 minutes
Materials	Ball of string



SOURCE: Billinghamurst, A: LEAP Project training

- Ask participants to stand up, shoulder to shoulder in a circle. The facilitator should hold a full ball of string. They will call the name of someone and then throw the ball to that person across the circle. The facilitator will keep hold of the loose end of the string. When the named young person catches the ball of string, the facilitator and the young person are 'attached' by a line of string. The facilitator will then describe something they have noticed about that person either on that day, or over the duration of the project that illustrates their competence. This might be how they have acted in the group, something they said, that they were funny, that have supported group members etc.
- When finished the young person who was named and now holds the ball of string should repeat the process with a different young people in the circle. REMEMBER the person throwing the string must hold onto the loose string at the point where it reaches them.
- Continue until all members of the group are holding onto the string and have all said something and had something said about them. The outcome should be that it looks like a 'spider's web' of string connecting, and held up by, all the members of the group.
- Ask the group to think about what the 'web' represents?
- It represents that all members of the group are equally as important as the others – if one person lets go of the string the whole web falls down.
- It represents that we are all inter-connected through the group and that we are all supporting those around us.
- It provides opportunity for affirmations and speaking positively of each other.
- Recognises that we all contribute in different ways to the group, some more quietly than others!

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Projects of relevance

- Be Healthy [Project webpage and resources] www.ayph-behealthy.org.uk
- One of the Gang [Short Films] www.beds.ac.uk/ic/recently-completed-projects/four-films-on-gang-associated-sexual-violence-and-exploitation
- Making Justice Work [Research project webpage] www.beds.ac.uk/ic/recently-completed-projects/making-justice-work
- Marginal Gains [Research project webpage] www.our-voices.org.uk/news/2017/marginal-gains-poster-small-steps-that-make-a-big-difference-for-improving-police-responses-to-cse
- Learning from the Experts [Research project webpage] www.beds.ac.uk/ic/current-projects/learning-from-the-experts
- Our Voices and Our Voices Too [Programme webpages including resources and reports] www.our-voices.org.uk
- LEAP [Resource/ toolkit] www.beds.ac.uk/ic/recently-completed-projects/life-skills-leadership-limitless-potential/
- SVRI [Blog post] <https://uniofbedscse.com/2017/11/15/svri-2017-making-the-case-for-involving-young-people-in-research-on-sexual-violence/>



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