

Public Identity Disclosure

When young people participate in projects and activities, they may be invited to use their voices, images or names in the resources they create. They may also be invited to take part in, or speak, at different events.

It is important that young people are supported to think about the potential implications, both now and in their future, of being associated with the work and with being identified as a survivor of abuse.

I choose to be identified as a 'Youth Advisor' or 'Advocate.'

I prefer 'Survivor.'

Before I decide to participate, I have some questions.

How might it feel for me now?

It gave me a new identity!

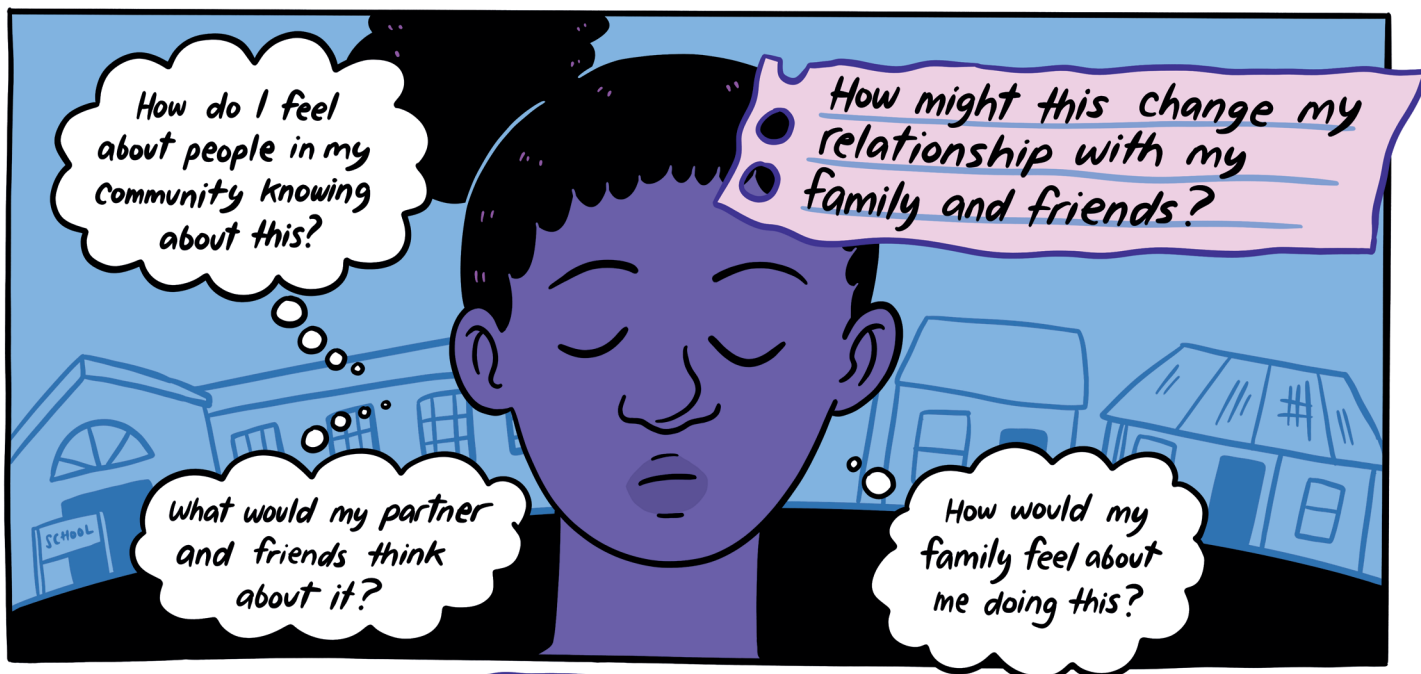
It helped me turn this into something positive.

It can be exposing, when people ask you questions and presume things about you.

It can be hard to have your identity linked to something so painful.

It was a lifeline.

Sometimes it can feel as if the other parts of you cease to be significant.



Concluding Thoughts

For young people

- Young people with lived experience are perfectly placed to offer valuable insights and perspectives on how things can be improved and what might be important for other young people. Remember though that you do not need to disclose personal experiences in order to inform and meaningfully contribute to different initiatives.
- Nobody should ask you to talk about anything you feel uncomfortable discussing.
- It is important to think about how you might feel about other people in your life knowing about your experiences.
- It can be difficult to predict how you might feel in the future, but it may be helpful to talk to other people, including professionals about this.
- If you do wish to take part in different events you could talk to the organisers, or those who are supporting you to take part, to make sure that they have fully prepared and that you know how you will be introduced or involved and what to expect.

For professionals

- Young people who have received support from an organisation may feel indebted to that organisation. They might feel that they should take part in certain activities and events as a 'thank you' to the service. You should be mindful of this and always be very clear that participation is voluntary and there are no expectations on them to do anything they do not wish to do.
- Young people may or may not wish to disclose their survivor identity in public. Either way, they should never be asked to do this. You should work with them to think through:
 - How their ideas and messages could be communicated in ways that do not require them to be identified as a survivor.
 - The potential implications for them from being named or identified as a survivor, both now and in the future.
- Even if a young person's identity as a survivor is not publicly shared, you may wish to help young people think through how they can explain their work, and any contributions to a project or initiative tackling sexual abuse, in ways that do not feel exposing.
- If working in a group, it will also be important to work with young people to help them develop a description of the group that everyone feels comfortable with.
- If young people are engaging in an event, spend time thinking about how to manage the event so that young people feel comfortable in their role and have control over what happens.
- If young people are at an event in a 'youth advisor' or other capacity, work with them in advance to prepare them on how to deal and respond to insensitive and inappropriate questions and comments.

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Comics are by Maria Stoian.

To find out more about the work of the Centre please visit the Centre's website beds.ac.uk/sylrc.