



Record your oral history with the Recovery Histories Research Project

Information sheet for survivors of CSA

We would like to invite survivors of childhood sexual abuse to join our research project. We welcome participation from anyone who has lived through child sexual abuse. We are investigating the histories of recovery from childhood sexual abuse (CSA) in the second half of the twentieth century. We particularly welcome underrepresented survivors, on the grounds of race and ethnicity, immigration status, language proficiency, gender identity, sexuality, or ability. If you are unsure whether you fit into these definitions, please contact us and we will discuss it. You are not required to be supported by an organisation to take part in the research.

This information sheet is for you to make sure that you understand the purpose of our research and what your involvement would look like. Please take time to read the following information carefully. One of our team can guide you through this information sheet, to help you decide whether you would like to take part and answer any questions or concerns you may have. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear. Our contact details are at the end of the information. You can keep this document and refer to it at any time.

What is this research and why is this important?

Our project is the first social, cultural and medical history into recovery from childhood sexual abuse in the second half of twentieth century Britain and Ireland. Even though child sexual abuse is not an illness, recovery is spoken about in a language borrowed from medicine. What we want to do is learn from the experiences of survivors and practitioners about the many ways that survivors live with the aftermath and the impact of child sexual abuse. Our aim is to do research that will support the building of a CSA survivor archive, and that will explore methods of support beyond medication and therapy.

The research team

My name is Ruth Beecher. I am the principal investigator on the project. I am interested in the knowledge of those who lived through child sexual abuse, and those who have supported survivors— either when they were children, young people or as adults.

I invite you to record an oral history. The benefit of you taking part is that you will help us to find out about the different ways survivors have understood trauma and found ways of living with the impact of childhood abuse. Survivors' voices are rarely found in the historical records. Hearing of your experiences would help to create a better understanding of survivors' past experiences and current needs, and also ensure that survivors' experiences are recognised and valued. Your memories can help to build the historical archive and shape current services to better meet victim-survivor needs.

I will be working with a team of researchers from different disciplines and with other organisations. The research will be supervised by a Lived Experience Advisory Group, that will provide feedback and guidance on research safety and ethics, the direction and methods of the study, and will contribute to the interpretation and dissemination of the results.

What will happen if you wish to participate?

We aim to interview a range of survivors who were born any time between the 1940s and the present day. If you agree to participate, we will arrange an interview with you, which will be recorded on a tape recorder or online. We prefer to interview you in a quiet space such as your office or your home but we can also offer an interview online, usually through a simple programme called Zencastr. We can make alternative arrangements if these do not suit you. The interview will last approximately two hours but can be shorter or longer if you prefer or can be done over a couple of sessions.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you agree to take part you will be asked to sign a *participation form* before recording but you will be free to withdraw from the project. We believe you have important things to share with us. We hope that you will choose to get involved and that the interview will give you the opportunity to speak about your experiences.

Although the projects does not offer therapeutic benefits, it will provide a reflective space for you to bring and share your experiences with us on your own terms. It will help us to find out about how survivors have found ways of living with the impact of childhood sexual abuse. Listening to you would help to create a better understanding of survivors' experiences and needs. We hope that you will enjoy taking part. However, you may have some memories that remain difficult in your current life. If you feel distressed at any point, we will give you some advice on organisations or professionals who could support you. We will work with you and our Lived Experience Advisory Group, and you will be able to **benefit from peer support**, delivered by Survivors Voices.

What will happen to the information collected during and after the project?

The interview recordings will be transcribed and the transcripts and audio recordings will be stored digitally and retained for an indefinite period so that they are accessible for future education or research purposes. The recordings may be available on a website to researchers and the general public. The recordings will be transcribed in full where funding permits and these will also be made available. You will be asked to sign a *recording agreement* in relation to depositing these items in the archive after the interview is complete and you have had the opportunity to review the audio, transcript and any other materials to be deposited. You can still withdraw your consent for depositing the materials for three months after signing the recording agreement. After that time, you can request that your materials are taken down but note that they may have been downloaded from the data archive during the intervening period.

Your personal data

We will collect your personal data and during your interview you may tell me about your race, ethnic origin, politics, religion, health or other personal information. As a research team, we are interested in this as it tells us about different experiences and how they are shaped by our personal characteristics. You are free to provide as much or as little information as you are comfortable with.



We will store your personal data securely and we can provide a copy of our data management plan and discuss its contents with you if you would like the detail of this. The relevant Data Protection Officer at Birkbeck can be contacted at dpo@bbk.ac.uk. You may request access to your personal data or to request correction or removal of your personal data by contacting the Data Protection Officer.

Publications or reports produced by this project may use quotations from interviews. The research team will confirm with participants how quotations should be attributed. It is possible that after archiving your words may be used by other researchers or academics.

If you are unhappy about how your information is handled, you can contact the principal investigator r.beecher@bbk.ac.uk or the Data Protection Officer dpo@bbk.ac.uk. If you are unhappy with our response or you need advice, you may contact the Information Commissioner casework@ico.org.uk

Will my participation be confidential?

Future historians may wish to use your interview as a source and will want to understand where the information came from and think about any biases in our sample, for example if all of those interviewed came from a certain social class, ethnic group or geographical area. However, if you wish to close off your contribution for a period or have it anonymised, this is possible and would be done in discussion with you and in line with ethical guidelines.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

All participants will be offered an MP3 copy of their audio interview, and a summary of the interview topics. Where funding permits and a full transcript has been produced, this will also be made available to participants. Each participant will be provided with a summary of our research findings. Recordings, summaries and transcripts will be available on a website to researchers and the public. We may publish our findings in working papers for the funding body, journal articles or books.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research proposal has been ethically approved by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Historical Studies on [insert date].

Where can I get more information?

For more information please contact:

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