



Survivors' Voices Gatherings Information

Who are the Gatherings for?

Our gatherings are for adults (18+) who have experienced any form of abuse (e.g. physical, psychological, sexual, profound neglect, bullying...) in childhood or adulthood. It is run by survivors of abuse and is open to survivors and their supporters. If you are new to Survivors' Voices, please make contact with connect@survivorsvoices.org before the day, to say hello and so we can introduce ourselves.

Why do you hold the Gatherings?

The purpose of the day is to come together with others around our shared experience, to gain a sense of solidarity, being acknowledged and having a voice.

What can I expect on the day?

We will have lots of time to chat informally and there will be 2 parts to the day : you can take part as much as you feel comfortable with. Dipping in and out and 'just being' there is totally ok!

Morning: Gathering and Sharing: *standing shoulder to shoulder with each other.* Lots of tea, coffee and cake and just being! Plus, a one hour facilitated and confidential sharing space for us to support and talk about our lives as survivors - or just listen and be with others who understand. The group is not 'therapy' and you don't have to share details of what you have experienced

Lunch - bring and share. (*We provide drinks*)

Afternoon: Exploring our own resources and expertise: *sharing things that help us on our journeys.* We have a different theme for this part each time, but it usually involves some members of the group leading an activity or discussion where we share challenges and resources on our journey out of abuse. We always include something creative, nurturing and fun!

If this is your first gathering, you will find more information about what to expect at the end of this sheet.

How do you keep the day safe?

All our gatherings are organised and facilitated by survivors who have been trained in safe facilitation and been involved in Survivors' Voices for some time. We have group safety guidelines which we ask everyone to read and agree to beforehand, and we go over them on the day. We don't publicise the venue publicly.

A day like this is profoundly inspiring and often deeply emotional. For that reason we encourage you to think about how you can keep yourself safe on the day and talk to us if there is anything we can do to support you. You are welcome to invite a supporter to accompany you on the day. You may find it helpful to think about what you do after the day, for example meet with a supportive friend or plan something relaxing and soothing.

What is the cost for the day?

There is no charge, to ensure the day is accessible; we ask you please to donate what you can afford. The day costs us £15 per head to run, which comes entirely from donations. If you can afford to donate more, this supports an unwaged survivor.



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More about the Sharing part

In the morning, we hold a safely facilitated support group for one hour. The space is confidential, with group guidelines agreed at the start and there is no pressure to talk unless you want to. Drawing strength from just being with others who understand is totally OK as is talking freely about our journeys, (without graphic details of abuse so that the sharing space feels as safe as possible). Participants say how much hearing from others who have been on a similar journey - the sense of being heard and understood - breaks the sense of isolation and gives strength for the journeys ahead. It is a very special experience to simply be with each other, just as we are. Coming to such an event can feel daunting, especially if it is your first time. Be assured that if you come, you can dip in and out of each part of the day as feels okay and that "come as you are" is the most important message, because all of us come to such gatherings with anxieties, struggles, strengths, insights, wisdom and creativity!

More about the Exploring our Expertise part

We firmly believe that we are the experts in our own healing, so the afternoon is dedicated to sharing that expertise, to help each other in our journeys. The focus is on exploring and sharing what helps us as survivors, and how we can use our expertise to change things. We have a different theme each time, and always include something creative and fun. Sometimes we may ask you to contribute (anonymously) to our research and change projects. Or we may gather key messages to take to policy makers or the general public. You may be invited to contribute to a new book or tool for other survivors or professionals. As with the morning, there is no pressure to take part or say anything if you don't want to.

Where is the venue?

We hire a bright and cosy venue in South London SW16 that we have exclusive use of on the day. Details will be sent to everyone who books (to keep the space safe.)

How do I book?

There is an on-line booking form on our website. See www.survivorsvoices.org/events

The form asks you to confirm that you are happy to follow our safety guidelines. Once your booking has been received, we'll send you details of the venue and the programme for the day. If you are coming with a friend or bringing a supporter, please complete a separate booking for each person, so we have the names of everyone coming. We will hold your information confidential to the organisers of the day.

I want to know more about Survivors Voices. How do I keep in touch?

Please see our website for more information about who we are and what we do. You can sign up to our newsletter there, for regular updates about our work.

Any other questions?

You are welcome to contact us by email connect@survivorsvoices.org Please note we are run by volunteers so it can take a few days for us to be able to respond.