

Towards Recognition of Abuse, Understanding, and Mutuality
through Arts (T.R.A.U.M.A.)

Arts Collective Information Pack



Arts Collective

Survivors of abuse and trauma who practice as artists and/or researchers are invited to join an Arts Collective (AC) to work with us on this exciting new project.

We are seeking two experienced Artists and two survivor Researchers – all with lived experience of abuse/trauma.

We warmly welcome applications from people who identify as being from marginalised or minoritised groups.

Background to our Project

Globally, it is estimated that over half of all children experience abuse each year, yet it is vastly under-reported. Though child abuse is highly prevalent and harmful to individuals and societies, it is scarcely discussed and largely unaddressed. A critical barrier to public understanding and effective interventions is the difficulty in recognising abuse: survivors and non-survivors alike typically lack the knowledge and skills to identify signs of abuse in themselves and others.

The Violence and Mental Health Network (VAMHN)'s *Survivor's Priority Themes and Questions for Research: Consultation Report* found that a key issue for survivors is recognising what happened to them as abuse and ensuring that professionals have the tools to recognise abuse. This was confirmed in our *Safe, Seen, Supported (SSS)* research project on reaching and helping children and young people experiencing abuse in their households. 94% of participants considered a better understanding of abuse – how to recognise it, talk about it, and respond to it – to be vital. We found that abuse recognition requires: 1) a language to describe abusive versus healthy relationships; 2) educational materials for communities and professionals; and 3) wider awareness-raising societal conversations.

T.R.A.U.M.A. aims to build on SSS by meeting this need. We will use art to do this, because it can best convey abuse beyond verbal narratives, raise awareness and engage wider public debate.

Project Team

We are an interdisciplinary survivor-only team with expertise in survivor-led research, art, and the intersection of scientific and creative methods.

Academic Lead: Angie Sweeney, survivor researcher and mental health services researcher from [SURE](#), King's College, London.

The *Service User Research Enterprise (SURE)* is a research group that conducts, supports and teaches research from the perspectives of people with direct experience of neurodiversity; trauma, violence and abuse; mental distress; and/or using (or refusing) mental health services.

Art Lead: Laura E. Fischer, interdisciplinary artist, activist, and survivor researcher from [Traumascap.es](#).

Traumascapes is a survivor-led organisation dedicated to changing the ecosystem of trauma and creating new horizons for survivors through art and science.

Involvement Lead: Jane Chevous, survivor researcher, activist and writer from [Survivors Voices](#).

Survivors Voices is a survivor-led organisation turning the pain of abuse into the power to improve responses to trauma, through peer support, research, education and activism.

Project Aims

The **aim** of this project is to use art to increase awareness of abuse and develop and pilot an arts-based card deck that can be used to facilitate discussion around abuse recognition.

Our **objectives** are:

1. To work with abuse survivors to create, safely and ethically, new artwork that explores the nature of abuse and its imprint on survivors and develop a card deck that includes a) images of the artwork and b) talking points about abuse, with the aim of generating discussion and facilitating recognition.
2. To run a discussion group with a range of stakeholders to test the utility of the card deck in facilitating abuse recognition and discussion.
3. To engage the public, academics, and practitioners with an exhibition showcasing the artwork and a reception to launch the card deck.
4. To reflect on the process and share learning through formal and informal evaluation methods.

Overview of Project and the Role

The project has five phases, with the Arts Collective involved in each phase:

1. Forming

We are forming an Arts Collective (AC) with the project team, two survivor artists, and two survivor researchers with an interest in art-making. We are aiming to ensure that we reflect as much as possible a range of survivor perspectives, including different generations, gender identity, sexual orientation, racialisation, disability, neurodiversity, culture, and faith.

The AC will work collaboratively throughout the project, informed by the ethos and ethics of survivor research and trauma-sensitive arts practice.

2. Creating

We will facilitate creative workshops with possibilities for the Arts Collective to use a range of artforms, with our support where needed, including (but not limited to) poetry, drawing, painting, photography, filmmaking, creative writing, textile art, live art, and dance.

Together, the AC will produce:

- 12+ artworks on the nature, characteristics, and impacts of abuse.
- A pilot deck of 6-12 cards composed of artworks and talking points.

We will guide the AC in ways that support mutual development, with everyone gaining from the cross-fertilisation of ways of thinking/working and engaging with audiences beyond their fields. We will support artists and researchers to learn new skills and we hope to provide guidance to further develop your trauma-informed survivor-led practice.

3. Testing

We will invite ten practitioners from a range of sociodemographic and disciplinary backgrounds to take part in an online discussion about the card deck. The card deck and talking points will be revised as a result.

4. Engaging

The artworks created by the AC will be presented at an exhibition aimed at encouraging engagement with the topic and launching the card deck. Survivors, artists, researchers, practitioners, and allies will be invited to the launch from our wide combined networks.

We will also create an online repository of the artwork and make the card decks available for purchase.

5. Reflection

We will hold a final meeting of the Arts Collective to reflect on the process, celebrate our achievements and identify learning, leading to the production of a final evaluation report and blog post.

Honorarium and Terms

Each Artist/Researcher will receive a £700 honorarium for;

- Attending workshops (held in person in London) to produce artwork and talking points for the card deck
- Showcasing the produced artwork at the T.R.A.U.M.A. exhibition and in the online repository held on the Traumascaples website
- Attending the final reflection workshop.

We will also cover travel costs, supply art materials, and provide light refreshments during workshops.

All Artists/Researchers are expected to produce artwork that will be used in the card deck and showcased in the exhibition; however, each Artist/Researcher retains copyright and ownership of their artwork. Artists/Researchers can choose whether to be credited for their work or to remain anonymous.

Person Specification

- Personal experience of violence, abuse, trauma (self-defined) *(Please note that at no time will you be asked about your personal experiences of these)*
- Practice as an artist, interested in research; or as a researcher, interested in arts and/or creative research methods
- Interest in applying lived experience of trauma to educate and raise awareness

- Interest in using art to open public conversations around abuse
- Available for the period of the project (see Key Dates)
- Commitment to promoting inclusion and involvement for individuals and groups that have been subject to discrimination or disadvantage
- Commitment to maintain safety and confidentiality, and able to hold sensitive information and conversations safely
- Able to provide feedback supportively and constructively
- Able to take part in online meetings and in-person workshops.

Safety and Support

All our work will be guided by our survivor ethos:

- the inclusion of all, in all our diversity (including gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, culture, faith, experience, ability)
- safe spaces based on a culture of mutuality, respect and co-operation
- removing barriers that divide people, encouraging everyone to participate as much as they want or feel able to
- epistemic justice that values the wisdom of lived experience equally with other forms of knowledge.

We aim for the AC to be a mutually supportive space.

Additionally, peer support workers will be available for the discussion group and exhibition. AC members will be invited to join the Traumascape Community of Thought and Action and Survivors Voices peer networks and peer support groups.

Key Dates

Information session (at Changemakers virtual network meeting) *Tuesday September 20th 12.30pm*

Informal discussion with the team: *7th or 11th October 2022*

Start date: October 2022

End date: February 2023

Introductory meeting (online) *13th October 2022 (am)*

Creative workshops:

- 31st October from 10am to 5pm
- 7th November from 2pm to 5pm
- 10th November from 10am to 5pm

Exhibition dates: December – February (TBC)

Reflection workshop: January - February (TBC)

How to Apply

Please complete the Application Form provided and submit with examples of your work as indicated. To assist selection, based on suitability and ensuring a diverse group, we will invite shortlisted applicants to an informal discussion.

Please send your submission to Jane (connect@survivorsvoices.org), Laura (laura@traumascapes.org) and Angie (angela.sweeney@kcl.ac.uk) with the subject line “T.R.A.U.M.A. Arts Collective” by Midnight on the 30th of September 2022.

We are committed to diversity and inclusion, and encourage people from all backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities, to apply. Please contact connect@survivorsvoices.org if you wish to discuss an alternative method of submitting an application (e.g. verbal/video-recorded rather than written) or have specific access requirements. We welcome all such applications.

Thinking about Safety

The project focusses on creating artworks and talking points to find ways to identify, talk about and raise awareness of abuse and trauma. While no one is expected to share their personal experiences in any detail, the content is likely to be emotionally charged. **Please think carefully about whether this role is something that you want and feel able to contribute to.** We are happy to help you think this through when you apply, if that would be helpful. While involvement can be inspiring, it is also challenging, and it can cost us when we engage these spaces. We are committed to ensuring that the Arts Collective is a safe space and that members have access to the support they need.

We will put several safety measures in place for the AC, including agreeing safety guidelines and group and individual safety and support plans. For further general information on support, please visit: <https://survivorsvoices.org/support/> and/or <https://www.traumascapes.org/self-care>

Towards Recognition of Abuse, Understanding, and Mutuality through Arts (T.R.A.U.M.A.)

Arts Collective Application Form

Thank you for your interest in joining the T.R.A.U.M.A. project. Before you complete this form, please ensure you have read the Information Pack.

There are 4 parts to this application form:

- Part 1: Your Details
- Part 2: Your Interest and Professional Experience
- Part 3: Your Work
- Part 4: Your Identity and Lived Experience

Once complete, please send your submission to Jane (connect@survivorsvoices.org), Laura (laura@traumascapes.org) and Angie (angela.sweeney@kcl.ac.uk) with the subject line "T.R.A.U.M.A. Arts Collective" **by Midnight on the 30th of September 2022.**

If you have any questions or have any difficulty completing this application, you are welcome to contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you!

PART 1: Your Details

Your first and last name:

Your email address:

Where in the UK are you based?

In which capacity are you applying? *Please highlight or underline your answer.*

- Artist with lived experience of abuse
- Researcher with lived experience of abuse (based in academia, third sector, or independent)

Do you confirm that you are available on the following dates and times and able to attend in-person workshops in London?

- 31st of October from 10am to 5pm
- 7th of November from 2pm to 5pm
- 10th of November from 10am to 5pm

- Yes
- No

Are you happy for your artwork to be included in the card deck and the exhibition?

- Yes
- No

Do you have any accessibility needs for online meetings?

Do you have any accessibility needs for in-person work?

PART 2: Your Interest and Professional Experience

Please answer the following questions in a few sentences (up to 3 paragraphs per question). Please refer to the Information Pack for a description of the project and what to expect.

1. Why would you like to take part in this project?

2. From your perspective, why is it important to support abuse recognition?

3. From your perspective, how can art help make that happen?

4.1. Artists: What is your experience of using art to explore and articulate abuse and/or trauma?

4.2. Researchers: What is your experience and/or interest in using art to study or explore abuse and/or trauma? *This may be with arts-based research methods, artistic components to studies you have conducted, or non-research related artistic interest and/or experience.*

5. Can you describe your experience of working safely and sensitively with narratives of abuse and/or trauma?

PART 3: Your Work

All applicants

Please attach a copy of your CV **or** outline your educational and professional experience in a few sentences here. Please note that we do not have specific academic requirements; we are interested in knowing more about your experience and what you would bring to the project.

Artists

Which artform(s) do you prefer to work with? *Select all that apply.*

- Drawing
- Painting
- Illustration
- Graphic design
- Textile art
- Photography
- Film
- Animation
- Drama
- Dance
- Music
- Live art / performance art
- Poetry / creative writing
- Other: *please specify.*

Please attach either a portfolio, a PDF with a few examples of your artwork, or a link to a website where we can see some of your work.

Researchers

Where is your research based?

- Academic institution
- Third sector, e.g. research charity
- Survivor-led / user-led organisation
- Independent practice
- Other: *please specify.*

Please tell us about one or more research projects you have been part of and include links to an article, report, or other output.

PART 4: Your Identity and Lived Experience

We ask that you provide this information so that we can ensure that the group we bring together reflects a range of identities and experiences. We would greatly appreciate your help with this, but if you do not feel comfortable answering some or all of these questions, feel free to leave them blank.

Do you identify as someone who has experienced abuse? *Please note that at no point will we ask you to talk about your experience. However, due to the nature of the project we will be discussing the topic of abuse.*

- Yes
- No

What is your age?

- 18 – 30 years old
- 31 – 40 years old
- 41 – 50 years old
- 51 – 60 years old
- 61 – 70 years old
- 71 + years old

What is your gender identity?

What is your sexual orientation?

What is your ethnicity?

Do you identify as being disabled and/or having a mental health issue?

Do you identify as neuro-diverse?
