

Working in collaboration with lived-experience groups
Survivors Speak Out
Kolbassia Haoussou and colleagues

Notes by Vanessa Stone

Survivors Speak Out:
Survivors of torture
Speak out against torture
Support rights of torture survivors in UK

Trust, loneliness, meaning - flee, lost loved ones
Many problems integrating with people
Fear of return, re-experience

Everyone needs hope
And to create a home

Torture silences you
Speak out - inspire others

It's my voice
It's my history
It's my life

We choose to speak out but not always easy
Not individual testimony
We speak as a collective voice
Control over how when where information is used
Choice and control is important
We are resilient (not cotton wool, but respect / dignity / level playing field)

Kolbassia - realised if he speaks as a victim, has a longer emotional impact on him as individual
If able to speak as survivor, empowered

Want to change things - influence communities and decision-makers

About 30 people in SSO community - very diverse

Feel very good about UK. Want a better life, opportunity to give back.

How does it feel to do work we do?....

Exercise to put us into their shoes
Think about most emotionally painful event that happened to you, that left you feeling vulnerable
Think about how you would describe that event to the group (what happened, what I felt, why)
Think about how would feel to describe story to an audience repeatedly (people don't know / never met, what is their take)

How did it feel to do this exercise?
Vulnerable
Unprepared for emotions that arise
Difficult to select info to share
Under attack
Invasive
Ashamed, embarrassed
Judgement
Re-traumatising, triggering
Powerless

Defined as a victim or even a liar

Reflecting on this, what should be considered when living with lived experience groups?

Safe to share

Empowering and respectful

Clarity about context - purpose / intention, expectation, audience

What will happen to information

Informed consent (clarity and capacity)

*What is participants objectives / fears - consultation - co-objectives - what is really needed to help people you want to help - engage

Don't be greedy for details

Be a human being - put in shoes

Risk

Choice

Emotional support (/mediator)

Protection if public presentation (mediator)

We are not our experiences

Space around questions

Questions

What to do in community?

Ask what is needed

Navigate arts project?

Consultation, co-curation, time

Protection against voyeurism?

Twitter

@SSOonline

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