


**NATIONAL NETWORK TO PREVENT FORCED MARRIAGE
WEBINAR SERIES**

December 19th, 2017

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**Empowering
Individuals
with Lived
Experience**

Laura Vidal
Webinar for Tahirih Justice Center
December 19th 2017

The Freedom Partnership
End Modern Slavery



The Power of a Story

Our connection to human stories is biological =
Stories connect us

2 main emotional experiences influence helping
behaviour= empathy and personal distress

We have a responsibility to strike a
balance to ensure that survivors
are able to use their stories in a
way that both empowers them
and serves a greater purpose



Equitable Inclusion of Survivors



Remember: to some it may be a story, to the person telling the story it is a significant part of their life where there is a possibility of risking harm, physically and psychologically if un-managed

Lived experience is highly valuable for more than promoting the organisations work or raising money. Lived experience can help inform legislation, policy and service delivery responses. It can also be an opportunity for survivors to grow.

"Survivors of trauma see their own personal experiences as understanding the complexities in self-disclosure and believe they are role models for their others in living life after trauma..." (Bennett, 2015)

For some survivors, significant life events whilst traumatic can be catalysts for finding purpose. We can be powerful vehicles for assisting in realising this purpose and providing opportunities.

Breaking down and working with power imbalances between survivors, helping professionals and the audience is critical.

Our responsibility lies in the equitable empowerment of survivors to ensure they can participate wholly and make autonomous decisions about how, why and where their story will be shared.

Key Principles

Introducing the 3 E's:

Ethical—Empowered—Equitable

Ethical: Refers to how we engage with survivors have we considered risks to physical and psychological wellbeing of the survivor and their family? Will being public with a personal narrative cause harm? Are there risks to any current/ongoing legal cases? Are there any children involved? Are you able to obtain informed consent? Etc.

Empowered: Do the opportunities available provide mutual benefit? Is the opportunity in-line with the goals set out by the survivor? What is the purpose of engaging with lived experience?

Equitable: Is there training, information and resources available to ensure that survivors can operate equally with others? Is there compensation (Financial) for the time spent working with the organisation?

"Appreciating and merely acknowledging the bravery, courage and commitment of a survivor to share their story is no longer enough. We must nurture and facilitate the equal inclusion of survivor voices in all aspects of policy and service delivery and in doing so empower them as agents of change..."

Things to Avoid

- Objectification and re-traumatisation
- Re-exploitation of survivors
- Use of images/videos of children

For the purpose of self-promotion or profit (fundraising)

How can we do this?



THE FREEDOM ADVOCATES PROJECT

EMPOWERING SURVIVORS OF MODERN SLAVERY

The Freedom Partnership
End Modern Slavery



The Freedom Advocates project provides an opportunity for survivors of modern slavery to use their experiences to create positive change.

The project seeks to:

-  Bring the voice of survivors to key policy discussions
-  Ensure experiences of modern slavery reflected in awareness raising and community education are accurate & respectful
-  Offer advocates as mentors to others who may have experienced exploitation

"Consulting survivors ensures that support and intervention strategies are relevant and most effective for people who have been in situations as I was" - Margaret

Ways of Participation

Each individual has their own motivation for wanting to share their story for good.

The project can engage advocates in the following 3 ways:

- ☆ PUBLIC ADVOCATE
- ☆ CONSULTANT ADVOCATE
- ☆ PEER MENTOR

"I am living proof that slavery happens in Australia. I know this can be hard to believe but it is real, and it happened to me. I am also living proof that people who have experienced slavery can achieve many things and contribute to our community." Sandra

Why is the project unique?

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Freedom Advocates undertake a comprehensive training program that develops advocacy skills. The training and support offered through the program is critical to ensure ethical engagement and minimization of risks.

SUPPORT

Advocates are supported via the project coordinator. This includes support to prepare for events, speaking engagements, meetings, media appearances etc. Support also includes financial compensation for the time advocates take to both prepare and be present at various different opportunities. Freedom Advocates develop their own individual advocacy plan every 12 months, and have the opportunity to evaluate their participation on an ongoing basis.

OPPORTUNITY

The project coordinator assists advocates to assess opportunities that come to them, helps them evaluate the value of the activity and ensures that the opportunity is in line with the advocates individual advocacy plan

The Freedom Advocates Model


Key Principles in Action

1. Developed framework for empowering people with lived experience to be advocates and spokesperson with guiding principles, policies and procedures
2. Assessment of psychological readiness and capacity to participate by a professional mental health practitioner in collaboration with survivors
3. Informed consent (which cannot be provided by children) about the purpose of each engagement as an advocate
4. A risk assessment and management strategy for participating survivors and their families
5. Development of a survivor public narrative by survivors
6. Benefit to survivors for their participation including financial compensation

"Like anyone, trafficking survivors want to be recognized for their personal and professional contributions and accomplishment. Like any former victim will tell you, it's not enough to survive a terrible trauma, because no individual should be defined or pigeonholed by the worst thing that ever happened to them.

Should you feel compassion? Yes. Compassion is a great place to start, but it will count for so much more when channelled into an action that enables trafficking survivors to achieve what they're really after: purpose, competence and independence"

Evelyn Chumbow, Advisor to President Obama, US Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.



Where to from here?

Some questions to ask ourselves:

- How are we engaging with people with lived experience?
- Is there mutual benefit for both the survivor and your organisation?
- Who is controlling the survivors engagement?
- Are we undermining our service delivery in the way we work with survivors?
- Can we improve our approach?
- Does your organisation want to adopt a consistent approach toward this area of work?

