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# communications and campaigns about sexual harm our trauma informed approach

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Please be aware that this document contains detailed references to sexual harm which some individuals may find traumatising. These references can be found throughout the document but feature most prominently between pages 8-10.

If you require this information in a different language or format please contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by email [opcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:opcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk) or telephone 01392 225555

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Defining trauma: ‘an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individuals’ functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being’.

Traumatic events are those in which a person is harmed, where there is a serious threat of harm or where the person sees someone else being harmed.

*The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration  
– US Department of Health and Human Sciences*

## The purpose of this document

This document is for any professional working within the public sector in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly who has been tasked with creating communications and/or campaigns which relate to sexual harm. This document is not instructional and is not intended to control how organisations choose to communicate. Instead it outlines an approach and a set of principles that we at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner believe are important and can be used to help inform thinking and generate ideas. The focus of this document is on communications and campaigns aimed at those who have experienced sexual harm, and not those who harm others (that requires a separate document).

## Keeping you safe

Sexual harm is an issue that affects too many people in our communities. If as a professional this issue is close to you, and if you need help and support and feel able to, you can:

- **Contact the Devon and Cornwall Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)** online at <https://sarchelp.co.uk/> or telephone 0300 3034626. SARCS offer medical, practical and emotional support. They have specially trained NHS doctors, nurses and support workers to care for you. If you decide to report the assault to the police, they can arrange for you to attend a SARC for medical care and, if you wish, a forensic medical examination. If you are unsure about whether to report to the police or not, you can still refer yourself to a SARC for assessment, medical treatment, sexual health advice and emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.
- **Speak with Victim Support via 'livechat'** by clicking on the 'chat now' box online at [www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat). Victim Support can provide a listening ear and all of their services are confidential, free and available to anyone who's experienced sexual assault or rape. Victim Support provide emotional and practical support, regardless of whether someone has told the police or anyone else about the assault.
- **Telephone the Victim Care Unit on 01392 475900**. The unit is a team of staff who work with people who have experienced crime to try and get them the support they need. The Victim Care Unit is run by Devon and Cornwall Police and funded by the [Police and Crime Commissioner](#). The service is available whether or not a person's crime is being investigated by the police.
- **Speak with Devon and Cornwall Police via live webchat at [www.devon-cornwall.police.uk](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk), email [101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk), telephone 101 (non emergency), or 999 (emergency calls only)**. Devon and Cornwall Police have specially trained police officers who can speak with you. You can choose whether to speak with a male or female police officer and they will explain the process for investigating your report and the options you have available to you. The police will also keep you updated about their investigation into your report.

## The people who have created this document

This document has been created by staff at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This document could not have been produced without extensive contributions from commissioners of specialist services, leaders of specialist services, sexual assault referral centre managers and staff, representatives from Plymouth's trauma informed network, Plymouth's lived experience

group, a number of communications professionals, and a much-valued lived experience advisor. We thank each and every individual involved for their help in creating this approach.

## Why we needed to create this

"I believe that when we inspire people to challenge harmful culture, we can change the world. And when we build stronger relationships between support services and victims of sexual violence, it **will** save lives" - Lived Experience Advisor – October 2020

Many organisations throughout the country deliver communications and campaigns about sexual harm. Whilst there are a number of examples of good practice, historically sometimes messages (and/or how they have been delivered) have not been appropriate, and at worst they have been harmful. Sometimes they are simply just not effective. We want to avoid that now and in the future by using our understanding of trauma to help shape the way we communicate about sexual harm.


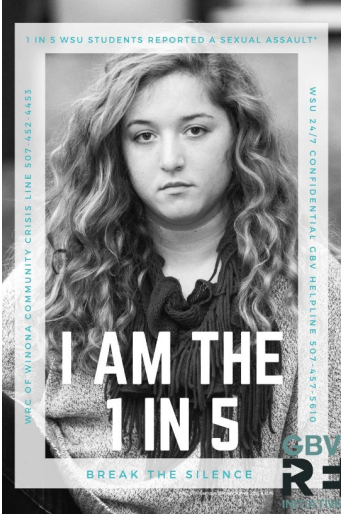
When we get communications about sexual harm right, we can help change culture for the better, and we can give individuals the information that they may need to make their own informed choices. When we get our communications wrong, we can perpetuate myths and damaging culture and we can actually prevent individuals from accessing help, support and in some cases justice.


In this document we will be referencing 'triggers to trauma'. A 'trigger' in this capacity can be a sight, sound, smell, taste or touch; and is anything which can spark a memory which transports a person back to a traumatic event/their traumatic experiences. When trauma is triggered, an individual may experience emotional and/or physical responses.


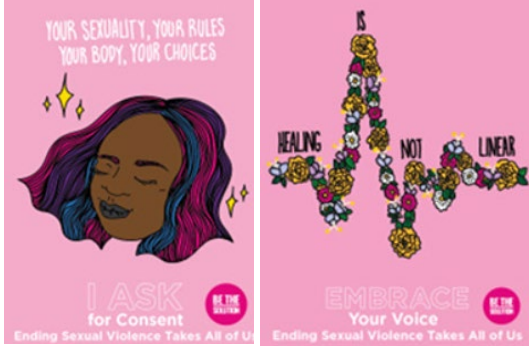
## Real examples of sexual harm communications

The following are real examples of sexual harm campaign messages and our thoughts about them (these are just our thoughts, yours may be different):

Campaign message	Our view
 <p><b>Which one of your mates is most vulnerable on a night out?</b> The one you leave behind</p>	<p>The intention of this message may have been to encourage individuals to stay together so that they may be safer. Directly interpreted though, this means that if someone is left on their own, they are 'vulnerable'. This puts a responsibility on that person to not be alone/vulnerable. This message also places the responsibility for that person's 'vulnerability' on the friends who have left them behind. This message makes the implied danger the responsibility of everyone else, other than the implied attacker/assailant.</p> <p>In reality someone on their own should not be 'vulnerable' to rape or other sexual harm, because people in our society shouldn't rape or sexually harm others.</p>

Campaign message	Our view
	<p>This campaign from <a href="http://changingourcampus.org/current-efforts/saam/">http://changingourcampus.org/current-efforts/saam/</a> uses a range of artwork depicting a diverse range of individuals with very clear myth and fact statements.</p> <p>The campaign doesn't shy away from challenging myths and this demonstrates a serious, transparent and mature approach to having an open conversation about sexual harm and why it exists in our society.</p> <p>The campaign imagery is positive in tone which makes it approachable and far less likely to re-traumatise / trigger individuals with lived experience.</p> <p>The #itsapeopleissue encourages a broader societal conversation about sexual harm.</p>
<p><b>Friends who play together, stay together. On a night out don't let your mates leave with a stranger or go off alone.</b></p>	<p>Culturally this type of message can encourage individuals to fear being out in public spaces at night. Individuals should not have to fear being outside because of the threat of being raped or sexually harmed.</p>
	<p>This campaign from <a href="http://changingourcampus.org/current-efforts/saam/">http://changingourcampus.org/current-efforts/saam/</a> is a good example of using statistics with respect and purpose to make a point. The intent behind this artwork is to demonstrate that the issue is prevalent and that behind each statistic is a human being. The imagery is not triggering / does not risk re-traumatizing individuals, forms part of a series of visuals which challenge stereotypes and depicts individuals that the intended audience can identify with (i.e. students).</p>

Campaign message	Our view
<p><b>If you're enjoying festive drinks tonight, know your limits. Getting drunk can make you vulnerable.</b></p>	<p>This message encourages the reader to believe that drinking alcohol / getting 'drunk' makes an individual 'vulnerable', and that whilst that person is vulnerable (which they have chosen to do through getting drunk) they may be raped / experience sexual harm.</p> <p>In reality someone who has had little, some or a lot of alcohol should not be 'vulnerable' to rape or other sexual harm, because people in our society shouldn't rape or sexually harm others.</p>
	<p>The message in this campaign is a clear 'bystander' message that encourages everyone to intervene when and where they experience inappropriate sexual behaviours towards others. The tone of this message is not that a man needs to save a woman, as from the image, we cannot tell who the sexually inappropriate behaviour is aimed at (it could be the man or the woman depicted). What this message is saying is that a) sexually inappropriate behaviour and harassment is completely unacceptable, b) all of us in society can intervene and challenge behaviours and c) those who perpetrate this behaviour should expect others to intervene because it's not okay.</p>
<p><b>Night of the reckless drunk. When you drink too much you lose control and put yourself at risk.</b></p>	<p>This message blames an individual three times for potentially being raped or experiencing another form or sexual harm. The blame is in the forms of the word 'reckless', 'losing control' and putting 'yourself at risk'. An individual who has experienced sexual harm and has viewed such a message as this, may be reluctant to seek help and support in case they are judged for being 'reckless' and drinking too much.</p>
<p><b>One in three reported rapes happens when the victim has been drinking.</b></p>	<p>This message not only places the blame for rape with the individual who has been raped, but it dehumanises all those who have experienced rape and sexual harm by using a statistic in an attempt to convey its message. This message could be perceived as meaning 'don't drink, don't get raped'. What this message doesn't say is 'if someone has been drinking or if they haven't been drinking, don't rape them'.</p>

Campaign message	Our view
	<p>This campaign <a href="https://www.bava.org.uk/news/this-is-not-an-excuse/">https://www.bava.org.uk/news/this-is-not-an-excuse/</a> depicts individuals doing things that are perfectly natural and acceptable (such as wearing clothes, socializing, wearing a wedding ring etc) with a simple caption stating that all of those things are not excuses to rape them. This campaign sends a clear message that there are no excuses for rape and it also challenges the damaging stereotype of an individual who through their own actions, may have made themselves 'vulnerable to being raped'. The tone of the caption is directed at potential perpetrators of harm which is powerful and direct. It also highlights that individuals are entitled to live their lives safely and without fear of harm.</p>
<p><b>Drink sensibly. Get home safely.</b></p>	<p>This message contains judgement as the implication is if a person does not drink 'sensibly' they might not get home safely, and that they are then responsible for whatever implied danger they then may face.</p>
	<p>In the first image of artwork from <a href="http://www.wcsap.org/prevention/awareness/saam">www.wcsap.org/prevention/awareness/saam</a> three clear and positive messages are given relating to: a person's right to make their own choices, that consent is something that is asked for not implied, and that ending sexual harm takes whole communities. In the second image we see a message that is really important but not always featured in sexual harm prevention campaigns, which is the 'what next' for an individual with lived experience and their future. The 'healing is not linear' message is valuable because through a trauma informed approach, it challenges stereotypes and barriers that an individual with lived experience may face.</p>

## Understanding what sexual harm is

Terms like ‘sexual harm’ are blanket terms that cover a whole range of harmful sexual activities and crimes. When designing communications about sexual harm, it is important to understand what we mean by that term specifically as what one person’s direct experience or personal view of that term may be, may be different to someone else’s. It’s also important to recognise that individuals who have experienced sexual harm may not associate themselves or their experiences with *any* of the terms that we use in our organisations such as ‘sexual assault’, ‘sexual violence’ and ‘sexual offences’. ‘Assault’ and ‘violence’ are also words that may be triggering to individuals who have experienced trauma.

Overall, sexual harm includes actions and behaviours that stem from an individual’s desire to have power and control over another person and they relate to forced, coerced and unwanted sexual contact. Sexual harm can take place on a spectrum of actions and behaviours that range from subtle to incredibly violent.

Consent to sex/sexual activity means agreeing by choice and having the freedom and capacity to make that choice. To give consent a person must have the capacity (i.e. the age and understanding) to make a choice about whether or not to take part in a sexual activity at the time in question. They also have to be in a position to make that choice freely, and not be constrained in any way. Consent can only ever take place when there is equal power.

This list is not exhaustive, but examples of unequal power could be a relationship or interaction where one person:

- makes all the decisions
- actively removes choices or the ability to make choices, from another person
- refuses to compromise during a disagreement
- does not respect another person and expresses contempt for them
- isolates another person
- physically intimidates another person
- disregards the needs and feelings of another person
- will not take personal responsibility for their own actions and behaviours
- always has to have the last word
- has financial control over another person
- has a professional position of power higher than another person/group
- holds a status of power in the community, higher than another person/group
- has familial control over another person/group
- is an adult and another person is a child (a boy or girl under the age of 16 cannot consent to sex by law)

Sexual harm can be profoundly traumatic to those who experience it directly, and to others who may indirectly experience it such as children and other family members.

Types of sexual harm can include (but is not limited to): sexual abuse, rape, sexual assault, grooming, revenge porn, and human trafficking for sexual exploitation.



### Sexual abuse against children and young people

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.

There are 2 types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse. And sexual abuse can happen in person or online or by telephone/ text.

Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes:

- sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
- using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
- making a child undress or touch someone else.

Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative. Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes:

- exposing or flashing
- showing pornography
- exposing a child to sexual acts
- making them masturbate
- forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone<sup>1</sup>.

### Rape

A rape is when a person intentionally penetrates another's vagina, anus or mouth with a penis, without the other person's consent.

Legally, a person without a penis cannot commit rape, but a female may be guilty of rape if they assist a male perpetrator in an attack<sup>2</sup>.

### Sexual assault

Sexual assault is when a person is coerced or physically forced to engage against their will, or when a person, male or female, touches another person sexually without their consent. Touching can be done with any part of the body or with an object. Sexual penetration is when a person (male or female) penetrates the vagina or anus of another person with any part of their body or an object without that person's consent<sup>3</sup>.

It's important to recognise that some individuals will have experienced more than one type of sexual harm in their lifetime.

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<sup>1</sup> Text to explain Sexual Abuse taken in its entirety from Sexual Abuse | NSPCC - [www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/) (October 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Sexual Offences | Crown Prosecution Service [www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/sexual-offences](http://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/sexual-offences) (October 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Text to explain Rape taken in its entirety from Sexual Offences | Crown Prosecution Service <https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/sexual-offences> (October 2020).

## Understanding labels

The language we use to describe something, or someone, is deeply significant.

Organisations often attach labels to individuals in order to categorise them into where they 'fit' into our systems. Generally, when someone has experienced a crime, they are referred to as a 'victim of crime'. Because sexual harm is about power and control, the word 'victim' should be considered carefully in communications because it can be perceived by some as portraying an individual as having little power or being in some way 'weak'. The possibility of being perceived as 'weak' may make an individual feel shame and negatively impact on their self-esteem. The word 'victim' may also be perceived by some as defining a person by the crime that they have experienced (e.g. 'rape victim'). Overall, there is a difference in being 'the victim of a crime' and 'being a victim'.

The word 'survivor' is often used instead to describe those with lived experience of sexual harm. For some individuals the term 'survivor' is an empowering one and a reality because they have quite literally survived their experience. For others the word 'survivor' is associated with overcoming an obstacle and by doing so becoming stronger in some way. This can place a huge amount of pressure on an individual who has experienced trauma to 'recover' from their experience and transform into something else. Some individuals with lived experience of sexual harm can find the pressure to *be* a survivor / *act* like a survivor every day unrealistic.

When considering 'victims' and 'survivors' it is also useful to reflect upon those who do not 'survive' sexual harm, particularly those lost to suicide.

The phrase 'cope and recover from crime' is one that is well used by many organisations and is referenced in the national Victim's Strategy. Whilst all crimes are important, sexual harm can result in trauma to those who experience it. Using the term 'to cope', with a traumatic experience/series of experiences/years of experiences, can place a huge responsibility on an individual to 'get by' particularly if they do not have access to the type of specialist help and support that they may need. An individual who has experienced sexual harm may also feel that they may not ever 'recover' as they may never return to the version of themselves that existed before their experience.

This is not to say that these terms should never be used, but when using them when talking about sexual harm it is important to understand *how* they may be perceived, how they might resonate (or not) with individuals, and how they may make individuals feel.

At the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, where possible we refer to individuals within our own communications as having 'lived experience of sexual harm' or as 'individuals who have experienced crime/harm'.

## Our principles

We believe that by working to a set of principles, we and others can create high quality communications content and materials which:

- give individuals who have experienced sexual harm the right type of information that they may need, so that they can make their own informed choices

- raise awareness of the type of help and services that are available, how to access them and how specifically they can help support individuals with their emotional and practical needs

Communications should also seek to explore, understand and challenge:

- why sexual harm exists in our community
- myths which exist about sexual harm
- stereotypes and why they exist

Our principles when communicating about sexual harm are:

1. We recognise that trauma is an emotional response, not a mental health illness.
2. We believe that there is no justification or excuse for sexual harm.
3. We believe that no individual or group should have to live in fear of sexual harm.
4. We recognise that we (organisations) need to create a culture of trust so that individuals who have experienced sexual harm feel able to tell us about what has happened to them, and what they may need from us.
5. We believe that our communications should demonstrate and encourage compassion, continuity, community, choice, empowerment and resilience.
6. We understand that not every individual who has experienced sexual harm wants to go through the criminal justice system and we respect that this decision is their choice to make.

## Questions to ask when designing communications

### Who do we want our communications messages to reach?

Deciding who we want to try and reach through our communications is integral to our approach. We may wish to communicate with:

- Women and girls who have experienced sexual harm
- Men and boys who have experienced sexual harm
- Children and adolescents who have experienced sexual harm
- Individuals who have experienced sexual harm whose first language is not English
- LGBTQ and non-binary individuals who have experienced sexual harm
- Individuals over 50, 60, and 70+ who have experienced sexual harm
- Individuals with disabilities who have experienced sexual harm
- Individuals with learning difficulties who have experienced sexual harm
- Individuals with other protected characteristics (for example expectant mothers) who have experienced sexual harm
- The general public
- Families, friends and carers of both adults and children who may have experienced (or who are at risk of) sexual harm

Who we wish to reach with our messages will influence specifically how we communicate. We need to consider and understand all protected characteristics, to ensure that we are communicating the right type of messages, in the right way, at the right time and in the right place. We also need to understand if and how our messages have been received, and what difference they have made.

### What fears do our communications need to consider?

When preparing our communications plans we may consider that an individual may be fearful of:

- Facing their trauma
- Some of the emotional and physical responses generated by their trauma
- Talking to strangers and other people about an intimate and traumatic experience
- Having to disclose other intimate details about themselves
- Being outed as LGBTQ+
- Having to disclose being in a polyamorous relationship
- Having to disclose that the harm took place in breach of Covid-19 regulations (for example at a house party)
- Being held accountable for use of illegal drugs
- Being judged for former convictions of breach of law
- Reporting a crime against someone they know
- Reporting a crime against someone in their family
- Reprisals from the abuser
- Reprisals from someone in the family or friendship group
- Not being entitled to support because what happened occurred a long time ago
- Being judged or blamed for the circumstances leading to the violence
- Not being believed
- Not being able to remember everything
- Their social status being a factor in how they might be treated
- Religious or cultural fears
- The status of their abuser (e.g. someone in a position of power or privilege or the abuser being someone in the workplace)
- Losing a job due to needing to take time away from work
- Not wanting to bring perceived shame onto their family
- Being disowned by their family
- What other people will think and say
- The impact on children, parents, other family members
- Going to a police station
- Fear of the police
- Having to go somewhere they don't know for a medical examination
- Knowing that the violence is likely to happen again
- Fear of the stigma of being 'a rape victim' and the label of that

Recognising these fears may influence how, where and when we choose to communicate a specific message.

### What barriers may exist for individuals in terms of accessing help and support?

To communicate effectively with individuals who have experienced sexual harm we must acknowledge and truly understand the barriers that they may face. By acknowledging these barriers, we can adapt our communication so that they have a better chance of being received. The types of barriers an individual may experience could include:

- Natural responses to trauma such as: dissociation (you can find out more about dissociation on the [Mind website](#) but one way of describing it can be as feeling completely numb), avoidance, guilt, panic attacks, hyperarousal, sleep problems, low

self-esteem, grief, depression, suicidal feelings, self-harm, alcohol or substance misuse, irritability, anger, or flashbacks

- Feelings of shame and embarrassment
- Not recognising the term ‘sexual harm’ because no physical violence may have been involved in what happened to them
- Lack of detailed awareness/knowledge of what services provide and how specifically they may be able to help
- Not being ready or not feeling able to talk about their experience
- Feeling like they don’t deserve help
- Fear
- Mistrust of the police and others
- Being previously let down by agencies
- Physical isolation
- No support network
- Any barriers associated with having one or more protected characteristics
- Mental health difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Living in an abusive household
- Lack of a support system
- Financial difficulties
- Language
- Literacy
- Access to IT
- Access to a phone
- Transport

### **What aspects of trauma need to be considered when designing our communications?**

- Trauma is an emotional response, not a mental health illness
- Just because someone may have experienced trauma, it does not mean that they have a diagnosed mental health issue (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and they may not want to be labelled with one
- Individuals may have experienced more than one trauma
- Individuals may have experienced trauma over long periods of time
- Trauma can affect the way that our brains function under stress
- Inappropriate communications can retraumatise individuals
- Imagery and sounds may trigger traumatic experiences
- Natural responses to trauma include an individual suffering from nightmares and flashbacks, so we must avoid content which could trigger responses
- You can find out more about what trauma is and the range of physical and emotional effects it can have on the Mind website at [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/trauma/about-trauma/](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/trauma/about-trauma/).

### **What other factors need to be considered when designing communications?**

- Individuals with lived experience of sexual harm, when offered the opportunity, can fundamentally support organisations to communicate about this issue well. Their voices are powerful, insightful and true.
- Individuals may change their mind after engaging with the police or support services.

- Trauma associated with sexual harm can remain with an individual, but their experience does not have to define them as a whole person or inhibit the life they want to live.
- Negative language is not helpful for individuals who have experienced sexual harm. They are not ‘damaged’ for example. They may be altered by their trauma, but they are not ‘broken’.
- Culturally a range of myths about sexual harm exist in our communities and it’s important to recognise what they are so that we can attempt to challenge them. Information about myths can be found on the Rape Crisis website at <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/about-sexual-violence/myths-vs-realities/>.
- We must avoid damaging practices i.e. making promises that can’t be kept, giving false hope, giving double messages, words without actions, words which don’t match visuals, and words that don’t reflect real life.
- Individuals deserve to know what they can expect to happen when they contact a service for information, help or support. Asking someone to telephone a number without saying what is going to happen if they do, doesn’t necessarily inspire trust or confidence.
- We need to consider the content and context of our communications and be sensitive to diversity.
- We must use language that those we are communicating with use themselves, (e.g. their first language, the language they are comfortable with using) and we shouldn’t expect individuals to try to navigate our corporate language.
- We must use language easily accessible without jargon. When we use corporate language we can be perceived as elitist. An individual who has suffered trauma should not be expected to navigate our terminology.
- We must be mindful that different individuals with different traumas may find different things triggering.
- Appropriate (i.e. non-triggering) images/visuals are important particularly for those who have lower literacy levels or speak languages other than English.
- If data/statistics are to be used, they must be used sensitively and with a clear purpose

#### **What do we want to support individuals to do (these may be different for each demographic)?**

- Access the right type of help and support they may need after experiencing sexual harm
- Access the ongoing therapeutic support they may need for their trauma
- Have an awareness of the types of individuals who work and volunteer in specialist services, and how they may be able to support them
- Seek justice by reporting what has happened to them to the police, if that’s their choice
- Help us as organisations, services and systems to improve

#### **What are our key messages (these may be different for each demographic)?**

- An individual who has experienced sexual harm is not alone. There are people and organisations who can provide help and support
- No matter what the circumstances, sexual harm can never be justified or excused
- Help and support is available, regardless of whether or not someone chooses to report their experience to the police

- Help and support is available for those individuals who want to report their experience to the police (during the police process and through the criminal justice system)

### **How will we know if our communications have been successful?**

- Feedback from individuals with lived experience will inform us
- Feedback from staff in specialist services will inform us
- Referral patterns into services may indicate change (and those services should be informed about any new campaign prior to its release)
- Social media engagement can be measured
- Press coverage can be measured

### **Help us to improve**

We hope you have found this document helpful and that it supports you to design your own communications about sexual harm. We are always striving to improve so if you think we could make this document better in any way, or if you have any feedback or suggestions please let us know by email to [opcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:opcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk).

### **Communications planner checklist**

✓	
I'm clear about and can articulate the overall purpose of this communication	
I know who specifically I want this communication to reach and why	
I have considered what type of communications channels they use/have access to	
I have considered the types of trauma and fears that the individuals I'm trying to reach may have	
I have considered the specific needs that the individuals I'm trying to reach may have	
I can articulate the clear key messages I want to communicate	
I know where to deliver my messages, and have taken into consideration barriers that the individuals I'm trying to reach, may experience	
I know who is going to be responsible for delivering these messages	
I've asked agency specialists and if possible, those with lived experience of sexual harm, for their advice and guidance to help inform this activity (I also know I can access them through the office of the police and crime commissioner if I'm not sure who to approach)	
I've contacted relevant partner organisations to talk with them about my plans and how they may be able to support this activity	
I have checked that I'm signposting individuals to the most appropriate services	
I am confident that my plans do not perpetuate <a href="#">myths</a> about sexual harm	
I've contacted organisations who may be impacted by my communications, so that their staff know to expect increased contact / enquiries to services	
I can articulate how I have considered protected characteristics/equality and diversity in this activity	

I have considered the risks associated with my plans and have taken steps to mitigate them	
I have a clear plan to measure the performance of this activity so I can demonstrate if it has been successful and how I can use learning from it to inform my future work and the work of others	

## Testimonials

*“The trauma guide is a fantastic reference when compiling sensitive communications. It highlights small but integral nuances that may not be considered in day-to-day comms but which make a huge difference to those who have experienced trauma. The use of both good and bad examples to highlight key points makes the guide extremely user-friendly and very quick to cross-reference. Most importantly, it didn’t in any way stifle or restrict what needed to be communicated. In the main the document just emphasises minor amendments or different ways of phrasing things that ensure your comms won’t trigger or upset anyone who has been through a traumatic experience.”*

Joel Cooper – Multi-Media Communication Specialist – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner