

Safeguarding, confidentiality and disclosure

It is very important that everyone knows from the beginning of the programme that confidentiality is important – the issues being discussed may affect students on a very personal level and the process of discussing them may lead some students to disclose previous or current abuse or assault. At the beginning of the programme you will create ground rules with the participants – please ensure that they include confidentiality.

Your university will have a Safeguarding Policy which they will publish and which you are required to implement. If during the course of the programme you become aware or have concerns that a participant is being abused or harmed, or if you have concerns about their welfare, health or safety, and believe them to be vulnerable, your university's Safeguarding Policy is likely to require that you report concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Officer at the university. It is a requirement of law to report safeguarding concerns in the case of children (anyone aged under 18) or vulnerable adults (defined under Section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/notes/division/18/3>).

If a participant does make a disclosure to you or to the group, you may find these points helpful:

Acknowledge

- It takes courage to talk about personal experiences – thank the person for sharing. Check whether they would like to talk later in a safe/quiet space and before moving on, ask if they are happy for the group discussion to move on.

Listen, Believe, Reassure

- This may be the first time they have ever spoken about this experience. It is important that they feel understood and believed. Reassure them that the abuse/assault is not their fault.

Inform

- From the outset, do not make promises that you cannot keep such as “I’ll take care of it” or “I won’t tell anybody”. Explain that some information can be kept confidential but some cannot.
- Explain that the group is a learning group and not a support group – say that there are support services inside and outside the university and provide a list of contact details and telephone numbers. We have provided a list (last checked in March 2014) of national contacts for you as a downloadable Word document – please check the current status of the information and add local organisations to the list before printing and distributing. [link to downloadable document page of contacts: [supportservices.doc](#)]

Checklist:

I have copies of a list of national and local support services including University support services and specialist support services (e.g. for domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, forced marriage) to hand

I have read and understand my university’s safeguarding policy and the procedures I must follow

