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SURVIVORS MANCHESTER

Break the Silence

Twenty lads in Manchester come together to tell the collective journey of breaking their silence to find healing in the hope of helping others.

“Research suggests 1 in 6 males have experienced abusive sexual experiences before age 18”

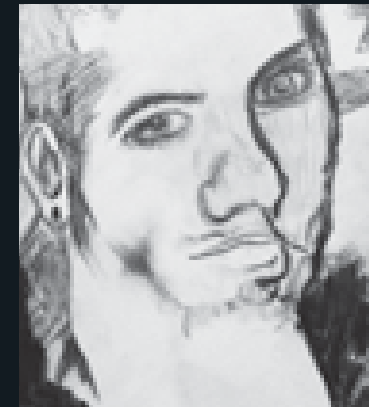
www.lin6.org

“Three-quarters of sexually abused children did not tell anyone about the abuse at the time. Around a third still had not told anyone about their experience(s) by early adulthood”

Cawson, P. et al. (2000) Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect. London: NSPCC. p.83.



If you want to talk to us about anything in the book or if you want to see what support Survivors Manchester can offer, check us out on www.survivorsmanchester.org.uk, drop us an email at support@survivorsmanchester.org.uk or call/text 07919 246 267.



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Welcome to Break the Silence, written by male survivors for male survivors.

The aim of this book is to do something that can be really difficult to do... talk about the sexual abuse and rape of boys and men. We hope that the boy or man reading this might not feel so alone anymore, because we know how that feels.

Dealing with the impact or legacy of sexual abuse can be emotional, confusing, draining, and sometimes feels like it's just too difficult and never going to end. But it does get easier, we can't guarantee when but if you want it to and work at it then it will.

That's where, hopefully, this book comes in useful.

This book contains our stories and creative writing; the drawings and illustrations we did, and information and advice from us and some professionals.

We wanted this to be a book of REAL WORDS from REAL PEOPLE about a REAL ISSUE!


Some things you read you might find difficult. Other things might stir up some emotions. So our best advice is to read it at your own pace, it doesn't have to be read all at once.

The fact that you've even picked this up proves that you are already breaking the silence, keep going.

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

The NSPCC say "Sexual abuse can be very difficult to identify" and it's true. The law says that it is an offence committed against someone that is sexual in nature. We say that sexual abuse is the act(s) of removing a person(s) power and control using sex. We agree with The Survivors Trust, who said:

"Rape and sexual abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, culture or social status. Living with the consequences of rape and sexual abuse can be devastating. There is no excuse for rape or sexual abuse"



The horrifying truth of
one lads experience of
what a father was.

A FATHER'S LEGACY

By [Danny](#)

A father should be a man who;
Cares,
Loves,
Provides,
Teaches, and;
Cherishes.

My father is a man who;
strikes fear into his own son,
rapes his son violently,
injures, suffocates and traumatises his son,
takes his son to the depths of hell,
leaves a dreadful legacy.

[Survivors Manchester](#) has taught me how to;
[take my life back](#), talk through pieces
of my memory, achieve clarity its my own
little jigsaw.



A traumatic story
of horror &
speaking out.

THE MONSTER

By [John](#)

I'm John, a dog groomer from Dublin. I've worked with animals for most of my life and opened a dog grooming salon in Manchester in 1992. It was while working at this grooming salon that I was subjected to a vicious and callous rape that my Northern Inuit puppy, Indie, tried bravely to save me from.

I have post-traumatic stress disorder but have learned to manage this on a daily basis thanks to the help I received from my family and friends, Survivors Manchester, Greater Manchester Police and St Mary's Centre. They helped me to get through the court experience and see THE MONSTER sent to prison for 15 months. He's on the sex offenders register for 10 years and will never be able to visit a country that requires a visa or work with vulnerable people. His actual sentence was for 4 years but the judicial system being what it is in this country, he was to serve 15 months.

Originally he was meant to be released in February 2011 but he was gate arrested on his release and sent back to prison! HA! He spent time in a hostel and was due to be released again in July but broke his licence conditions and is now, as I am writing, back in prison.

The impact rape has had on my life cannot be overestimated. It has affected every aspect of my daily life [but I am getting the power back with support](#). He raped me and I have to carry this legacy! It's not fair is it?

[But now, through support, I no longer feel ashamed or blame myself as I used to. I feel proud, no, really proud that I sent that MONSTER to prison for one of the worst violations of another human being... Rape.](#)



A life almost ruined by
the actions of one boys
foster father.

IN PRISON

By [Lee](#)

I spent my entire childhood in care, up to the age of 14 being sexually abused by my foster father; I eventually left when I was 14.

Although I was disruptive throughout my time in school it was when I left that I started to drink most nights and started to get very angry which resulted in me committing a number of serious violent crimes, between the ages of 17 and 21 I spent all but 15 months in prison. This is a cycle that I am sure would have continued unless I addressed the fact that I was abused.

During my 2nd sentence which was 3 years I had a year and half to get some help. The help I needed wasn't readily available through the prison and they would only offer group work. Eventually I managed to convince the prison and probation service to pay for one to one counselling which I had weekly for 15 months. This was my last time in prison.

What made the difference? I stopped blaming myself, it wasn't my fault. I started to understand why I felt the way I did, why I reacted the way I did and most importantly that my reaction was normal.



Mistakes are always forgiven,
if one has the courage to admit
them. That's what I have done.

SPEAKING OUT

By **Jason**

When I was 7, I went through the atrocity of sexual abuse. Up to 6 months ago, aged 23, I had kept everything bottled up. I told no one. I felt it was my fault, I was scared and I felt like I was on my own, thinking over the years what people would think.

Would anyone believe me? Would I become the butt of dirty jokes?

In 2010, the Police came to my house and asked me if I had ever been sexually abused. I was stunned. It came out of the blue. After calming down they asked me if I would do a statement and after 10 mins I said I would. It was not easy having to talk about the most traumatic time I had ever been through. I did a statement over a video link but it took 6 months to do it. It took that long because even though I was speaking to a male, I still felt very uneasy.

The Police were very good to me, I knew I wasn't on my own anymore.

As time went on towards the trial, speaking more about it made my confidence grow.

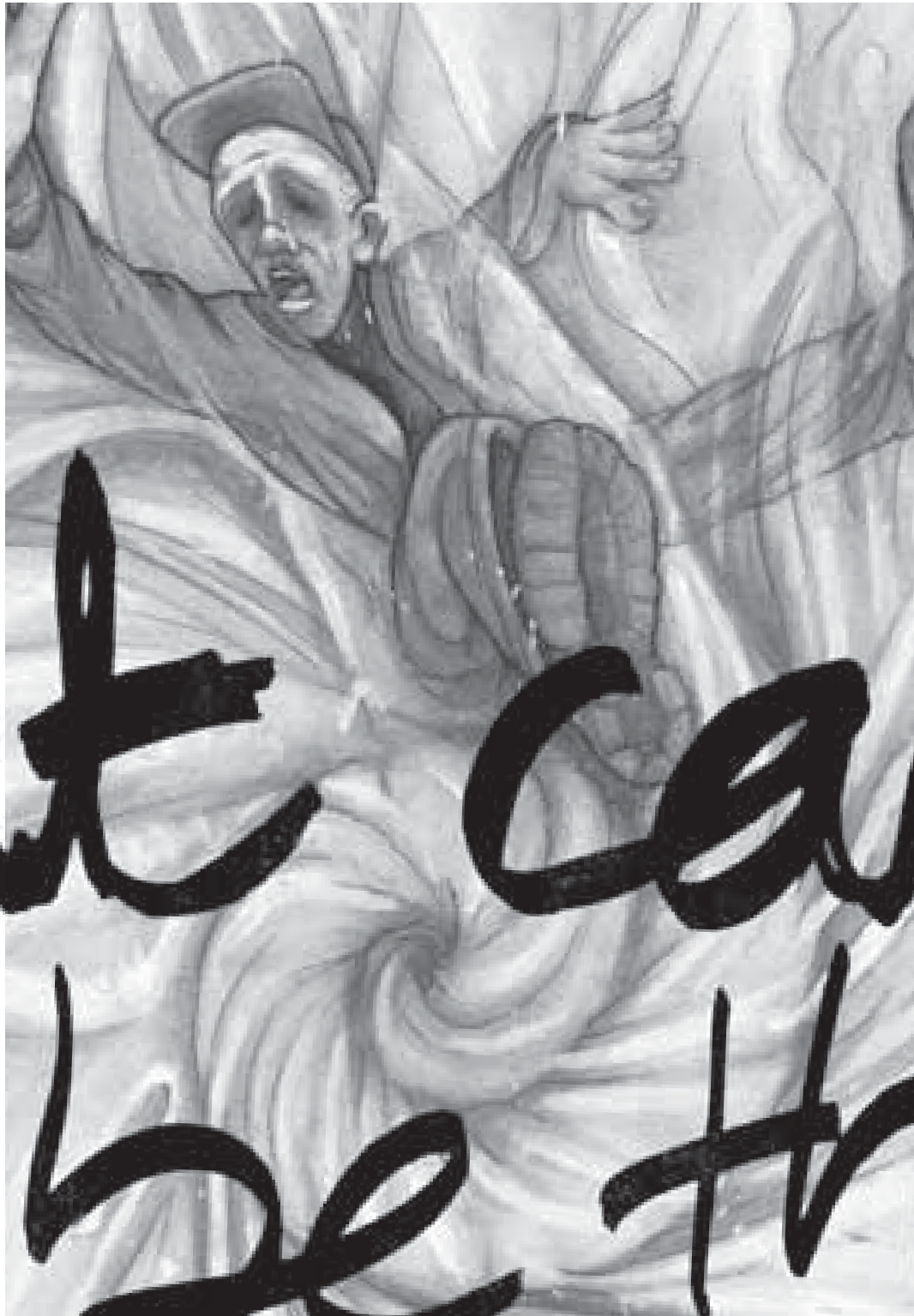
But going through the trial, it affected me more than I thought. Meeting the attacker face to face and seeing him go to prison for what he had done to me, that weight on my shoulders which I had for 16 years gradually got lighter.

In May 2012 I told my story to Bella Magazine, just for the reason that I don't want other people in the situation I was in; to suffer in silence.

Speak out, let other people know about the bastards who live around us. Never feel alone.

I want to give back because I know through experience how bad it can be. There is support and help out there so don't suffer in silence. I hope this book can give hope and peace for people going through a traumatic time as I did. I hope you will find this information inspiring. If you would like to read my story go on the web and get Bella Issue 31, or check out Survivors Manchester for more details.

Keep strong from Jason.



IT CAN'T BE THAT

By [Terry](#)

Often, daily even,
I'd say to myself
four simple words;
"It can't be that."

After all it was
such a short and
trivial sentence of
no importance. So if
I could see it like
this, then surely the
meaning behind it was
just as irrelevant.

It was the poverty
I was born in, why
I found school so
hard, the study, the
bullying, I just
didn't fit in.

"It can't be that."

Why I rebelled so
much, the crime,
the violence and
juvenile intro to
drink, drugs and
the sex.

"It can't be that."

The jobs, the family,
the friends I lost,
didn't matter, it is
how it is, no one
cared anyway, least
of all me.

"It can't be that."

The addiction,
isolation,
degradation,
spiralling deeper
and darker.

"It can't be that."

The attempts, the
wanting and such
strong conviction to
not be here.

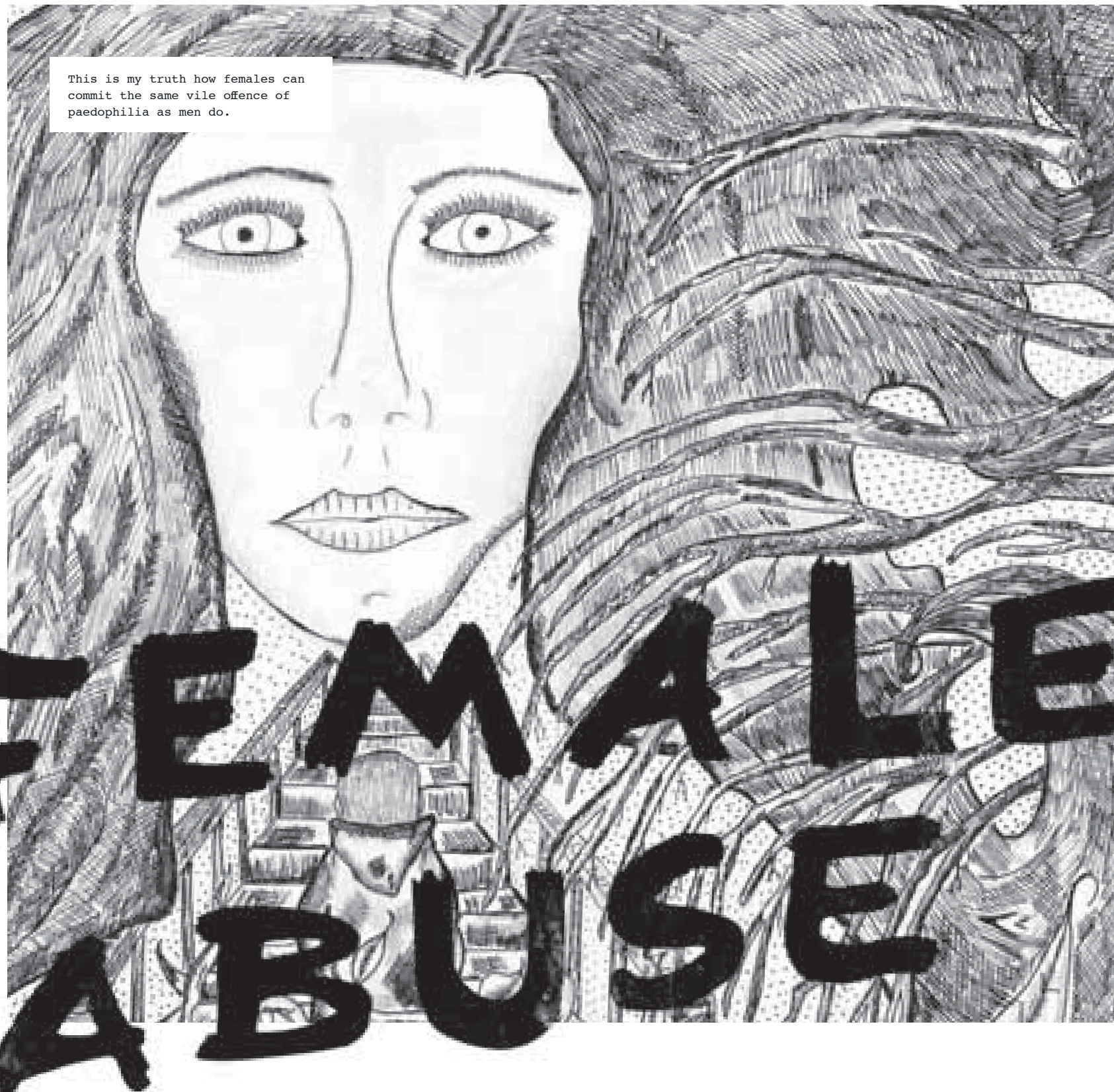
"It can't be that."

[But I am still here.](#)
[I'm a survivor.](#)
[I'm getting back](#)
[all that he took,](#)
[the strength, trust,](#)
[belief and so much](#)
[more. I still say](#)
[a simple four word](#)
[sentence, not daily](#)
[though, only because](#)
[for sometimes and for](#)
[the past times,](#)

["IT'S BECAUSE](#)
[OF THAT!"](#)

[That... the selection,](#)
[manipulation through](#)
[false affection,](#)
[the violation and](#)
[rejection.](#)

[Because THAT is abuse,](#)
[the sexual abuse.](#)



FEMALES ABUSE TOO

By [Daniel](#)

Prevailing dominant winds are winds that blow from a single general direction at high speed over a particular point on the earth's surface, this particular point was a street in bury, my bedroom age 8, and the general direction the wind blew from originated from a female perpetrator named hurricane Nicola who raped and abused me.

What was left from that particular point in time at that longitude and latitude was a child, with a turbulent under current that turned into a whirlpool inside. From the outside apparently you may not have known it wasn't that obvious what happened that day, the first time. I must have hid it well sometimes I wonder how did this act slip through the net; the only solace I found was jumping on my BMX and flying a top speed down the steepest hill I could find with a different kind of wind blowing through my hair. I remember not caring weather there was traffic at the bottom this was an early measure of my low self worth.

As I mentioned before because it used to be important to me how did I slip through the net how did no one pick up on my change in behaviour withdrawn, disappearing for hours and finally "silent"...this was the manipulation working its magic, a sprinkling of evil fairy dust on my voice. Instilled with silence, standby had been pressed on the remote to my lust for life, confidence and self esteem for 28 long years.

What I did over time was tried to reason and justify what had happened the my age changed and after all it was a woman shouldn't I be grateful surely other lads would say I was lucky to have sex with the baby sitter then I remember I was 7... This wouldn't go away. The only thing I could find to try and wipe the tape was heroin and crack, this would work for a short period of time but in the background my life was spiralling out of control. I had handed her all the power and was slowly killing myself. This would cement the silence bestowed upon me.

Finally through luck I met a worker who had the skills and compassion to open up this can of worms and guide me safely through this mess. This is how I got my power back and gained control I spoke out like I am now and broke the silence.

Today I have peace.

"Ppl fink am fik because I cnt go normel scool liek efry oen else n i cnt rite or red propa becoz wen efrey l else woz lerning I was kikin of n fitin coz I was mad at wat was appenin at ome and no one giv a shit bowt it. But i no i aint, u ant ad ur dad mesin wiv ur dik, ano i aint no saint."

Kman

LEGACY ISSUES

By [Duncan & Kman](#)

"two of the most powerful words to hear when we're struggling... ME TOO"

Dr Brene Brown

"The legacy of abuse is like the after shocks from an earthquake, they can go on for years but understanding them means we can be prepared and cope with them better"

Duncan Craig. MBACP

"Alcohol, illicit drugs, over the counter medication and even legal highs have been reported by clients to be helpful in alleviating distress that is overwhelming them, particularly mental distress related to any sexual abuse they have experienced. Substance misuse is employed as a coping mechanism; it is a short lived coping mechanism prone to failure in the medium and long term and should substance misuse and mental ill health co-exist they should be addressed simultaneously.

Dr Mark Holland
www.dualdiagnosis.co.uk

The impact, or 'legacy' as we call it, of being sexually abused as a child or young person, sexually assaulted or raped as an adult can really affect your life. Some people say that they believe the abuse they suffered as a child has not affected them as yet, or now, and you know what, that maybe true for those individuals. What's important to remember is that sexual abuse and rape affects us all in different ways... experience is absolutely unique to the individual. Many of us may have a shared fear or feel a similar way, but just because one individual feels one way it doesn't necessarily mean that you should feel or have to feel the same way. Our feelings are exactly that; Our Feelings.

Suffering from depression or anxiety; using drugs or alcohol to block out the memories and nightmares; deliberately harming yourself so just for once you can actually make sense of the pain your feeling inside; being angry and kicking off at everyone now, because of how angry you are at yourself for "letting it happen" (which you didn't by the way); not eating or binge eating because it feels good for one to have control of what goes into your body or not; having sex with random people to try and get the feeling of being connected to someone; being confused about your sexuality because of what happened; the list is endless.

But that doesn't mean everyone will feel the same legacy issues, or that everyone who does share the same legacy issue will deal with it in the same way. [The point is that whatever you're feeling just after or years after being abused is normal.](#)

[It's a normal reaction to an abnormal situation!](#)

[Identifying the legacy issues can be painful and upsetting but take it from us, it's well worth doing it because when you do, you get to be free from the shit!](#)

ANGER

By John

It seems that anger has been a constant issue for most of my life. As a sexually abused child I often reached for the anger stick and beat myself with it uncontrollably. Uncontrolled anger is a major factor in domestic violence and abuse, in aggressive driving violations, in workplace rudeness and disruption, and in marital conflicts and family fights. As an older man I believe managing my anger is easier by following the eight pointers below:

RECOGNIZE STRESS

I'm able to understand stress and anger tend to go hand and hand. The higher my stress level, the easier it is to allow my anger to get out of control. It has been a challenge for me to manage my stress levels but over time I have been able to learn stress management techniques. Some of us are very good at knowing how we feel and expressing it, while others struggle to do so. [It is crucial to express emotion in order to relate to those around us.](#)

DEVELOP EMPATHY

Have you ever been in a situation where you tried to express your feelings and it backfired in some way? I have, this lack of awareness is often a sign of not being emotionally or socially alert. Or, our ability to know how we are feeling as well as our ability to accurately sense the feelings of those around us help us make positive connections with others. This characteristic is often called "empathy". To empathize is to see with the eyes of another, to hear with the ears of another,

and to feel with the heart of another. [To manage anger, it often helps to see our anger as a combination of other people's behaviour and our lack of empathy toward them or their situation.](#)

RESPOND INSTEAD OF REACT

Many times I have become angry because I find people and situations that literally "push my buttons", and I have reacted just like a juke box that automatically pulls down a record and starts playing when you make a selection. There are many advantages of learning how to be more flexible in dealing with the stresses and frustrations of life. At the top of the list is a sense of empowerment. [Many people notice their anger level going down as their feeling of empowerment goes up.](#)

CHANGE THAT CONVERSATION WITH YOURSELF

"For some reason whenever I get upset I am always putting myself down" I have often said. "Even my friends tell me I am just too hard on myself". When I get upset, I will often say things like, "I'm such a waste of time", or, "sometimes I even tell myself that I am worthless and stupid when I make mistakes." A crucial tool in dealing with angry feelings for me has been to challenge that conversation with myself. I have spent a long time constantly telling myself all kinds of things which cause me to have certain feelings or emotions. [Learning to change that "self-talk" empowers me to deal with anger more effectively in terms of how strongly I feel the anger, how long I hold onto my anger, and how I express my anger.](#)

COMMUNICATE ASSERTIVELY

Good communication skills are an essential ingredient to anger management because poor communication causes untold emotional hurt, misunderstandings, and conflict. Words are powerful, but the message we convey to others is even more powerful and often determines how people respond to us and how we feel toward them. Anger expressed toward others is often a misguided way of communicating a feeling we have or a need that is not being satisfied by other people or situations. [Assertive communication is a set of skills to honestly and effectively communicate how you feel and how you are responding to things without getting angry or hostile about it.](#)

ADJUST EXPECTATIONS

Have you ever been told your expectations are too high? Anger and stress can often be caused when our expectations are too far apart from what is realistic to achieve. In other words, anger is often triggered by a discrepancy between what we expect and what we get. [Learning to adjust those expectations, sometimes upward and other times downward, can help us cope with difficult situations or people, or even cope with ourselves.](#) In marriage, research shows that much anger is caused by trying to solve problems which are unsolvable and perpetual. Successful couples learn to live with each other around these issues rather than getting angry about them.

FORGIVE BUT DON'T FORGET

Anger is often the result of grievances we hold toward other people or situations, usually because of our perception and feeling of having been wronged by them in some way. Resentment is a form of anger that does more damage to the holder than the offender. [Holding a grudge is letting the offender live rent free in your head. Making the decision to "let go" \(while still protecting ourselves\) is often a process of forgiveness – or at least acceptance – and is a major step toward anger control.](#)

STEP BACK AND THINK THINGS OVER

Me and my partner have grown to love each other deeply, but every so often we can go into horrific verbal battles over any number of issues. Sometimes we can struggle to give each other "space" during an argument insisting we solve the issue immediately. Needless to say, this is a dangerous practice as it can escalate levels of anger even further and cause us to do and say things we don't really mean and may later regret! [To avoid losing control either physically or verbally, it is often best to take a temporary "time-out"—and leave. This tool of anger management works much better if \(a\) you commit to return within a reasonable amount of time to work things out, and \(b\) you work on your "self-talk" while trying to cool down.](#)

"I felt detached from the world all emotions and love, affection even anger were gone well now all had gone but all that was left seemed desperately negative mostly fear that I would never escape this hurt and pain."

Terry

"everyone's experience of depression is different. Its hard being depressed but there is light in the darkness"

Joanne (Psychotherapist)

"Anxiety UK's services include a helpline staffed by volunteers with personal experience of anxiety; access to talking therapies; a community of support and advice; and a fantastic Manchester peer mentoring service"

Tom (Counsellor)

ANXIETY DEPRESSION

ANXIETY

By Terry

Anxiety is often reported by survivors. Most people can relate to feeling tense, uncertain and perhaps fearful. But, as survivors we can often feel constantly "on guard", as if expecting to be attacked. Some men experience panic and anxiety attacks, in which they experience periods of overwhelming fear. Higher levels of anxiety can be hard to cope with and make life seem really hard as it gets worse.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS

Anxiety can affect your sleep, appetite and so much more. In the body you may feel your heart rate increasing, your chest tightening, restless or fidgety, stomach churning, dizzy or lightheaded and hard to focus. You may have constant thoughts such as 'I can't cope', 'I'm cracking up', 'I'm going to collapse' or you may even think you are having a heart attack. You may start to behave differently, smoking, drinking and using drugs as a way of avoiding things. Which can ultimately lead to isolation, cutting yourself off more and more from the world.

DEPRESSION

Depression is another important issue to us as survivors of sexual trauma. The past can have a profound effect on how we feel about ourselves in the present. Thoughts on the event and the effects it has had on you. Hitting your self-worth, trust and confidence. It can, at its extremes, make survivors suicidal or simply give up the will to live. Depressed is often used as a term when we are feeling sad or miserable about life. Usually though, these feelings pass in due course. But if the feelings come back, again and again or don't go away, then it could be a sign that you are depressed in the medical sense.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS

Depression shows up in many different ways. Symptoms, such as feeling low in motivation and tired all the time. Having thoughts such as "I'm useless, worthless and don't do anything." In your behaviour you may avoid doing house work, opening letters and paying bills. And like anxiety it can lead to cutting yourself off from the world such as seeing friends or family, abusing alcohol and drugs which can ultimately lead to isolation again.

DEALING WITH IT

Anxiety and Depression often go hand in hand, and without help can trap you in a destructive and downward spiral. There are many ways to help reduce them to a more manageable level.

Just the thought of, and dealing with, anxiety can make you feel anxious. This is a common and natural response, avoiding anything that could trigger your fears. But this is the first crucial step in breaking the cycle of anxiety. Try to stay present and focus on now.

Similarly depression can feed on itself. Meaning you can get depressed about being depressed. Negative thoughts become automatic triggering a cycle of feeling and behaviour. You have to remember there is no instant solution, solving any problem takes time, energy and work.

Try to take more care of yourself, such as your personal appearance and eat healthier. Make all your goals at first fairly small and achievable which will give you satisfaction. Complementary therapies like massage and acupuncture can help you to relax, sleep better.

You may not feel like it but exercise is very therapeutic. It stimulates endorphins in the brain that make you feel better and can also be very helpful to turn negative adrenaline and other hormones that are produced when anxious or depressed, into something positive.

Be vocal! Talking to a friend or family member and just having someone to listen to you and showing they care, can help in itself.

If you find that you can't cope and need more support, then contact your GP who will help you find out about the things they can offer, such as medication, therapies and what alternatives there are. Don't be embarrassed in telling him how you feel, as I found out as a survivor myself, doctors are fully aware of the severity of anxiety and depression.

At the onset of my anxiety or depression I keep telling myself that I have been here before and that I can get through it again. It will pass if I try to keep calm, focus on the here and now; on what I need and can do to make me happy.



"It was our secret,
I promised not to tell.
As an adult I felt sick
knowing I kept that"

GUILT & SHAME

By Michael, Duncan & Sam

"I thought I deserved it
because he told me how bad
I'd been. I believed him
when he said no one would
care if I told so I let
him. I've felt ashamed for
so long"

"I have to remember
I am not to blame.
It isn't my fault no need
to feel shame"

Sam

"The one thing that keeps
us out of connection is
our fear we're not worthy
of connection"

Dr Brene Brown

"empathy is the
antidote to shame"

Dr Brene Brown

The oddest of all things was my childhood obligation, not to play and be free but to subserve my body and charm to men who were old enough to understand their disgrace! It was actually a pleasure, until it became routine and then a chore... making sure I was clean for them, at ten years old! For most people, this information they would not otherwise wish not to hear. I didn't ever want to listen to it myself. I was deeply ashamed of my childhood and of me as that child! But I have come to accept (with some help and support) that the horrific actions of these men were pre-meditated and malicious acts of an abhorrent crime... that of the sexual abuse of a child. **The greatest release is now living with the fulfillment in accepting that the child whom had sex with men, was the victim of indecent immoral adults who chose to exploit the innocence of a child. Me.**

It's widely acknowledged that guilt is one of the main emotions that can keep victims and survivors of sexual abuse silent, including men... men just like us! As an emotion, guilt is what we feel as a consequence of our actions when we believe that the action was the breaking of a moral rule, social norm, personal value or statutory law that we consider to be valid or right. It's that feeling we get when we think or say quietly to ourselves "I shouldn't have done that".

Shame can be one of the most crippling emotional spirals, overwhelmingly strong and because of its nature, one of the hardest to talk about. It is without doubt, the single most common feeling that keeps victims and survivors of sexual abuse and rape, silent – the exact effect that an abuser desires. But in reality you shouldn't be carrying that shame, you have nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, the shame doesn't belong to you; it belongs to the person abusing, the person who abused you, regardless of who they are.

Both the Guilt and the Shame that you been carrying around aren't even yours to be carrying! You have nothing to feel guilty about with regards to being abused, that wasn't your fault. Your reactions were about natural survival, you have nothing to be ashamed of.

"Vulnerability is NOT a weakness. The myth that it is is profoundly dangerous... vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change"

Dr Brene Brown



SELF-ESTEEM

By [Daniel](#)

"People who have a strong sense of love and belonging BELIEVE they're worthy of love and belonging"

Dr Brene Brown

For me being abused and raped when I was younger totally broke my self esteem, like a crack in a mirror it appeared and resulted in years of bad luck. I blamed my self and felt weak to the core. Looking back after a painfull walk and sprint down memory lane it was no wonder I couldn't trust, love myself and accept love from others, critism was my only comfort blanket and felt like home is supposed to feel.

Any positive words aimed in my direction to talk of my potential felt like a punch to the back of the head, it stung. I remember in depth feeling uncomfortable receiving cards or presents, I couldnt stand being the center of attention, this was a legacy of my abuse. The abuse I suffered turned me into a shy, awkward person who was constantly flinching on receipt of any physical contact.

I remember an intense feeling of being different to others, not nice. This just propelled my sense of emptyness and worthlessness. I carried this false impression of myself everywhere. I didnt know or want to understand myself.

It took a lot of work to get to where I am today, and knowing that feels good, I've took the power back and now my self-esteems my own.

I can give and receive love and accept praise; this is a big part of what built me up. I achieved this by connecting the dots and seeing the real picture of me emerge from the puzzle book. Guess what? I'm not a puzzle any more!

"Get into the habit of thinking and saying positive things about yourself to yourself"

www.mind.org.uk

"Other people's treatment of us affects our self-esteem, actions or words. You believe their words to be true, believe them to be fact. But guess what, IT'S NOT TRUE! Breaking the silence means that we break free from those words and we regain the power and control that was taken away. We gain back a sense of who we are and our true and valuable worth. The more we feel potent, the better our self- esteem"

Jo (Counsellor)



There are many organisations such as MIND that can offer you support and care.

0300 123 3393

mind.org.uk

You can also go on the Survivors Manchester website for a more comprehensive list of such organisations.

www.survivorsmanchester.org.uk

SELF HARM

By [Jim](#)

Self harm, I think to myself 'How could that be?' Surely we do act, due to the actions of a third party. We physically do damage to our bodies to cause pain to take a never-ending ache away. Is this self-harm?

We destroy all prospects of an open relationship by holding onto someone else's dirty little secret, treating it like we're the guilty ones! Full of fear that our loved ones will run for the hills.

I have messed a huge part of my life up in a self-destruct mission, let my children down, split partners, ruined many a friendship, but most importantly harmed myself, continuing the perpetrators work as if I had become the bastards' accomplice.

I'm lucky, I spoke to people and disclosed to loved ones. I took control and this worked, unlike my suicide attempt.

"The biggest thing we want you to remember is that YOU have choices now, you can stop 'self-injury', there are other ways to heal.

If you're cutting, one common method is to swap the blade for an ice cube. Yeah, I know it might sound stupid but try it. You might be surprised at the familiar sensation. If you need something visual then use coloured liquids in the ice tray.

For those that are biting (that was my way), then replace your arm, hand, knee for something else. Lollypop stick, apple, banana, even chewing gum. You still get that bite!"

Duncan Craig. MBACP

SELF HARM & SUICIDE EMERGENCY CONTACTS

If you feel that you are in distress, particularly if you feel at risk of harming yourself or others, then we would advise you to contact your local Mental Health Liaison Service (MHLS) based in A&E Departments.

The service provides mental health and risk assessments for emergency patients presenting to the A&E departments at Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI), North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH) and Wythenshawe Hospital with mental health or self harm issues. They also provide liaison services to the general wards of these hospitals where appropriate.

The service is open seven days a week from 9am to 9pm at NMGH and Wythenshawe Hospital, while at the Central Manchester Hospitals site it is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week 0161 701 0313/14

Please do go seek support, you are worth getting help.

GROOMING

GROOMING

By [Daniel & Duncan](#)

Grooming is the process by which an offender draws a victim into a sexual relationship and maintains that relationship in secrecy. The shrouding of the relationship is an essential feature of grooming. Forensic psychiatrist Dr. Michael Welner explains the six stages that can lead up to sexual abuse.

Stage 1: Targeting the victim

Stage 2: Gaining the victim's trust

Stage 3: Filling a need

Stage 4: Isolating the victim

Stage 5: Sexualizing the relationship

Stage 6: Maintaining control

Lads will often talk about how gifts were used in the grooming process. Its worth remembering that the whole process of grooming is gradual, calculated and ensnares the individual. The whole thing about grooming is that you don't know it's happening! Not because your thick or stupid or anything, but because the perpetrator is good at what he or she is doing!

It's not your fault,
you were tricked.

for more information, see Dr Welner's page at www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Child-Sexual-Abuse-6-Stages-of-Grooming

"INTELLIGENT THINKING"

For me, being groomed was the reason the abuse happened. With hindsight its the perpetrators sharpest and most used tool in his or her arsenal. A finely homed weapon that inflicts the first blow and shatters the protective boundries and in my case, this left me vulnerable and cerceptable to further counts of sexual abuse at further stages in my life.

Thinking about what happened to me and with the knowledge of what happened to the other lads I now know, I can now see how what happened to us happened.

In my experience, grooming involved a sort of false affection, present giving, with a hope of being taken advantage of, sexually. The process often leaves the lad, and left me, thinking it's his fault, riddled with guilt and shame for something that happened that was wrong but definatley not his fault and totally out of his control.

I'm speaking about a younger, vulnerable version of myself who was led to believe what was going on at first was normal, even though the words still echo round in my head "if you tell your mum and dad whats happened they will go to prison", yeah I know it sounds like a cliché, but it was effective. It kept me quiet for 20 odd years so the grooming

process worked for him, the abuser had worked his magic.

I was abused by three different perpatrators throughout my life, one was a male who was a respected family member; one was a trusted female babysitter; and the last one, a friend much older than me.

The first one did the most damage and I now see that the legacy of this, set me up to be manipulated into my early adult life. What still gets me is how I slipped through the net how did no one know? I went from being a pleasant happy go lucky child, to a drug taking criminal in three easy steps. All you had to do was look into my eyes and ask why I was always running away from home. Looking back at photos of my young self, I can see that they told the full story, but I suppose I didnt.

Also I know that I didnt want any one to know back then - that is the power of being groomed! You think its your fault, you've been given these gifts and affection, its all been normalised. You don't know up from down, that is why its the greatest tool in the abusers box.

And then maybe the abuser groomed us all. Maybe we should replace the word groomed with manipulated, tricked, cohersed, pretended, brain-washed! Same shit, different words!

COPIING

COPING MECHANISMS

By [Jason, Duncan & Kman](#)

We all cope with the shit in our lives in different ways, but maybe we should be thinking; "If you're going through hell, keep going mate, we cannot learn without pain"

- Jason (24) Warrior and Survivor

There's a million different ways to cope, some positive, some negative. We're never going to say what you should and shouldn't do, that's up to you. But have a look at these, see what you think.

POSITIVE (OR HEALTHY)

- Taking drugs or drinking might ease the pain for a while, but is it sustainable? Wont it just cause more damage in the end?

- Go out for a walk and get some fresh air. It's a well know scientific fact that physical activity releases feel good chemicals such as endorphins.

- Get the support you need!!! You deserve it. If you need to see your GP then go. If you're on medication then take it. Go to your support appointments.

"ppl fink am a cunt to because I kik of at em wen dey in ma fase n telin me wat to do. but i no i aint. Av u ad cigs put owt on u? No u ant. Ano I aint no saint thou"

"ppl fink am a weed head because I smoekt so i dnt av to fink bowt shit al teh tiem but i no i aint. U ant ad ur dad keep goin in ur bed! Ano i aint no saint"

By Kman

NEGATIVE (OR UNHEALTHY)

- Taking drugs or drinking might ease the pain for a while, but it will make things worse and more stressful in the end.

- Physically hurting yourself might focus you on physical pain instead of emotional pain, but maybe there are other ways to get the same results that are less physically harmful.

- Isolation is a killer. It can feel good to remove yourself from the world, but then how do you break the silence if you do this constantly?

Take things day by day and step by step, realise it takes time to feel stronger and things will feel easier.

We know how hard it is to speak out, but try. It doesn't have to be with friends or family, it could be to a therapist. The point is, speaking out is much better than staying silent... just trust us on that one.

You may not have realised this yet, but you're already helping yourself... You're reading this book.



CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION AUTHORITY (CICA)

By Julie, Victim Care Officer at Victim Support Manchester's Victim Care Unit

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority is a government funded scheme for people to apply for compensation for injuries received as a direct result of an act of violence, sexual abuse or rape.

Under the 2012 Scheme, there are some important points you should be aware of:

- You have to have been injured after 1 August 1964
- You have to have reported the incident/s to the police
- You have been seriously enough to qualify for at least the minimum award (£1,000)

- The claim needs to be submitted to CICA within 2 years of the incident unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as the crimes were committed when you were a child and were not reported
- You must provide relevant information to CICA in order that they can reach a decision - e.g. medical and police reports.

We understand that people sometimes do not feel they can claim for the fear of not being believed. Survivors Manchester and Victim Support are together here to support you through this difficult time. All you need to do is contact us directly on 0161 200 1950 or ask someone at Survivors Manchester to put you in touch with us. We're here to help.

REPORT

REPORTING IT

By Duncan

When a report is made, most people are automatically referred to Victim Support, but anyone can contact them directly if they want by calling 0161 200 1950.

Carole Smith, Manager of the North West Region Victim Care Unit said...

"We know how hard it is to speak out, we know about the devastating impact of sexual assault, but we also know that with some support you can move forward. We can help if you want. You only have to ask".

If you or someone you know has been raped or sexually assaulted, you don't have to suffer in silence. You can report it to the police on 101 or if you want to talk to someone else you trust. St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre also take self referrals, just call 0161 276 6515.

Male victims of sexual violence can find it hard to look for help. It can be a confusing time. St Mary's SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) is here to help. We are a 24/7 service open to men as well as women. Every victim will have different needs. We can discuss with you what your options are and together decide a way forward. St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) provides a comprehensive and co-ordinated forensic, counselling and aftercare service to men, women and children living in the Greater Manchester and Cheshire area who have experienced rape or sexual assault, whether this has happened recently or in the past.

If you decide that you want to report what's happened then this page is here to help.

Greater Manchester Police are committed to tackling sexual abuse and rape by supporting victims and bringing offenders to justice. "We understand it is your decision whether to report it and it is one you shouldn't be pushed into, but it is important to remember that the sooner the assault is reported, the more evidence we will be able to collect to help prevent you or someone else being hurt again. If you do decide to make a report, we will do everything we can to make sure you and your family receive the best possible care and support. Your welfare is our priority and we have 900 specially trained officers working on a 24-hour basis to offer advice and support to victims"

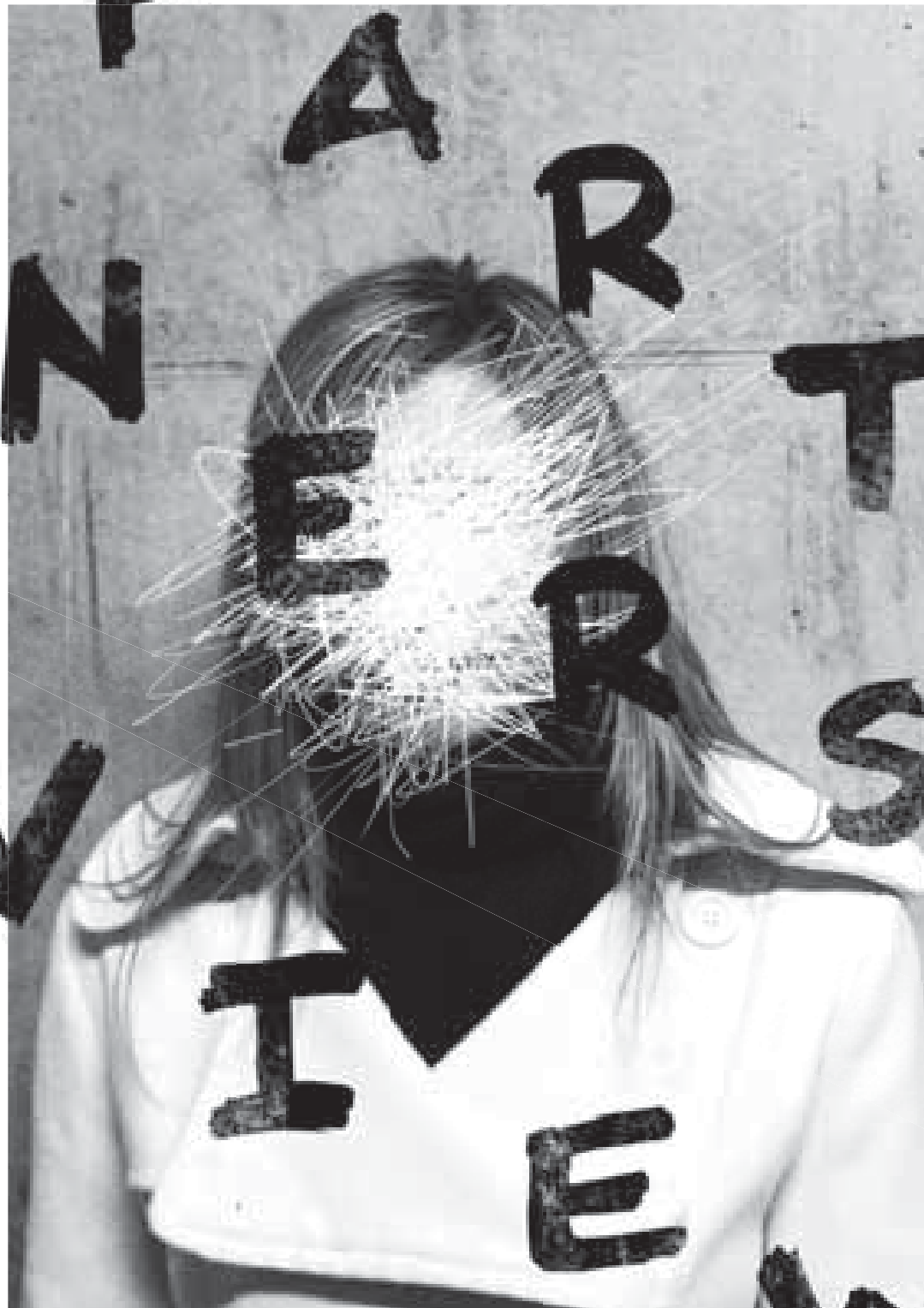
Check out www.survivorsmanchester.org.uk/survivors-support/talking-to-the-police for a step by step guide to reporting to the police.

When John Reported...

"When I first reported the monster it was for theft and not rape. I'm not sure even now why that was but I suppose it must have been because of fear. Fear of the unknown. What would happen, would it get to court or most importantly for me, would I be believed. When I did report it was rape I wasn't sure who would come from the police. As it happened it was a specially trained male Detective who came in plain clothes and importantly to me at the time, he came on his own. He was sensitive and kind and he never questioned whether I was telling the truth or not. He believed me from the moment we met. That officer supported me through every stage of the process and indeed was a great support to me in court. I also received huge support from the ISVA at St Mary's Centre. She was a huge support at every stage of the procedure and supported me through the court case and indeed still supports me."

Dr Cath White at St Mary's wanted to say...

"Male victims of sexual violence can find it hard to look for help. It can be a confusing time. St Mary's SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) is here to help. We are a 24/7 service open to men as well as women. Every victim will have different needs. We can discuss with you what your options are and together decide a way forward. St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) provides a comprehensive and co-ordinated forensic, counselling and aftercare service to men, women and children living in the Greater Manchester and Cheshire area who have experienced rape or sexual assault, whether this has happened recently or in the past."



PARTNER'S VIEW

We believe that sexual abuse and rape affects us all in various ways. From reading a story in the paper to seeing the man you love suffer in silence, the subject itself can be difficult for a survivors' wife, civil partner, boyfriend or girlfriend.

All of us believe that our supporters need a space and recognition too. So this is dedicated to you lot. To the thousands of friends and loved ones, professionals and supporters, who have stood by us through thick and thin, without you we'd be lost!

[Survivors Manchester would like to thank each and every one of you for being our heroes.](#)

OPENING UP

By [Wesley](#)

When my partner first told me he was a survivor, I didn't know how to react.

What should I say?
What should I do?
Was it ok to give him a hug?
Or would he not want to be touched?

I learned I just needed to be there for him. [To listen when he was ready to talk and give him time when he wasn't.](#)

[It's ok not knowing what to do.](#)

[Neither of us did.](#)

[But by being open about how we felt and by listening to each other, we came through it closer than ever.](#)

A SILENT PARTNER

By [Janice](#)

My relationship is like a rollercoaster; living with a man who has been sexually abused in childhood. I find myself trying hard to focus on the positives as this helps me to cope with the indescribable pain I feel; when I think about what he went through and I try and hide my fucking anger at the abuser. Sometimes I am not sure how to support my partner; or what to say; is it okay to talk about it or will I cause the man I love deep pain and take him to a dark place. Sometime it's like walking on eggshells living with my angry and unpredictable man as I watch him struggle along his path and I wonder if he is experiencing unbearable thoughts from the past.

[I think we both try really hard, not to let the legacy of abuse steal our lives.](#)

CAROLYN'S VIEW

By [Carolyn](#)

When I met Lee I was immediately attracted to him but I could tell he had a bit of an edge to him. I couldn't put my finger on why, as things started to get more serious he told me that he had been in prison twice for violent offences, he said there was more to and that he would tell me in time, when he felt the time was right. When he told me he had been abused as a child I was devastated. It was all I could think about for weeks, months. Eventually I was able to let it go, what helped was the fact that despite his troubled past Lee didn't let it control his life anymore. He found Survivors Manchester and it is hard to explain the difference it made.

[To sum it up it seems like Lee can be the person he has always wanted to be now that he has been able to share his experiences with other people and relate to them.](#)

[He has a spring in his step that wasn't there before. That's the only way I can describe it. For me living with a survivor of sexual abuse hasn't always been easy, but I respect Lee more than anyone else in my life. Knowing what he has been through makes me appreciate him as someone special and strong; sometimes it's hard to believe how much he has achieved by living a normal life.](#)

MYTHS

The following are regarded by Survivors and those working in the field of sexual violence as the “Five Myths”. In providing the truth behind the myth, we hope to expose it once and for all!

This has been adapted from a presentation given at the 5th International Conference on Incest and Related Problems, Biel, Switzerland, August 14, 1991.

1. VAMPIRE SYNDROME

That is boys who are sexually abused. like the victims Of Count Dracula, go on to “bite” or sexually abuse others.

This myth is especially dangerous because it can create a terrible stigma for the child, that he is destined to become an offender. Boys might be treated as potential perpetrators rather than victims who need help. While it is true some perpetrators have histories of sexual abuse, **it is NOT true that most victims go on to become perpetrators.** Research by Jane Gilgun, Judith Becker and John Hunter found a primary difference between perpetrators

who were sexually abused and sexually abused males who never perpetrated: non-perpetrators told about the abuse, and were believed and supported by significant people in their lives. Again, the majority of victims do not go on to become adolescent or adult perpetrators; and those who do perpetrate in adolescence usually don’t perpetrate as adults if they get help when they are young.

2. SEXUAL ABUSE OF BOYS

Most sexual abuse of boys is perpetrated by homosexual men

Pedophiles who molest boys are not expressing a homosexual orientation any more than pedophiles who molest girls are practicing heterosexual behaviors. While many child molesters have gender and/or age preferences, of those who seek out boys, the vast majority are not homosexual. They are pedophiles.

3. WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

If a boy experiences sexual arousal or orgasm from abuse, this means he was a willing participant or enjoyed it

In reality, males can respond physically to stimulation (get an erection) even in traumatic or painful sexual situations. Therapists who work with sexual offenders know that one way a perpetrator can maintain secrecy is to label the child’s sexual response as an indication of his willingness to participate. “You liked it, you wanted it,” they’ll say. Many survivors feel guilt and shame because they experienced physical arousal while being abused. **Physical (and visual or auditory) stimulation is likely to happen in a sexual situation. It does not mean that the child wanted the experience or understood what it meant at the time.**

4. HOMOSEXUALITY

Boys abused by males are or will become homosexual

Sexual orientation is a complex issue and there is no single answer or theory that explains why someone identifies himself as homosexual, heterosexual or bi-sexual. Experts in the human sexuality field do not believe that premature sexual experiences play a significant role in late adolescent or adult sexual orientation.

It is unlikely that someone can make another person a homosexual or heterosexual.

Whether perpetrated by older males or females, boys’ or girls’ premature sexual experiences are damaging in many ways, including confusion about one’s sexual identity and orientation.

Many boys who have been abused by males erroneously believe that something about them sexually attracts males, and that this may mean they are homosexual or effeminate. Again, not true. Pedophiles who are attracted to boys will admit that the lack of body hair and adult sexual features turns them on. The pedophile’s inability to develop and maintain a healthy adult sexual relationship is the problem – not the physical features of a sexually immature boy.

5. FEMALE ABUSERS

If the perpetrator is female, the boy or adolescent should consider himself fortunate to have been initiated into heterosexual activity

In reality, premature or coerced sex, whether by a mother, aunt, older sister, baby-sitter or other female in a position of power over a boy, causes confusion at best, and rage, depression or other problems in more negative circumstances. To be used as a sexual object by a more powerful person, male or female, is always abusive and often damaging.

BELIEVING THESE MYTHS IS DANGEROUS & DAMAGING

So long as society believes these myths, and teaches them to children from their earliest years, sexually abused males will be unlikely to get the recognition and help they need.

So long as society believes these myths, sexually abused males will be more likely join the minority of survivors who perpetuate this suffering by abusing others.

So long as boys or men who have been sexually abused believe these myths, they will feel ashamed and angry.

And so long as sexually abused males believe these myths they reinforce the power of another devastating myth that all abused children struggle with: that it was their fault.

It is never the fault of the child in a sexual situation – though perpetrators can be quite skilled at getting their victims to believe these myths and take on responsibility that is always and only their own. For any male who has been sexually abused, becoming free of these myths is an essential part of the recovery process.

GET THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EDGE

By **Martin Robert Hall**

Life can be a challenge at the best of times. It will rain on your parade. That's not being negative, that's being accurate. Knowing this and being prepared for this are two entirely different things.

Those who are mentally equipped to deal with life's challenges have the ultimate advantage in life, they have the psychological edge. It is this edge which helps them to stay strong during challenging times, to make the right decisions and to remain focused when all around them is pulling them off track.

This mental strength does not happen by accident. It happens as a result of practise and repetition, like all skills do.

Winners in life understand that to win the game of life you need a winning mentality and this must be worked on daily. There is no escaping that.

Here are 5 tips to help you develop the psychological edge in your own life:

Feed your mind positive thoughts every single day, especially at the start of it. Positive self talk is how to do it. Start by writing down some positive statements about yourself and repeat them each morning. These are known as your 'mantra's'. This is more important than breakfast!

Set goals for your life that excite you. A life without exciting goals is a life wasted. Again, write them down to make them real.

The quality of your life is the quality of your emotions. Do the things that make you FEEL good, every day!

As you begin to help yourself, help others too. Not only is this one of the greatest gifts we have as people, it also cements your learning even deeper.

And finally, don't forget number one. Feed your mind positive thoughts every single day. I like to think of them as mental vitamins and yes they really are more important than breakfast.

Start today and give yourself the psychological edge.

Martin Robert Hall is a performance specialist who runs his own consultancy and training business which specialises in helping individuals, teams and organisations to be the best they can be.

Martin has worked with world class athlete's, business owners and traders helping them to develop the mindset, strategy and crucial elements for performing at the highest level. In 2012-13, Martin delivered a 10 week course to a group of male survivors of sexual abuse and rape from Survivors Manchester that resulted in many of the lads making life-changing decisions and everyone aiming to be the best they can be.

Martin is the author of Optimize Yourself: 'To Be the Best You Can Be'

(ISBN: 978-1467000017)

USEFUL SEXUAL ABUSE

& RAPE LINKS

We thought it would be useful for you to be able to look through other resources for male survivors, so we have compiled this list of fantastic websites that you can check out.

THE SURVIVORS TRUST

www.thesurvivorstrust.org.uk

SURVIVORS UK

www.survivorsuk.org
0845 122 1201

NAPAC (NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE ABUSED IN CHILDHOOD)

www.napac.org.uk
0808 085 3330

1 IN 6

www.lin6.org

MALE SURVIVOR

www.malesurvivor.org

PANDORA'S AQUARIUM

www.pandys.org

LIVING WELL

www.livingwell.org.au

We also thought it was important to make sure that if you want to talk to someone who specialises in a particular issue, then you have the contacts to hand. There are loads of organisations in Manchester that offer support, so have pulled out contacts that support those with the issues we mentioned in this book.

VICTIM SUPPORT (MANCHESTER)

National independent charity supporting victims of crime.
www.victimsupport.org.uk
0161 200 1950

ST. MARY'S SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRE

Examination and after care and support to victims of sexual assault.

www.stmaryscentre.org
0161 276 6515

GREATER MANCHESTER PAY & EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ADVICE SERVICE

Free confidential employment advice to anyone experiencing problems at work.
www.gmemploymentrights.org.uk
0161 839 3888

MANCHESTER CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Free, confidential and independent legal and financial advice.
www.manchestercab.org

NORTH WEST CENTRE FOR EATING DISORDERS

Services for anyone with eating disorders and their families/carers.
www.oakwoodhouse.co.uk
0161 480 0882

LESBIAN & GAY FOUNDATION

Support services and advice to gay and bisexual men.

www.lgf.org.uk
0845 3 30 30 30

MANCHESTER HOUSING

Information for Manchester City Council residents.

www.manchester.gov.uk/housing
0161 234 5000

MOOD SWINGS NETWORK

Support for people affected by mood disorders.

www.moodswings.org.uk
0845 12360 50

SELF HELP SERVICES

User-led mental health services for Manchester residents

www.selfhelpservices.org.uk
0844 477 9971

SELF HARM NETWORK

Supporting those who are affected by self harm.

www.nshn.co.uk
0800 622 6000

CRISIS POINT

Mental health crisis support centre for Manchester residents.

0161 225 9500

ADDICTION DEPENDENCY SOLUTIONS

Providing support and treatment to those affected by drug and alcohol issues.

www.adsolutions.org.uk
0800 988 1948

SAMARITANS

Providing support 24 hours a day to those wishing to speak to someone.

www.samaritans.org
0161 236 8000

MEN'S CHARTER FOR HELPING MEN TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ABUSE OR RAPE.

Men who identify with the shared experience of sexual abuse or rape, come together to gain information support and guidance that encourages them to think about choices when disclosing.

There are a number of headings that offer guidance towards supporting member's involvement by having a:

VOICE...

We have a right to be listened to as individuals who have experienced sexual abuse or rape. Our story must be taken seriously and not ignored.

RESPECT...

We all want to be treated with respect. To recognise that we all may have different views and we may not agree with them always.

LISTEN...

We have a right to have our views listened to by each other and outside parties, helping us to communicate our views. Not being judged on what we say, just being able to speak.

ADVICE...

Getting advice that is understood and appropriate, that is sensitive to our needs, mindful of and including of external agency involvement if requested.

SUPPORT...

Sharing what we feel is important for us, if it is a disclosure then it may be the first time in talking to a professional and that professional may be you.

ENVIRONMENT...

We want to feel safe, at ease, able to say what we are really feeling and talk about what we really want and need.

ACTIVITIES...

To be involved in social activities that helps the men to enjoy their time together and helps them to challenge old ways and learn new things.

CONFIDENTIALITY...

We want to be able to confide with each other and with professionals. This means information. Issues are only made available to outside parties if there is concern around people's safety. When information is shared the man is kept fully informed at every stage.

COMPLAINTS...

We want to be able to think about making a complaint and make a complaint if it is appropriate. To have support when making the complaint, where the procedure is simple.

All the text in the guide has been set and printed in the way it was written by each of the inspirational lads. Spelling and punctuation are not important here... breaking the silence is!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This guide has been written by survivors for survivors, a real labour of love.

Putting this together was uncomfortable (to say the least) for most of us at the beginning. But the process has given some of us a sense of connection; most of us have found healing; top notch friendships have been made, support networks created and the whole project has created more understanding about the impact of what happened to each and every one of us. The silence has been well and truly broken.

We want you to know that you're not on your own. You can speak out if you want to and we will listen. We've done this, so can you!

As a wise man once said...
Whatever it takes.

Peace and respect to you all, from the
Survivors Guide Team.

The Lads: **Danny, Daniel, Duncan, Michael A, Michael, Sam, Jason, Lee, Kman, Mark, Jim, Terry, JT, John**, and all the other Survivors we have worked with since the project began.

The professionals: Martin, Carole, Cath, Duncan, Tom, Joanne, Jo, Mark, Brene, Michael, Julie.

Thanks a million to our funders, Health Form from The People's Health Trust, Zurich Community Trust (in particular Matt, Beth, Nick, Mark and Maggie)

All the lads wanna say a huge and special thanks to Michael Atkins, and JAMcreative's Dave Gee and Richard Pay for the incredible creative work they have done to make this guide look as amazing as it does!



"Since contacting Survivors Manchester I have been able to make my own choices and decisions. I have no guilt issues, anxiety or low self esteem. My life has changed so much since contacting survivors Manchester, It is a difficult first step but with help you will soon be running." Danny