



DRILL

Professionals Supporting Disabled
Survivors of Abuse and Violence

AVA's Work

- Founded in 2010
- Aim to bring violence and abuse to an end
- Work streams in consultancy; research and survivor consultation and informing policy.



Consultancy and Research

- Royal Navy
- ASK Routine Enquiry Programme for Citizen's Advice
- Survivor Consultation: The Stella Project
- Multiple Disadvantage



Multiple Disadvantage

- The intersecting inequalities including gender based violence, mental ill health, homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system and the removal of children.
- The Stella Project
- Mapping the Maze
- National Commission into domestic & sexual violence, substance use and mental ill-health



DRILL: AVA's Role

- AVA's core focus is specialist training and ensuring best practice for survivors who usually fall through the gaps.
- To collect data from professionals working with disabled survivors to get a detailed picture of best practice and barriers to support.



Interview Quotes

"A lot of the disabled women I supported were sex workers, and I felt like my managers were reluctant to see them both as disabled and as sex workers, because somehow their disability would negate their agency and decision making, and somehow make them less responsible."

When I supported one survivor who was deaf, I assumed she just didn't want to engage with the service. However, over time she trusted me with what her needs were, and I was able to adapt our communication so that she could understand and engage better.

"Because she was in a same sex relationship with her carer, who was also her perpetrator none of the agencies involved saw what was happening as domestic violence. I think she was also dismissed as a nuisance by housing because her council property had been heavily adapted and now she wasn't safe there..housing were really unhappy about that"

I supported a blind survivor of DV who was originally from Nigeria to get housing. When she explained to the housing officer that the perpetrator was smashing plates around her to frighten her, the housing officer claimed that this was not abuse but a 'relationship breakdown'. The housing officer suggested the perpetrator was 'stressed' from his caring responsibilities.

One of the things that really helped was linking up with a disability charity who got funding for this survivor to get a laptop, so that she could continue with her studies.

"In one case we supported a physically disabled survivor who had no recourse [to public funds]...I don't think it was legal but it wasn't safe not to.



Overview of Findings

1. Going well?	2. Barriers for service users	3. Agency barriers	4. How improve?
Sharing information between police, housing, disability, charities, social care, IDVA etc	Location and time – services are only available during working hours Availability	Info sharing – confidentiality	More training!
Having meetings to co-ordinate and delegate work between different agencies	Lack of awareness	Different definitions eg. Safeguarding	Service user led
Having a single point of contact (i.e. IDVA).	No Recourse to Public Funds!	Lack of awareness of what is available for disabled survivors.	Wrap around / holistic whole system approach
Training available	Eligibility criteria / waiting lists	Eligibility criteria for different services	Joint working
Flexible work practices	Prejudice, labelling, preconceptions	Lack of understanding of other agencies remit	Personalisation /Tailored support
Workers who can come to service users homes	Disbelief	Differing agendas / priorities	Disability IDVA?
	Lack of appropriate, accessible housing	Time constraints / workloads Thresholds	Publicise services
	Language – lack interpreters, accessible materials and and jargon	Red tape /other agencies not working beyond thresholds/ Lack of resources	Meetings between agencies to network and create understanding



Intersectionality

..promoting an understanding of human being as shaped by the interaction of different social locations (such as ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, disability/ability, migration status or religion). These interactions happen in a context of connected systems and structures of power (such as through laws, policies, state governments and other political, religious or media institutions). Through this forms of privilege and oppression are shaped by class, colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism and patriarchy (Hankivsky, 2012).



Next Steps

- Create a best practice toolkit for professionals
- Online learning and resources
- Disseminate findings and guidance through workshops, seminars and specialist training



Thank You for Listening

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Against Violence and Abuse

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