**Risk Assessment**

**Activity**: Online peer education program for women with learning disabilities and autism

**Date:**  **Review date:**

**Carried out by:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Risk**  | **Who might be harmed** | **Actions already in place to manage risk** | **Further action to manage risk** | **Responsibility for carrying out the actions** | **Date to be carried out by** |
| **Online safety concerns and confidentiality –** specifically, risk of disclosure of information online, online harassment, stalking, sexting, exposure to harmful content.Concerns relating to the disclosure of information are elevated in the case of learners who are at risk of known perpetrators in the community. This underscores the importance of ensuring that learners understand the need to maintain confidentiality as regards to their participation on the course. Training sessions could be recorded (directly/indirectly) by the training team, and/or images made of learners. This is of particular concern in school settings. Recordings could theoretically also be made by outside parties hacking Zoom, but this is very unlikely given current security measures. | LearnersPeer-education team  |  | * Enhanced training to be delivered to the peer education team in order to support learners around online safety and confidentiality.
* 1:1 assessment of digital competency and safety to be carried out with all members of the team; individualised learning plans to be put in place according to need.
* All new learners to participate in session on online safety, in advance of conducting the DA content.
* Learners will be supported by an informal or formal supporter during the course.

Sessions will not be recorded using the Zoom facility. The training team will be supported and trained to understand that they should not be recording sessions in any way using ancillary devices. |  |  |
| **Ongoing or present perpetrator risk –** there is a risk that some learners may be living, or otherwise sharing space (e.g. day service, school), with a perpetrator, whether that is a partner and/or parent/carer and/or peer. This risk is elevated in the context of learners who live independently, and for whom there is no provider oversight as regards to their living arrangements and safety at home. Some learners may feel unable to disclose any abuse at the point of enrolment, or, they may not have identified the abuse as such (see below). | Learners |  | * Pre-enrolment assessment will be conducted with all new learners to establish;
	+ Learner understanding of the course content re. DA
	+ Living circumstances of learner
	+ Available support
* The pre-assessment should inform decisions regarding whether a learner is accepted onto the course. In the event the risk is too high, they should be signposted to a relevant specialist agency.
* Supporters will be briefed around how to respond to any disclosures as well as available support mechanisms, e.g. local domestic abuse services, helplines, counselling services.
* Regular ‘check-ins’ should be conducted with learners regarding any emergent issues arising as a result of being involved with the course.
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| **Triggering and (re)traumatisation as a result of participation –** there is a risk that learners, learning supporters, or the peer training team may be ‘triggered’ by some of the content, thereby elevating concerns around their safety and potential distress. In some cases, learners/learning supporters may begin to identify abusive behaviours in their own partners, or carers, during the course of the workshop series. This could potentially elevate the risk posed to these learners/learning supporters, (particularly if they are not engaged with services). It is crucially important the learners know where to go and who to speak to, in the event that they start to identify abusive behaviours in their own lives and/or past abuses. The supporters will have a key role in mitigating the risk in this area. The training team’s familiarity with the learning material, and their own previous disclosures of abuse, should not be taken as meaning that they cannot experience further trauma about their own experiences. Further, if there are any disclosures from learners or learning supporters, this could further trigger training team members. | LearnersPeer education team Support staff |  | * Supporters will be present with every learner for the duration of the course. If no support is in place, learners will not be able to participate in the course, given the levels of risk associated with remote learning in this context.
* Peer education team to be supported to recognise and respond to signs of distress or unease displayed by new learners. A staff observer should also be present during the delivery to support the peer education team, particularly in case of distress displayed by learners.
* Sessions to be structured in such a way that core DA content is ‘bookended’ by ‘check-in’ and ‘check-out’ as well as grounding exercises in order to support learners with the emotional impact of the content. This makes the sessions longer[[1]](#footnote-1) however increases the safety of the sessions and reduces risks around triggering etc. Opportunities for assessment of learner wellbeing should be built in to each of the sessions.

**In the school setting, follow up sessions will be conducted with learners by the school to reinforce learning. This will give a further opportunity for learners to make any disclosures and/or share any issues/concerns raised by the training.*** Follow up phone calls\* to be made to learners after the sessions have taken place in order to establish whether there are any residual issues or concerns as a result of taking part in the course.

**\* In school settings, calls will be to school staff.****Learning supporters will be made aware of sources of support they can turn to in the event of them experiencing trauma, whether direct or vicarious (e.g. local domestic abuse services, counselling services). They will also be given contact details for the project lead.****The training team will be given specific opportunities before, after and between each training session to discuss their wellbeing with the project lead and within the team. External supervision and counselling will continue to be available, and they will be reminded of this. The team will continue to be reminded of other sources of support (e.g. helplines, local domestic abuse services).**  |  |  |
| **Lack of adequate support for learners’ when/if they disclose present or historical abuse –** there is a concern that learners may make disclosures of abuse during the workshops. While supporters are required to be present during the workshops, they may not have the skills to respond to the disclosure appropriately.  | Learners |  | * Supporters will be briefed around how to respond to any disclosures as well as available support mechanisms.
* Adult safeguarding protocols in place in institutional settings.
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| **The pilot program which covers relationship issues will be delivered to minors**  | **Learners** |  | * The content on relationships is age-appropriate and tailored to the audience concerned.
* All support staff are trained around child safeguarding (Level 3).
* ARC has a good track record of delivering age-specific content on relationships to school-age children with learning disabilities or autism etc.
* The content of the Us Too program is being delivered alongside an existing PSHE learning offer within the school which addresses the wider issues relating to sex, gender, sexuality and relationships etc.

**The training team will be informed that the programme is being delivered to minors and that they must conduct the programme in a manner that is appropriate and specific to the audience concerned (e.g. use of language and sharing of personal stories). This will be discussed at a training team meeting.** |  |  |

1. For example, delivering 1 hour of domestic abuse specific content, coupled with a half an hour of non-directive content such as ‘checking in’ exercises or ice-breakers. This would mean a 2 hour session but provide greater flexibility and opportunity to assess learner wellbeing before and after the DA content has been delivered (see separate document for more on structure of sessions). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)