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Involving Male Survivors

For Breaking the Silence the involvement of male survivors from racialised communities in developing, updating and improving the programme, has been fundamental to our success.

Whilst Meridian was established to further the needs of women from our communities, racialised male survivors really do have a voice in the strategic development and operational delivery of services and interventions by Breaking the Silence. Male survivor voices can be heard in our campaigning, education and lobbying; even where cultural custom and religious tradition inhibit their visibility on our website and printed literature.

From our inception it has been essential that the true voice of the community be central to our design. With so few racialised male survivors back in 2012, with the threats of actual harm to survivors and our staff, the design of the programme had a colonial quality. Well wishing friends from without offered their expertise and helped us design the first programme. But service users soon made clear that, whilst this design contained the seeds of healing, it was watered from the wrong spring, and thus could never bloom. Through the bravery of a few, collaboratively we redesigned, reformulated – and most importantly, refinanced through more ethical sources that would not subject users to the indignity of the security state.

Because of our male survivors, we have introduced a range of services, projects and programmes to better serve their needs. As one male survivor said, ‘*sexual abuse is not all of our story*’. These survivors have gone onto speak to Ministers, civil servants, researchers and press. They are the reason we exist and continue to grow.

There are a number of ways in which male survivors can be involved:

**Ummid Advisory Group**

Those male survivors that use or have used our services are one of the key stakeholders we count on.

How do we know what we’re doing is right? What about when we get it wrong? How do we keep meeting the needs of our beneficiaries?

Tasks will include reviewing and updating our strategic plan, assessing the suitability of funding streams, evaluating new programme materials for appropriateness, assessing user feedback, project outcomes against strategic aims, risk assessing any threats to our domain, interviewing new potential employees.

Well, we do it through our Ummid Advisory Group (UAG), which is a common way that many health organisations or change makers ensure that those that are affected by it’s output are front of centre of decisions.

If you are a male survivor, from a racialised community, over the age of 18 who has been through our programme, and are interested in becoming part of this exciting feedback loop, then email [info@breaking-the-silence.org.uk](mailto:info@breaking-the-silence.org.uk)