

EVALUATION REPORT



January 2021

The Women's Liberation Collective CIO (registered charity no. 1184411) provides governance for the Own My Life course.

www.ownmylifecourse.org | www.ownmylifecourse.org/wlc | info@ownmylifecourse.org

The Own My Life course was funded by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust and we are extremely grateful for their support. We are also grateful to the Community Fund, who funded materials to deliver the course with women around the UK and supported our wider development. The views expressed within the course and materials are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Trust or Community Fund.

We are so thankful to the organisations who were willing to partner with us in piloting the Own My Life course. Thank you to all the practitioners who trained to be Own My Life facilitators and a huge thank you to all the women who participated in the pilot courses and shared their lives and experiences with us. Thank you to Huda Jawad, Claire Doran and Cath Costello for your editing and support with this report.

Report author: Natalie Collins

Contents

Introduction	4
What and why	5
Course materials Facilitator training	11
The in-person pilot	12
Practitioner's experiences of the in-person training	13
In-person pilot data	15
Participant's experiences of the course	19
What worked well?	24
What have we learned?	34
The online pilot	39
Online development of the course	40
Practitioner's experiences of the in-person training	43
Online pilot data	48
Participants' experience of the online course	53
What next?	57

30% of women in the UK will be abused by a partner. (ONS)

THIS IS A FRESH, EXCITING AND UP TO DATE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COURSE FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE.

THIS IS THE BEST TRAINING I HAVE EVER BEEN ON. I'VE LOVED IT!

THIS COURSE WAS SO GOOD IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I ATTENDED A TRAINING THAT HAS HELD ME "CAPTIVE" & HAS INSPIRED ME SO MUCH. THANK YOU.

IF IT WASN'T FOR THIS COURSE I WOULD STILL BE TRAPPED IN A CYCLE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. FROM A FACILITATOR PERSPECTIVE, I AM ABLE TO EDUCATE WOMEN AROUND ME ON UP TO DATE INFORMATION ABOUT MALE VIOLENCE, EMPOWERMENT ETC.

I'VE REALISED THAT SELF-LOVE DOESN'T MAKE ME SELFISH. I REALLY NEGLECTED MYSELF SO MUCH, BECAUSE I WAS MADE TO FEEL WORTHLESS, THIS COURSE GOT ME BACK ON TRACK AND HELPED ME LEARN TO LIKE MYSELF.

BRILLIANTLY WRITTEN AND PUT TOGETHER. GREAT TRAINING, WELL THOUGHT OUT. FRESH AND SUCH A GREAT INNOVATION AND TOOL.

THIS COURSE IS BANG IN YOUR FACE. IT'S NEW, IT'S RELEVANT, IT'S EXCITING.

EVERYONE HAS SEEN A MASSIVE, LIFE CHANGING IMPROVEMENT IN ME. I WAS READY TO GIVE UP AND END IT AS I COULDN'T COPE. THIS COURSE HELPS SAVE LIVES!!

THIS RESOURCE IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL WOMEN, WORKERS AND SURVIVORS AND IS EMPOWERING, PRACTICAL AND AMAZING.

REALLY EXCITED ABOUT USING THIS WITH WOMEN. VERY EMPOWERING AND THE BEST TRAINING RESOURCE I HAVE BEEN ON.

YOU'VE GOT ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO THINK YOU'RE SILLY FOR GOING BACK OR STAYING WITH HIM AND THIS COURSE HELPS YOU TO KNOW WHY, AND KNOW THAT YOU'RE NORMAL.

I THOUGHT THIS COURSE WAS GOING TO BE A PILE OF SH*T BECAUSE I THOUGHT I KNEW EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT ABUSE, BUT NOW I TELL EVERYONE I KNOW ABOUT IT AND THEY ALL WANT TO DO THE COURSE.

What is The Women's Liberation Collective?

Seeking to see women liberated from male violence, The Women's Liberation Collective is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1184411) founded in 2019 to provide governance for the Own My Life course. We are a small charity with a big reach, seeking to train as many practitioners as possible to deliver the Own My Life course to women.

We began as a result of funding requirements that the Own My Life course be developed within an accountable context, with appropriate oversight and support. Since then, the charity has grown from strength to strength along with the Own My Life course.

Our values are to be woman-centred, work towards liberation for women, encourage women's resistance, operate with integrity and foster collaboration. Our vision is a world where women are liberated from male violence and control.

Our mission statement is that we will equip, train and educate women, so that they can take back ownership of their lives from male abusers. We will also work in wider society, to prevent abuse.



The charity's seven trustees have significant experience in charity leadership, the women's sector, law, business development, with one of our trustees regularly facilitating the Own My Life course with women. Own My Life course creator Natalie Collins is the Interim CEO of The Women's Liberation Collective, with administrative support provided by Andrew Collins.

We are incredibly excited to present this Evaluation Report detailing the results of the Own My Life pilot projects and are confident and hopeful about the potential of the course to make a significant difference in many women's lives.

What is the Own My Life course?

- Jan 2010 - DAY Programme established.
- Mar 2014 - Started writing the course.
- Oct 2017 - Secured funding from Sir Halley Stewart Trust.
- Dec 2018 - Finished writing course.
- Feb 2019 - Start training pilot organisations to run the course.
- Jul 2019 - The Women's Liberation Collective registered as a charity to govern the Own My Life course.
- Feb 2020 - Own My Life course pilots completed.
- March 2020 - As a result of COVID-19, the Own My Life course and training was redeveloped for online delivery.
- April 2020 - Subsidised online training begun.

The Own My Life course is based on the latest research on trauma and male violence and is an innovative, creative, and educational 12-week course for women who have been subjected to male violence. The course enables organisations to support women in regaining ownership of their lives after they have been in a relationship with an abuser.

After attending Own My Life course facilitator training (either online or in-person) practitioners can deliver the course to women. A Zoom Coaching session is offered to all facilitators to equip them to deliver the course to women online. The digital resources needed to run the course are provided during facilitator training with the other course resources available to be purchased from the Own My Life course website.

The Own My Life course uses multi-media content to explain trauma and show messages within popular culture that reinforce or perpetuate sexism, rape culture, violence, disrespect in relationships and abusive behaviour. The 22 Own My Life course videos explain complex concepts in easy to understand terms, with the Own My Story journal providing participants with all the ideas, key concepts and content from the course with space for reflection and notes.

The format for each session includes six key elements: Own My Mind, Own My Body, Own My Choices, Own My Relationships, Own My World, Own My Feelings.

The first session introduces women to the course and its values. The final week is the Own My Future session and includes opportunity for participants to create an action plan for developing a self-organised group (the Own My Group course).

The Own My Life course is under the governance of [The Women's Liberation Collective](#) CIO (registered charity no. 1184411). The course was created by [Natalie Collins](#) and was funded by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust. Natalie first delivered programmes for women in 2010. After creating the [DAY Programme](#) and training hundreds of practitioners to deliver the DAY Programme to young people in schools, youth groups, youth offending services, youth housing services and more, she wrote the Own My Life course.

Various factors contributed to the development of the Own My Life course:

- Developments in trauma science.
- The issues raised due to a diminished gendered analysis of domestic abuse.
- The need to rediscover second wave feminism's consciousness raising work with women.

Own My Life course core principles

Safety

Abusive men kill women and children. They rape, injure, disfigure and violate women and children. Any intervention with women may increase an abuser's risk to them, and this requires practitioners and organisations to make every effort to maintain and increase the safety of women and children.

Regaining Ownership/Building Self-Efficacy

Women need to be able to take back ownership of their lives from the abuser. They can be supported to do this through having space for action and through consciousness raising. Self-efficacy is defined as having confidence in your ability to exert control over your own motivation, behaviour, and social environment. Helping women to build self-efficacy is integral to recovery after a relationship with an abuser. (Bandura, 1994)

Intersectionality

Alongside sex, there are other axis of oppression including race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, disability, gender identity, education, age, job, religion, and economic status that interact with the impact of male violence on women's lives.

Controlling Behaviour

Men who abuse use the following tactics to control women and children, and to maintain their beliefs of ownership and entitlement: isolation, exhaustion, monopolising their partner's perceptions, threats, occasional indulgences, violence and sexually harmful behaviour, humiliation and degradation, enforcing trivial demands. (Biderman, 1957)

Space for Action

In order to leave an abuser and move forward with their lives women need space for action, where the abuser's tactics become less effective and they have a supportive space to take positive action for their lives. (Kelly, 2003)

Woman Centred

We centre women and their needs in all that we do and we understand that a feminist analysis is necessary to effectively respond to male violence and the harm men do to women and children.

	Own My Self	Own My Mind	Own My Body	Break	Own My Choices	Own My Relationships	Own My World	Own My Feelings
Time	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	10 mins
Type	My favourite	Flipchart	Video		Traffic lights	Quiz	Video	Writing
Session 1	Introduction	Group rules	Own my story journal		The Holiday			
Session 2	Place	What is abuse?	Why does abuse exist?		Fixing things	Relationships	The Sick Planet	
Session 3	Song	Why can't we leave?	The Seven Steps of a Break Up		Leaving	Communication	Women's Rights Timeline	
Session 4	Food	Cycle of abuse	The Five Fs		Resistance	Relationship myths/truths	Victim blaming	
Session 5	Film	Neural Pathways	Understanding the Brain		Moving on	Collusion	The Soundtrack of Our Lives	
Session 6	Animal	Safety planning	Online Safety		Living safer	Stranger Danger	Intersectionality	
Session 7	Book	DASH	Power Play		Leaving safer	Decision Inhibitors	Formal/Informal Reinforcements	
Session 8	Activity	Values	Traumatic Attachment		Personal integrity	Singleness	Adverts Hurt	
Session 9	Clothing	The Holiday for Children	The Power Threat Meaning Framework		Dealing with child contact	Children's Roles	Body Modification	
Session 10	Number	Needs	Sexual Control		Attachment Seeking Children	Assertiveness	Rape Prevention	
Session 11	Fairy tale	New partner values	The Stress Cycle		Love Bombing	Dating Calendar	I Am Whole	
Session 12	Cake	Reflect	Discuss		Kind words	What next?	Evaluations and certificates	

Course timetable

Consciousness Raising

This refers both to a woman's consciousness of her own personal life but also to gaining understanding about the dynamics of domestic abuse and what is driving the abuser's behaviour. It also includes socio-political education in identifying misogyny, patriarchy, and sexism in media, law, history, and across society.

Ownership and Entitlement

Men's abuse and violence is rooted in their beliefs that they own their partner (and children) and they are entitled to behave in whatever ways they choose to.

Own My Life course core values

Information ownership

The information within the group will be owned by the group. This is particularly important with regard to the Own My Story journals. Practitioners should NEVER look in women's journals without being invited to do so by women themselves. When running in-person courses the journals need to be stored securely. Agreements around confidentiality should be reiterated in every session to ensure that if women do disclose information they are fully aware that the information may be shared outside of the group.

Liberation and equality

In light of the Own My Life course's Core Principles of feminism and intersectionality; the value and equality of all human beings is recognised. The current state is one in which women are oppressed by men; black people are oppressed by white people; lesbian and gay people are oppressed by heterosexual ideals; transgender people are oppressed by transphobia; and disabled people are oppressed by a society designed by and for able-bodied people. The Own My Life course works to ensure all participants experience equality of opportunity but seeks to move beyond equality to full liberation.

Collaborative not competitive

The Own My Life course recognises that patriarchy seeks to divide women to conquer them, this is evident in women's magazines, TV programmes, the beauty industry and across society. We seek to foster collaborative spaces that build sisterhood and combat competitive attitudes.

Women are the experts on their own lives

They need our support in moving forward (much like a pregnant woman needs a midwife to help her through labour) but women are the experts on their lives, what they need and how we can best support them.

Right use of power

The facilitator and the organisation running the Own My Life course holds significant power and this must be acknowledged and managed appropriately.

Addressing the professional/personal dichotomy

Women's services have developed a tendency to treat professional knowledge and expertise as being of greater value and have viewed it as inappropriate for female practitioners to share their personal experiences with service users. However, appropriate and ethical use of our personal narratives as professionals can be helpful and useful to women.

Honouring resistance

Women always resist abusers and this resistance should be honoured. Sadly, most often when women share how they have resisted abuse, they are met with scorn and blame. The Own My Life course seeks to honour women's resistance.

Trauma literacy and psychoeducation

Building women's literacy about trauma will enable them to more quickly regain ownership of their lives and make sense of the ways they have responded to an abuser and the wider pressures and challenges within their life.

Depathologisation

Often women with abusive partners are pathologised, which means to treat them as if they are "psychologically abnormal". However, women's reactions and management of their lives with an abuser are usually totally normal. The issue is the abuser, not the woman.

Own My Life course method

Reflective practice

For both facilitators and participants on the Own My Life course, reflective practice is encouraged. This practice involves the ability to reflect on our actions so that we can engage in a continuous process of learning. Within both the WoManual content and the Own My Story journal, exercises for reflective practice are included.

Problem-posing education

Based on Paola Friere's work, problem-posing education recognises that education is not simply deposited from a teacher to a student but instead should be a dialogue between the two people. It is not the teacher working for the student but WITH the student. Problem-posing education should include listening, dialogue and action.

Individual work

The Own My Story journal includes space for individual writing and/or drawing throughout each session. Also, the course can be delivered on a one-to-one basis if necessary, though this will decrease the full benefit of the course with the community elements not included.

Fun and laughter

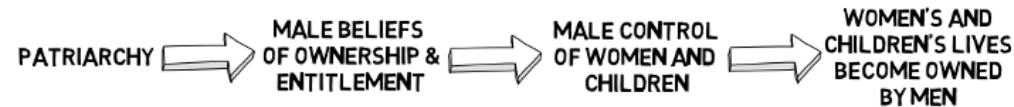
Abusers steal our joy, and so we should ensure that fun and laughter are part of how we deliver the Own My Life course.

Group work

The Own My Life course sessions include work in a large, in small groups and in pairs.

Own My Life Course Theory of Change

THE PROBLEM



THE OWN MY LIFE COURSE



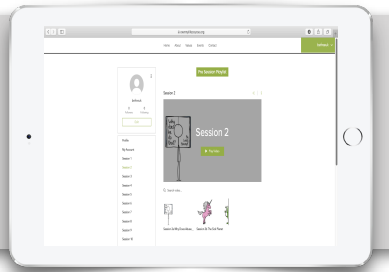
Course materials



The WoManual includes session plans, forms & a full copy of the Own My Story journal. Each facilitator needs a WoManual to deliver the course.



The Own My Story journal includes scripts of all the videos, the course quizzes and other activities, and a way for women to record their journey on the course. Each woman needs a journal to participate in the course.



The e-Hub includes the 22 course videos, additional video content, course playlists, forms, online evaluation system and more. Each facilitator is provided with a login for the e-Hub.



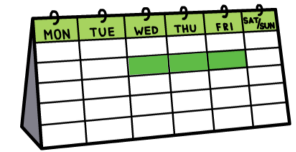
The other course materials include traffic light laminates & pens for the weekly Own My Choices activity, string for a Session 2 activity, the evaluation ballot box & counters. A box is needed to run the course in-person

Facilitator training

Own My Life course training is for practitioners within women's services and other organisations working to respond to domestic abuse and sexual violence and/or to support women.

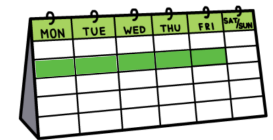
In-Person Training

When delivering in-person facilitator training The Women's Liberation Collective partners with organisations or local authorities. A partner organisation provides a venue and training participants, with the training taking place over three consecutive days, 9.30am - 5.30pm.



Online Training

Online training is usually delivered via Zoom (though, when necessary, can be provided via Teams). It is offered to organisations, local authorities and individuals. The training takes place over 5 days, 9am - 4pm (this may be 5 consecutive days or over 2 - 3 weeks). An additional 2-hour Zoom Coaching session is offered to equip facilitators to confidently deliver the course online.



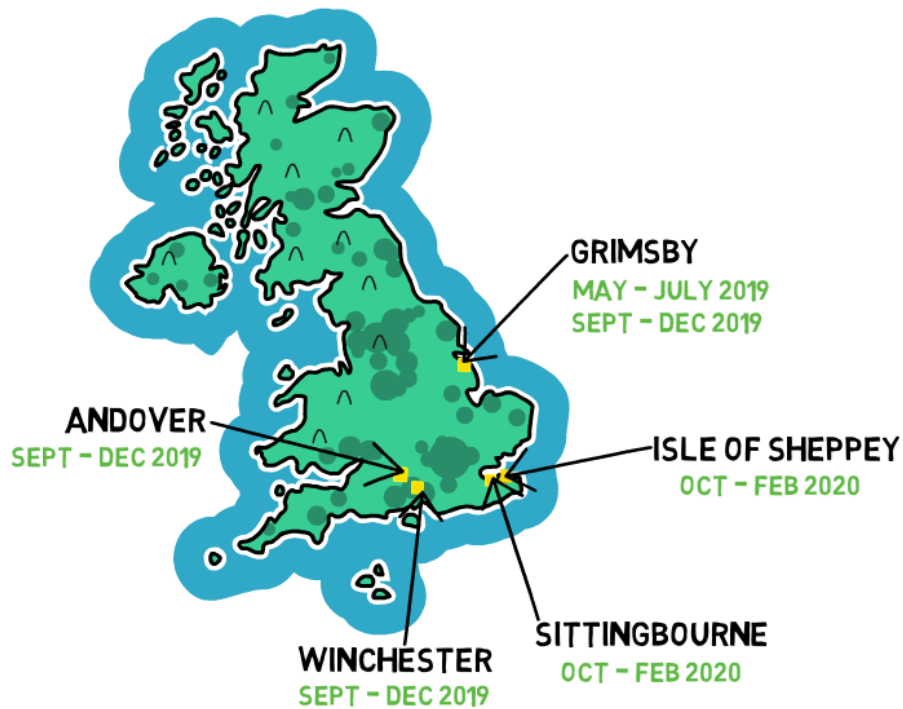
Training includes:

- Full instruction in running the Own My Life course.
- Comprehensive domestic abuse education.
- Building literacy in the physiology of trauma.
- The course WoManual.
- Access to the Own My Life e-Hub.
- 1x 2-hour Zoom Coaching session.
- Access to the online evaluation system including online forms and data capture spreadsheet.

Own My Life course in-person pilots

Across 2018/19 there were three in-person facilitator pilot training events across England and 32 practitioners trained as Own My Life course facilitators. Six pilot courses were delivered across England; three in domestic abuse outreach services and one in a women's refuge. The pilot organisations (Andover Crisis and Support, North East Lincolnshire Women's Aid, SATEDA and Stop Domestic Abuse) were recruited through existing relationships with these services.

3	Pilot facilitator training events	32	Practitioners trained
58	Women started pilot courses	48	Women completed pilot courses
5	Courses run in outreach services	1	Course run in a refuge

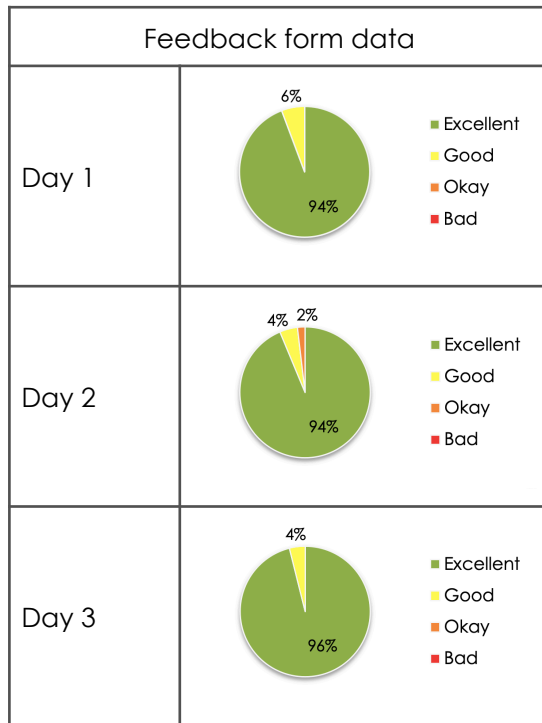


Map and dates of in-person pilot courses



Photos from pilot facilitator training.

What did practitioners say about in-person pilot training?



AMAZING PROGRAMME. THE MISSING LINK WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR, FOR YEARS!!! GOING TO HAVE A HUGE IMPACT (POSITIVE!) ON WOMEN'S LIVES.

SUCH AN INSPIRING COURSE. THE TRAINER WAS AMAZING. CAN'T WAIT TO TRIAL THE PROGRAMME.

BRILLIANT. EVERYTHING ABOUT THE TRAINING MADE SENSE. FLOWED GREAT & WAS DELIVERED WELL. WHAT AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE.

THIS IS A FRESH, EXCITING AND UP TO DATE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COURSE FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE.

3 DAYS OF EXCELLENT TRAINING. I CAN SEE HOW THIS WILL HELP WOMEN MOVE ON TO FURTHER INDEPENDENCE.

THIS COURSE WAS SO GOOD IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I ATTENDED A TRAINING THAT HAS HELD ME "CAPTIVE" & HAS INSPIRED ME SO MUCH. THANK YOU.

THIS IS A GREAT PROJECT THAT CAN REALLY HELP VULNERABLE WOMEN INCREASE THEIR SELF-VALUE, WORTH & CONTROL OF THEIR LIFE.

BRILLIANTLY WRITTEN AND PUT TOGETHER. GREAT TRAINING, WELL THOUGHT OUT. FRESH AND SUCH A GREAT INNOVATION AND TOOL.

IT IS INVALUABLE. EVERYONE SHOULD COMPLETE THE TRAINING AND THE COURSE - LIFE CHANGING!

Feedback from in-person trained facilitators about the WoManual and other course resources.

THE JOURNAL IS BRILLIANT. SUCH A BEAUTIFUL RESOURCE FOR PEOPLE TO KEEP.

THE E-HUB IS AMAZING! GREAT TO HAVE ALL INFO IN ONE PLACE, ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

VERY WELL SET OUT, GREAT CONTENT, LOOKS FABULOUS; LOVE THE STRUCTURE.

FOOL PROOF. VERY USER FRIENDLY

AMAZING - LOVE THE WAY THE COURSE IS FULLY LAID OUT IN THE WOMANUAL.

ABSOLUTELY LOVE IT!

ONCE I FOUND MY WAY AROUND IT, IT WAS EASIER TO USE AND UNDERSTAND.

It is possible to deliver the training over four 5-hour days

The training for the Sittingbourne/Isle of Sheppey pilots was primarily attended by practitioners with child-care responsibilities. This meant they could not commit to three consecutive 9.30am - 5.30pm training days. We delivered the training over two sets of 2 shorter days (9.30am - 2.30pm), one week apart. This worked well for the trainees, and is something we could offer for future groups.

THE PROS:

- More accessible for practitioners with childcare responsibilities.
- Trainees said they liked the week's break as it helped with processing the content.

THE CONS:

- Trainer travel and accommodation costs are increased.
- Teaching time is reduced by 3 hours.

Feminism Session

There was originally no intention to include a training session on feminism, however the Grimsby participants requested it. It has now become a core part of the training as it is helpful to locate the course within the wider values and history of the women's movement. Some trainees found the session quite intense, so was developed further over the three in-person training events and is now more effective.

Storage costs

Resource storage costs need to be incorporated into the project budget as it is more cost effective to bulk-buy materials, but they then take up a lot of space.

Typos and editing

Although all the material had been copy-edited, there were still some typos in the material. Trainees were willing to report these to us and became part of an informal editing team.

Demonstrating the e-Hub throughout

At first we played course videos embedded in a PowerPoint presentation, but realised it was better to play them directly from the online e-Hub, as this helped consistently demonstrate how they are accessed and used. However, this is only possible if the training venue has wifi or other internet access.

What did we learn from the in-person pilot preparation and training?

Cost of resources

As the project progressed, the size of the printed materials increased, other resources were needed and printing costs were higher than anticipated. Originally the budget for course resources and training materials was £1000, but the total cost came to £3377.66. These costs were recouped as content and copy-editing was not needed for the training materials. This has created a challenge in taking the course forward, as each woman will need an Own My Story journal (costing £10 each), facilitators need a WoManual (costing £15 each) and the additional course materials cost £60. In order to ensure the course is affordable to women's services, we are working to secure grant funding and build a longer term sustainability plan.

Pilot training cancellation

One pilot organisation cancelled the training at last minute and withdrew from the pilot, with trainer accommodation costs unable to be recouped. This has led us to include a commitment to pay and attend the training as part of the application process.

Equal Opportunities Data

We hadn't initially intended to collect data on participant protected characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, class, disability), but chose to after starting the pilot courses.

Pilot in-person courses start and end evaluations

How did we collect evaluation data?

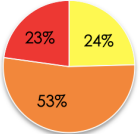
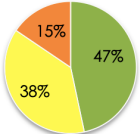
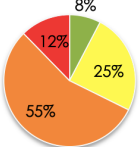
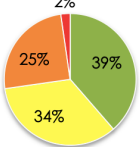
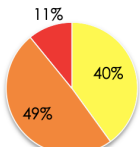
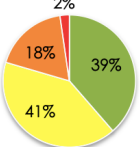
- Each trainee completed a training evaluation form.
- Each course participant completed start and end of course evaluation forms. The facilitators entered the data from these into the Own My Life course evaluation spreadsheet (downloaded from the e-Hub). After the course finished, they sent the spreadsheet to us.
- On Session 6 and Session 12 (or a session close to this) we met with each pilot group (except Grimsby 2) and invited their feedback. We also had a separate meeting each time with the in-person pilot facilitators.
- We had a phone call with the course facilitators after the Own My Group course.

What are we measuring and why?

The goal of the course is to increase self-efficacy, therefore we measured whether women feel in greater control of their lives. We also sought to establish whether they can make greater sense of their lives and whether there was an improvement in their relationships, environment and their physical, emotional and financial health after doing the course. While this data is correlative rather than causative it does, to some degree, indicate whether the course has made a difference in women's lives.

What does the data show us?

- In every category, course participants self-report significant progress.
- Participants from all in-person pilot groups consistently describe the course as life-changing.
- Facilitators across all in-person pilots consistently say that the course is changing women's lives and that the course is a pleasure to facilitate.
- Facilitators take the learning from the Own My Life course into other areas of their lives and role.

	Before Own My Life course	After Own My Life course
I feel like I am in control of my life and my future.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely 24% Mostly 23% Sometimes 53% Never 0% 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely 47% Mostly 38% Sometimes 15% Never 0%
I can make sense of my life.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely 8% Mostly 25% Sometimes 55% Never 12% 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely 39% Mostly 34% Sometimes 25% Never 2%
Overall, I feel good about my life.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely 40% Mostly 11% Sometimes 49% Never 0% 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely 39% Mostly 41% Sometimes 18% Never 2%

Pilot in-person courses start and end evaluations

	Before Own My Life course	After Own My Life course
I have family and/or friends that love and support me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I know where to go if I need help with difficulties in my life (e.g. money, health, job, education).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I like and feel safe in my neighbourhood and/or community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I am as healthy as I can be.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I feel safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never

*We did not define "healthy" for participants and we seeking simply to assess women's self-reporting of their experience of general healthiness.

Pilot in-person courses start and end evaluations

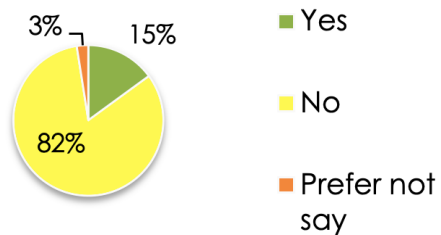
	Before Own My Life course	After Own My Life course
I know what domestic abuse is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I think that the things I see and hear in songs, newspapers, TV programmes, magazines, and adverts affect how I see myself and my life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I feel in control of my finances/money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
If I am a parent and am in contact with my children, I feel able to meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
If I am a parent, I am confident that my children know that I love them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Who Attended Own My Life course in-person pilots?

Pilot organisations invited women within their services to join the Own My Life course on a “first come first served” basis. Most women had previously attended other courses run by pilot organisations, usually the Freedom Programme. Some had also completed (or were in the process of completing) the Power To Change. Some of the women were still with an abusive partner, but most had already left him and were seeking to move on with their lives. Many, but not all of the women, had children and most of their children were still in their care (or their children were adults).

Disability

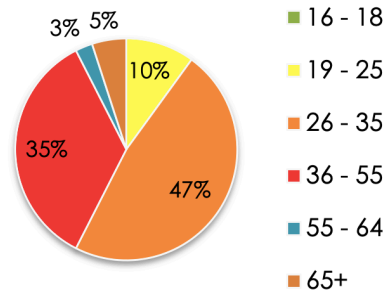
15% of women described themselves as having a disability.



Of those with a disability, 50% had mental health problems, 33% had a mobility impairment and 17% had a hearing impairment.

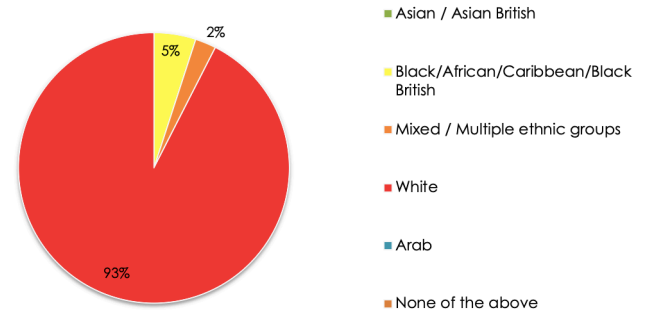
Age

Almost half of participants were aged between 26 - 35



Ethnicity

93% of participants were white, 5% were Black, African, Caribbean or Black British and 2% were Asian or Asian British.



Class

Women were invited to self-define their class:

- 12 x working class
- 2 x middle class
- 1 x poor
- 2 x upper working class
- 1 x "I'm just class!!"

Sexuality

Women were invited to self-define their sexuality.

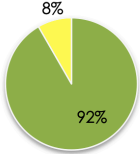
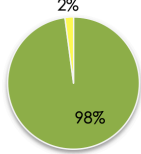
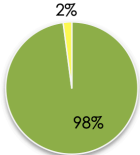
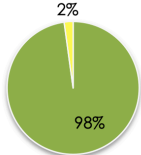
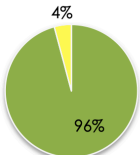

- 21 x straight
- 1 x Lesbian.
- 1 x Non-sexual/asexual.

Religion

Women were asked to self-define their faith or religion:

- 19 x none.
- 8 x Christian.
- 3 x Catholic.
- 3 x Church of England.
- 1 x Muslim.
- 1 x "love church and the community, but unsure about God".

Women's experiences of in-person pilot courses

I enjoyed the Own My Life Course.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	The course facilitators were helpful and supported my learning.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I learned a lot through the course.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	I like the Own My Story journal.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
The course has helped me to understand my life better.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	I would recommend the course to other women.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Dawn

“When you do therapeutic work, it’s like you’re digging dirt out of a pot. Through the course I was able to face talking about stuff I’ve never been able to talk about before. I got to the end of my pot! I got all the dirt out.”

Yvonne

Yvonne’s abusive ex-partner has custody of their children.

Through the course, Yvonne now feels strong enough to go back to court to seek custody of her children.

Hannah

Before coming on the Own My Life course, Hannah couldn’t leave her home without support.

As a result of attending the course, she has joined a local support group and is able to travel to the group on her own.

Women's experiences of in-person pilot courses



Sarah's Story

Before starting the Own My Life course, Sarah had attended other domestic abuse programmes and was still with her abusive husband. She says, "This course has definitely helped me to get to a place where I can leave my husband. It has helped me understand why I feel the way I do and that it's normal to feel like this." Sarah explains, "I've realised that all my needs are dependent on my husband. But now I know there's a way past that, which is what the course has helped me to see."



Lara's Story

Lara had been in a relationship with Toby for decades. She knew that if she cried, Toby would always hurt her more, so she learned to only cry when she was in the shower. After leaving him, she says she wanted to focus on being happy, moving forward and ignoring the past. Through the Own My Feelings activity, Lara began to realise it was okay to feel sad, she had a dream where she was crying and woke up still crying. She says that she realises that she needs to deal with the past in order to move forward, and is now able to cry if she needs to.



Abigail's Story

Abigail explained that the Neural Pathways activity made her realise she had become obsessed with ensuring that the car and TV volume controls were on even numbers. She had convinced herself that if they were on an odd number, something bad would happen. Through the activity she identified that she did this to feel a sense of control. Over the following week she chose to have the volume control on odd numbers, and nothing bad happened! She said that doing this has really helped her.



Karen's Story

Karen has ADHD and has never really engaged with domestic abuse services. She only attended the course because her friend invited her. She says, "I thought this course was going to be a pile of sh*t because I thought I knew everything I needed to know about abuse, but now I tell everyone I know about it and they all want to do the course." Facilitators say that, "Karen has loved the course so much." Karen says "It's like the course has been designed especially for people like me with ADHD".

Women's experiences of in-person pilot courses

Judith

"I've used the course materials to help my friend, I've been able to help her through abuse. I can't wait to show her the journal!"

Marie

"I was admitted to hospital one week because of a health problem and I was crying on the ward, not because of my health, but because I couldn't do the course. I was in my bed crying and saying, 'I wanna go to the course!'"

Katy

"Every time I've spoken to refuge or domestic abuse workers or whatever and I say I don't want a new relationship, they all tell me that I will and they sort of say that until I do I haven't really recovered. That's all I've had from services, like the goal of my life is to have a new relationship.

This is the first time I've felt like I'm being told it's okay that I want to be on my own."

Tara

Tara had been offered counselling a number of times, but didn't feel she needed it. As a result of being on the Own My Life course, she has begun counselling and finds it really helpful.

Hayley

Hayley had begun dating a guy after starting the course. She was concerned about his behaviour and told the group. They confirmed her worries and as a group they constructed a breakup text message to him. Hayley says she's relieved she realised early enough and had that validated by the group

What did participants say about the in-person Own My Life course?

I TELL EVERYONE ABOUT THE COURSE.

EVERY WEEK A FEW LIGHTBULBS GO OFF, PART OF IT IS GENERAL AND PART IS DEPENDENT ON WHERE YOU ARE ON THE JOURNEY.

NOW I KNOW WHY, AND THAT I'M NOT TO BLAME, I DON'T FEEL GUILTY ANYMORE.

THE WAY I SEE IT, THROUGH THE COURSE YOU REALISE HE IS THE ARS*HOLE AND YOU WANT TO WORK OUT HOW TO MOVE FORWARD.

IT'S BEEN USEFUL. IT'S TAUGHT ME TO BE THE PERSON I WANT TO BE, NOT WHO I WAS.

THIS COURSE HAS DEFINITELY HELPED ME TO GET TO A PLACE WHERE I CAN LEAVE MY PARTNER. IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND WHY I FEEL THE WAY I DO, WITH THE CORTISOL AND EVERYTHING AND THAT IT'S NORMAL TO FEEL LIKE THIS.

IT'S OPENED MY EYES FOR THE RED FLAGS IN A NEW RELATIONSHIP.

IT REALLY MAKES YOU REALISE ABUSE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE AND WE SHOULDN'T PUT UP WITH IT.

I'VE REALISED THAT SELF-LOVE DOESN'T MAKE ME SELFISH. I REALLY NEGLECTED MYSELF SO MUCH, BECAUSE I WAS MADE TO FEEL WORTHLESS, THIS COURSE GOT ME BACK ON TRACK AND HELPED ME LEARN TO LIKE MYSELF.

I CAME ON THE COURSE TO HELP OTHERS, BUT I HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH. I THOUGHT I DIDN'T NEED THIS COURSE BUT, F*CK, I HAD TO START DEALING WITH MY OWN SH*T.

BEING IN THE GROUP, YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU'RE GOING THROUGH IT ALONE.

IT'S BEEN VERY VALIDATING. IT'S BEEN HARD AND BROUGHT BACK BAD MEMORIES, BUT I'M IN A BETTER PLACE NOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

IT FEELS LIKE I'VE GOT A LIFE STILL.

I FOUND COURAGE AFTER THE FIRST COUPLE OF SESSIONS TO BREAK UP WITH MY PARTNER.

How did running the course in refuge work?

The Context

The refuge provides bedrooms, rather than self-contained flats for women and their children. They had previously run courses for residents, but had found that the complexities of living together and sharing personal information in a group had not worked. However, after two of the refuge staff attended facilitator training, they were keen to try running the course with a group of women. Limiting the course to 10 places, residents were all invited to attend on a "first come first served" basis. The course was made up of 8 refuge residents and 2 "civilians" who were engaged with the service's outreach provision.

The challenges

- Not all the women were able to complete the course because they moved out of the refuge before the last session.
- There are no childcare facilities onsite.
- If women get jobs or have appointments related to being in refuge, this can prevent or diminish their ability to attend.
- There can be fallings out when women are living together which create tension during the course, however the facilitators said this was not a big issue during the pilot course.
- It was impossible to run the 6-week "Own My Group" follow-on course because participants either moved on from refuge or had other appointments or commitments.

I ENCOURAGED THE GROUP TO BE MORE ASSERTIVE IN REFUGE, LIKE WHEN ANOTHER RESIDENT ASKS THEM TO BABYSIT, THEY SHOULD SAY NO IF THEY DON'T WANT TO. ALL WEEK LONG THE WOMEN HAVE BEEN TELLING ME HOW IT'S WORKED. AND EVEN RESIDENTS WHO AREN'T ON THE COURSE ARE PRACTICING BEING ASSERTIVE.

I JOINED THE COURSE BECAUSE IT'S IN MY REFUGE AND MY KEY WORKER IS RUNNING THE COURSE, I WOULDN'T HAVE GONE IF I HAD TO DO IT WITH STRANGERS.

The benefits

- Some residents were deeply traumatised and said they could never have joined a course that was not provided within the refuge building. One woman said that just leaving the course room and going back to her bedroom within the refuge could be challenging.
- Participants felt really safe doing the course in the refuge, knowing that no abusers "can get in" to where they were doing the course.
- Each week, content from the group would be shared across the refuge, including with women who were not on the course. One facilitator said, "I can hear women in the garden, they're talking about the group all day."

How did it work to run the course in partnership?

The Context

One of the pilot courses was run as a partnership between a domestic abuse service and a local Salvation Army church. The church's minister trained as a support facilitator for the course and she provided the venue for the course. The domestic abuse service provided the primary facilitator, the course participants and a volunteer to support the course delivery. This partnership emerged after three Salvation Army church ministers attended pilot facilitator training.

THE WOMEN ARE JOINING THE DOTS ABOUT DIFFERENT SUPPORT THEY CAN GET IN THE COMMUNITY.

LYNNE HAS BEEN BRILLIANT; SO OPEN AND NICE. FAITH ISN'T RAMMED DOWN PEOPLE'S THROATS.

The challenges

- This could have been a challenging partnership, however the facilitators, the church and the domestic abuse service were respectful of one another, with the church minister deferring to the specialist knowledge of the domestic abuse service.
- There were no challenges reported involved in this partnership. The domestic abuse service facilitator says, "The emphasis was about helping the community, not faith."

The benefits

- The church was able to provide resources (a facilitator and a venue) which reduced the cost to the domestic abuse service of running the course.
- Two course participants began taking their children to the church-run weekly toddler group. Facilitators say that the women felt enabled to make use of this community resource through attending the course.
- Women were signposted to a broader range of local services.
- One of the activities explores the ways different people may collude with the abuser, including religious leaders. The facilitators noted that it was helpful to have a religious leader present during this activity.
- This initial partnership has led to a longer term relationship between the domestic abuse service and the church.

Does the course work as a standalone resource?

How was the Own My Life course designed to work?

Although designed to be a standalone course, the majority of women who participated in pilot courses had previously been part of other courses. This was because:

1. The organisations who were willing to pilot the course were already invested in group work, with their staff members experienced in group facilitation.
2. It was safer to run the course with a majority of women who had already begun their journey towards recovery.
3. As the course covers a lot of moving-on resources, pilot organisations wanted to use it with women who had already begun that journey.

In light of this, it was important to consider whether or not the Own My Life course can be used as a standalone resource or whether it needs to follow other courses. Participants and facilitators were asked their thoughts about this.

What courses had women participated in?

- Freedom Programme: A 12-week course that enables women to recognise and understand abusive behaviour.
- Power To Change: A 10 - 12 week course which aims to: change patterns of behaviour, accept responsibility to change and challenge beliefs about experiences; raise awareness of women's basic rights; build self esteem, self determination, confidence and empowerment.
- Other: Some organisations have developed in-house courses for women which seek to build self-esteem and/or employability skills.

Yes it can be standalone

Participants said:

- "I want things that move me forward...In Freedom I just go back to being frozen whereas with this course I feel relaxed."
- Own My Life is "more modern" and "more real" than Freedom.

Facilitators said:

- "I think this course could answer the questions that Freedom also seeks to ask."
- "If women are accessing the course in an area where Freedom didn't run, it would be fine for them to enter straight onto the Own My Life course."
- "It suits the younger generation better than Freedom."
- "It wouldn't make any difference without the Freedom Programme."
- "It's different enough to Power To Change; in the Power To Change we're teaching people, in the OML course they're learning it for themselves."
- "Previous Own My Life course participants have told new refuge residents how good the course is. These new residents say they'll wait until we run Own My Life again, rather than start Freedom."
- "I thought doing this course straight off could be like throwing them into a fire pit, but it wasn't like that."

Maybe it can be standalone

Participants said:

- "You'll get more out of the Own My Life course if you've done Freedom."
- "This course is really good when you're out of the situation."

Facilitators said:

- "The course feels like a bigger commitment than Freedom, and so having done Freedom means that women know that they're able to commit to the whole course."
- "Freedom can be passive, the Own My Life course isn't, so it needs a readiness to fully take part."
- "It should be after doing Freedom, as then they won't be hiding stuff because they've already started to open up about what's gone on for them."

Engaging women with complex needs

Culture and religion

In-person pilot organisations tended to be in predominantly white, working class areas and while efforts were made to organise in-person pilot courses in more diverse areas, the priority was organisational commitment to the course. Facilitators in two pilot groups reported that the course had enabled women (both originally from West Africa) to open up about harmful and misogynistic elements of their culture, alongside white British women in every pilot identifying and speaking about harm and misogynistic elements of British culture. Course participants spoke about the intersectionality activity:

- "I liked that the course touched on other inequalities and culture and religion. It opens people's minds that we are all human."
- "As women we're discriminated against, but other people are as well."
- One facilitator said, "It allowed us to challenge things, like how people can be homophobic or racist."

I WAS WORRIED THAT THE COURSE WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR WOMEN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS, HOWEVER IT IS MANAGEABLE AND POSITIVE, NOT ONLY FOR WOMEN THEMSELVES BUT BECAUSE WOMEN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS CAN SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE WITH THE GROUP.

I'M DYSLEXIC AND I LIKE THE PICTURES AND VIDEOS AND THE JOURNAL. IT TAKES ME A BIT LONGER TO PROCESS BUT IT'S SO EASY. IT'S NOT TOO MUCH WRITING, NOT TOO MUCH READING.

Neurodiversity

The course has lots of different types of engagement, and does acknowledge neurodiversity in an activity about decision inhibitors. One participant described herself as having severe Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). She was hugely enthusiastic about the course, "What is good is that it chops and changes and that has kept me engaged."

Literacy challenges

While the Own My Story journal does require some reading and writing, it is designed to be accessible. It has spaces for drawing and dyslexia-friendly fonts have been used throughout. Also the videos provide a way of engaging that requires very little literacy. I asked participants and facilitators about whether they felt the course was accessible for those with literacy challenges:

- One participant said her literacy issues didn't stop her from participating fully in the course.
- Another participant said she had dyslexia and had been able to engage fine.
- One woman said, "I'm not good at writing", but said that she had joined in fully and that it hadn't been a barrier to being part of the course.

Emotional needs

All women who have been subjected to abuse have complex emotional needs. Some specific reflections from facilitators and participants included:

- One facilitator was a keyworker for some of the course participants and this had been really helpful in continuing conversations about course content.
- Another facilitator said, "One woman leaves mid-session and comes back when she feels able to. The rest of the group are supportive of her; she has a lot of additional needs."
- One participant said, "I'm going through a police investigation at the moment and the course is helping me to cope with that."

Disability

One participant particularly said she had found the safety planning activity and weekly traffic light exercises helpful, "Because I've got disabilities."

What exercises were particularly valuable to women?

String Activity (Session 3)

The activity aims to help women identify why it is so difficult to leave an abusive partner. Women said:

- "It made you think and was very clever. It was quite emotional."
- "It makes you think again and breaks down barriers because it makes everyone say something."
- "When we were in the web, people don't understand how hard it is to get out, but now we do."

The Sick Planet

(Session 2)

This video helps participants to identify the impact of patriarchy on their lives, many participants said this was really helpful to them.

Understanding trauma (Session 3 & 4)

All participants agreed that the videos and activities that helped them understand trauma were invaluable. Women said:

- "Learning about the Rewind Technique really helped me, because I struggle with intrusive thoughts, and now I have started to treat the memories as if they happened to a different person and I don't have them as much now."
- "I found out I was the sixth woman who had reported him. The video triggered me, but it did help. I had blamed myself a lot, but the video helped me not to."

Why Does Abuse Exist? (Session 2)

Challenging the myths about abuse, this video explains why men choose to be abusive. Many participants said it had been helpful to them, with one saying:

- "This video was so helpful to me, I drew the diagram of the tree from the video and stuck it on my bedroom wall."

Relationship Quiz 1 (Session 2)

This explores healthy and unhealthy attitudes in relationships. Participants said about it:

- "This was really important for me, I hadn't considered the early stages of the relationship and what could be abusive or not."
- "It was quite healing."
- "It makes you think, as do the other quizzes. It makes you realise that what you believed isn't actually right."

The Island (Session 1)

Introducing women to the course, this activity looks at the ways an abuser develops and maintains control and how women resist abusive behaviour. Facilitators said:

- "The women loved the Island exercise and the format of it. They really got into the story".

Soundtrack of our Lives (Session 5)

This video explores the impact of music and song lyrics on our lives. Participants said this exercise had changed their approach to music:

- "I live for my music and when it's put down with the words, it really made me think about lyrics, and what I put on around my children."
- "It ruined songs for me."
- "It opened my eyes."
- "When I listen to music now, I take notice of the words. It's like the songs are brainwashing you."

Bilateral Movement (Session 1)

This exercise helps women to understand ways to manage triggers during the sessions. Participants agreed it was really helpful and facilitators said:

- This has been one of the most helpful things about the course and I use it a lot, even when I'm not at the course"

The Mountain (Session 5)

Explaining how neural pathways works, this activity helps women to recognise that they can change their lives. Participants and facilitators said how important this activity had been.

What exercises were particularly valuable to women?

Safety Plan (Session 6)

Participants are encouraged to complete a safety plan, whether they are still with an abuser or not. They said of the activity:

- "It helped me, I never thought there were other ways, I thought once he stopped me, that was it. I would never have thought to take documents etc."
- "It's important to know how to leave."
- "It gave me a bit more of an insight, there is more than one way to escape."
- "It felt intrusive, but it needs to be to get through."

Adverts Hurt (Session 8)

This video explores sexualisation and objectification in popular culture. Participants said:

- "It was really interesting, it shows how your morals and values are so influenced."
- "You don't realise how much women are naked on adverts, it's normal."
- "You notice sexual adverts more, after seeing the video."

The Power Threat Meaning Framework (Session 9)

This video enables women to understand how circumstance, deliberate harm and systemic oppression cause them to struggle. Participants said it helped them to understand their situation better and not blame themselves. Facilitators also said this activity had hugely benefitted their wider practice.

Traumatic Attachment (Session 7)

This video explains traumatic attachment and helps women understand why it can be difficult to leave an abuser. Participants said about this:

- "I was able to relate to this."
- "The traumatic attachment video was really helpful."
- "I used to think I was [stupid] for going back, but the video helped me see why I did. I really want my mum to read the Journal to understand too."

The Island with Children (Session 9)

This activity helps participants to understand how children are harmed by an abuser. Participants said that:

- "I thought I'd struggle with this, but it was handled well."
- "There was a lot of conversation in this activity, everyone was more open and opened up a lot."
- "It takes you back to your own childhood which helps everything else make sense."
- "It was a really good session."
- "It lifted the mood."
- "I cried in the Freedom Programme session on the effects on children, this one was more gentle."
- "It gives more background."

DASH (Session 7)

Helping women to understand risk and the harm done to them, this activity uses the DASH Risk Checklist. Participants said:

- "I didn't realise the gravity of what he was doing until I did the DASH activity in the course."
- "The DASH questions were really hard hitting, I could see how far I've come."

Seven Steps of a Breakup (Session 9)

This video helps women understand the challenges of leaving an abuser, participants said about it:

- "I've realised my steps to leaving him are much bigger than other people's."
- "I couldn't relate to the bargaining bit, but can see how it would be helpful for some people, I could relate to the rest of it."

Lovebombing (Session 11)

This activity looks at the tactics a new or potential partner might use to increase control. Participants in one pilot group all agreed this activity was really eye opening and new to them and that they recognised the behaviours from previous relationships.

What did women find helpful about the course?

Own My Feelings

Each week women document their emotions and feelings using charts. Participants said about this:

- "It makes you realise how you're feeling because sometimes you don't know, then you see a word and know that's how you're feeling."
- "It's nice to have that quiet time to reflect on what's happened."

Videos

Each session has 1 or 2 course videos and all participants and facilitators found the videos helpful:

- "I like the simplicity of it; the diagrams and videos. They hit home."
- "I was engrossed by each video, but then there is the script to read through afterwards."
- "The videos are amazing and it's very helpful to have a visual to help understand."

What am I grateful for?

At the beginning of each session, participants are invited to share something they are grateful for. Facilitators of two pilot groups said this was helpful for their group:

- "Saying what they're thankful for was initially difficult, however over the weeks they've begun to think during the week and come with ideas of what they're thankful for."
- "At first, they struggled with having anything to be thankful for, but now they rush into the group to tell me what they're thankful for."

Own My Story Journal

All the participants agreed that they loved the journal and found it really helpful. Some said:

- "I'm a giant nerd and I will keep going back through the journal every few months, and it will remind me that I'm not broken by choice and I am healing."
- "I don't know if I can say this, but the journal is idiot proof."
- "It's such a nice book. You can look back on what we've done."

Case studies

The course uses many case studies and stories throughout the activities. We use "old-fashioned" names for the case study characters to allow distance and reduce the risk of participants identifying their partner/ex/children within them. Participants said this had been helpful to them:

- "The scenarios are helpful, they feel relevant but at a distance."
- "I like the names of the characters."

Traffic Lights

This weekly activity helps women to identify what the abuser will do to try to prevent them having space for action in their lives. One participant said:

- "When he stops us, we stop. Whereas now the traffic lights activity makes us think more, and not have to stop."

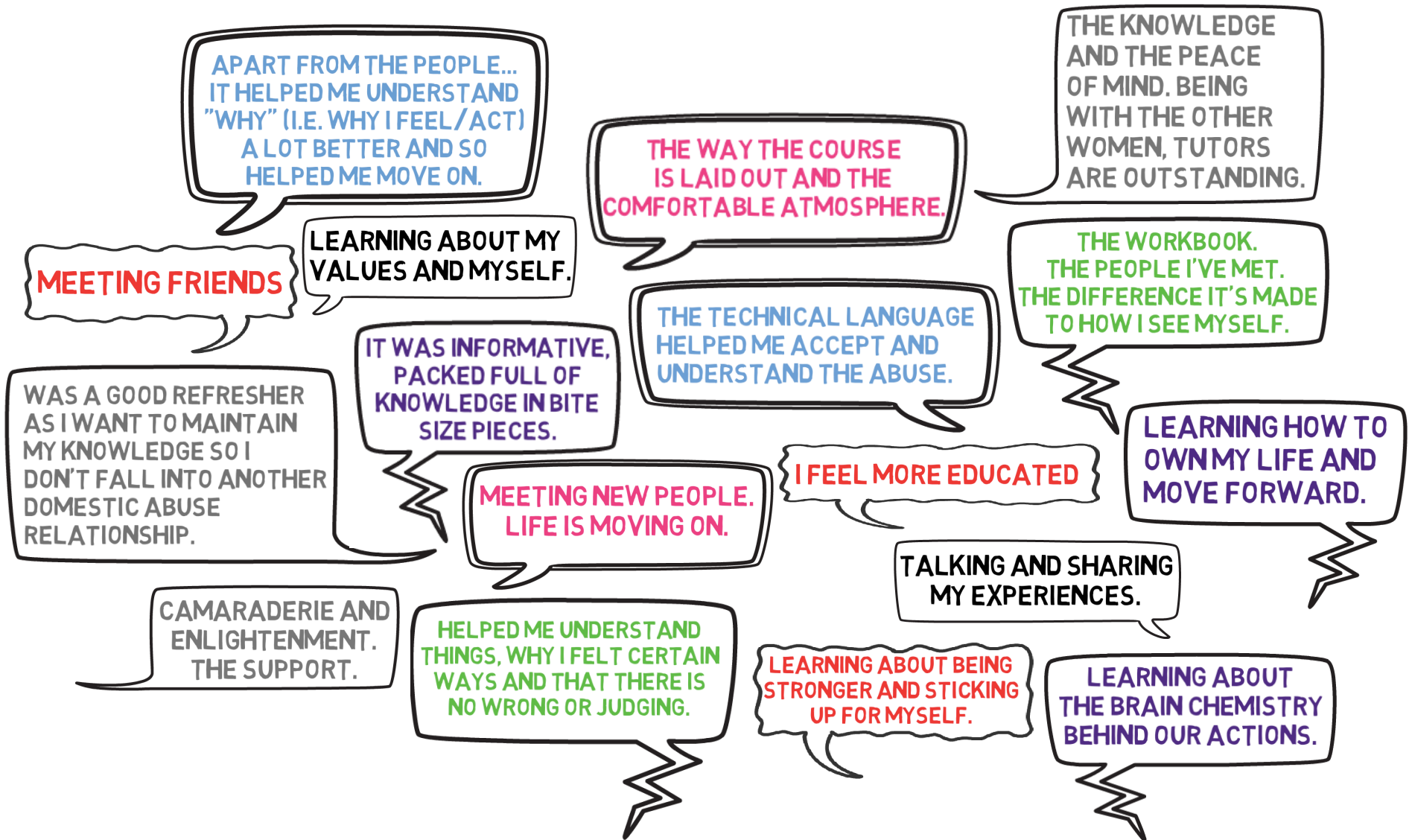
Facilitators said:

- "We use these in lots of different ways to talk about strategies for overcoming life challenges."
- "In key work sessions with women who are doing the course, I tell them to 'green light that' when they face an obstacle they need to overcome, even if that obstacle is their own negative thinking."
- "Each week during the traffic lights exercise, one woman has a mantra of 'block and delete' (the abuser), which is both funny and helpful."

WE KNOW ALL THE SAME STUFF, IT'S LIKE WE'RE PART OF A GIRL CLUB, WE DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN STUFF TO EACH OTHER. OTHER PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T DONE THE COURSE DON'T GET IT.

I FEEL LIKE A COMMUNITY NOW, LIKE A FAMILY, BECAUSE WE'VE ALL DONE THE COURSE TOGETHER.

What did women enjoy most about the in-person course?



What did women dislike about the in-person course?

Sexual Control (Session 10)

This video is quite sexually explicit and covers a traumatic and challenging topic, which is reflected in some participants disliking it. They said:

- "It's a taboo to talk about the bedroom."
- "I read through it, but didn't discuss it."
- "Week 10 was a lot easier than I thought it would be. I was dreading the 'rape' talk but it was a lot gentler than I expected."
- "I didn't realise that some of these things in the video were sexual abuse."

The Blame Game (Session 4)

One pilot group particularly found the video about victim blaming attitudes difficult. They felt it should be shown earlier in the session, rather than at the end so that participants didn't have it playing on their minds after leaving the session. One of their facilitators said:

- "The group had a lot of experience of the sexual stuff, so that made the Blame Game video harder to deal with."

Emotionally Difficult

Most participants found the course emotionally difficult in places, and reported that this made the course challenging, but not too challenging. Participants said:

- "Sometimes it was hard because it's what you have been through and you do think you are the only one."
- "Sometimes it was very difficult to think about things...I felt totally drained."
- "Some topics were hard."
- "Sometimes hard to take on board but I understand it's necessary."

Formal/Informal Reinforcements (Session 7)

This video uses photographs of real people (most other videos are solely whiteboard animations) and one pilot group stated that this was too difficult for them.

Nothing

On their evaluation forms most participants said there was nothing on the course that they would change or that they did not like.

Presentation

One of the pilots added a presentation activity to the course, requiring each participant to do a short presentation (to develop employability skills). While some participants appreciated the opportunity, some said they did not like doing it. One participant said:

- "I didn't like the presentation, but only coz I lack confidence and when I did it I felt great."

IT WAS DIFFICULT THAT THERE WAS NO CHILDCARE PROVIDED.

EVERYTHING THAT WASN'T HELPFUL WAS BECAUSE I ALREADY KNEW IT, NOT BECAUSE IT SHOULDN'T BE IN THE COURSE.

IT WAS HARD HAVING TO FACE THE DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN DONE TO MYSELF AND THE CHILDREN.

Timing

There is a lot of content in each session, and some participants struggled with this, though they felt the Own My Group follow-on course would help with covering missed content. Participants said:

- "There's too much in each session."
- "There is not enough of it!!! I wish I could come all year."
- "There's a bit too much sometimes in some segments."
- "The sessions are too short and it doesn't accommodate how everyone feels."

How has the Own My Group follow-on course worked?

The Own My Group follow-on course is a 6-week group that runs immediately after the 12-week Own My Life course finishes. The facilitator works with the women to plan the sessions, which will include any missed content from the course and material participants want to repeat. The Own My Group course is designed to help women move to a self-organised model, in which they gradually take the lead with the facilitator's support. There are Start and End of Group forms, which were developed by studying how unions and other self-organised groups are formed.

Empowers women

One facilitator said she had been worried that the Own My Group would lead to participants having greater dependency on the facilitator or the course but that the opposite happened. The course ended because women chose to stop coming, rather than because they were made to finish. She said:

- "It's nice they've decided they don't need it, rather than us saying that."

Didn't work in refuge

Due to the transient nature of refuge accommodation, women were unable to commit to another 6-weeks in addition to the course, even though they were keen to keep meeting.

Doesn't fit with the school term

Each academic year has three 12-week terms, this works brilliantly for 12-week courses, as an organisation can run three consecutive 12-week courses in a year, however with Own My Group, the Own My Life course is 18-weeks long, which prevents it fitting alongside the academic term, and only two courses can be run consecutively within a year, unless an organisation has enough rooms and facilitators to have two courses running simultaneously.

Reassured participants

As there is so much material in the course, participants were reassured to know that they weren't going to miss material as it would be covered during the Own My Group course. Participants said:

- "I think having the 6-week catch up will be good."
- "The 6-week follow on group will be good to do the stuff that the group has missed out."

Zoe

Zoe had been attending group sessions for many months, but refused to accept that she needed outreach support, stating that other people needed it more than her. As a result of the Own My Group course, she requested and began receiving outreach support.

What have we learned from the in-person pilot courses?

Amazing results!

Overall, the course has been hugely successful. Participants, facilitators, and pilot organisations are excited and enthusiastic about the course, and this is reflected in 100% of participants saying they would recommend the course to other women. The feedback has been focussed on “tweaking” the material rather than suggestions that there are huge gaps in it. Overall the impact of the course has greatly exceeded our already high expectations.

Don't take journals home during the course

Although the guidance stated that participants were not allowed to take their Own My Story journals home, one pilot group allowed women the choice to take their books home, which most women did. Facilitators reported that this led to challenges, as participants were “one step ahead” of facilitators. They were also the only group that refused to do some of the exercises, which may have been due to them already having read the material in advance of the session. While recognising that the course seeks to empower women, the material has been designed to take women on a journey. Taking the journal home at the end of the course is part of that journey. Women in other pilot groups said they were happy to leave their journal with the facilitator until the end of the course, with some saying they preferred to do that.

Increasing diversity

The pilot facilitator training events took place in predominantly white, working class areas, which meant pilot participants were generally white working class women. To increase diversity, online pilots in 2020 included organisations working in more ethnically diverse places including Birmingham, London and Edinburgh.

Enhances wider facilitator practice

Facilitators reported that they had used the knowledge gained from the Own My Life course across their practice; including some of the course content in other aspects of their work. The said:

- “I now talk about ownership and entitlement underpinning abuse in my work and have taken this language into facilitating the Freedom Programme.”
- “I've used the 'Why Does Abuse Exist?' video in the Freedom Programme with a group of women who couldn't understand why the abuser was abusive. They all grasped it and felt their question had been answered through the video.”
- “The knowledge I gained has changed how our refuge handles referrals. Previously, if a woman was referred and had a mental health diagnosis we wouldn't be able to take her, but now we ask more questions; because we recognise the mental health diagnosis may not be an issue in refuge and may have been caused by the abuser.”

Own My Life Course Extra

Participants said that although they were happy to leave their journal with the course facilitator, they would like to have the option of additional content to complete at home. We have added a password protected “Own My Life Course Extra” section to the website. We will notify facilitators of the termly password change and they can inform participants. The Extra content includes:

- Further reading.
- An additional exercise.
- An extra video.

www.ownmylifecourse.org/extra



What have we learned from the in-person pilot courses?

Men

When developing the course, it was understood that all facilitators and participants would be women, however no “hard and fast” rules had been made about men being present during the course. One pilot organisation had a male student working with them and as part of his placement, he attended some of the Own My Life course sessions. While the participants were invited to say if they would prefer him not to attend, we recognise that:

- Women are socialised to be polite and kind and would not necessarily feel able to be honest about not wanting a man in the group. This could be driven by a desire of not wanting to be perceived as “man-hating”
- Within a patriarchal society it can be difficult to recognise the ways that men being present in a space can change or reshape that space, and so not every participant would necessarily be fully aware about how the dynamics might shift or the other consequences of allowing a man into the group.

When meeting with the participants, it was impossible to ascertain their views on the male student being present in the group as he sat in on the meeting, however this was the only pilot group that refused to do the Sexual Control activity. In conversation with the male student, he said he had wondered whether participant reluctance to engage with this activity was because he, as a man, was present. As a result of this unplanned “experiment” in having a man join a pilot group, the course guidance now explicitly states that this is a women-only course. This also means men will not be able to train as Own My Life course facilitators. While this could be a cause for criticism, the priority of the course is the needs of women who have been subjected to abuse.

Closed group

A student joining the pilot group for a few sessions also raised concerns about the importance of maintaining the Own My Life course as a “closed group”. The guidance does state that new participants cannot join after Session 2, however this has been updated to clarify that no new people can join the group (including volunteers, students, staff or others) after Session 2, and that they should intend to be part of the whole course, rather than just a few sessions. The course involves women doing significant emotional work and having new people present or only intending to join the group for a few sessions can negatively effect the group dynamics.

Changed order

One pilot group was particularly keen to see an overhaul of the order of the course. This was not echoed in any other courses, so we have kept the order generally the same, however we have moved the Seven Steps of a Breakup activity (from Session 9 to Session 3), as it made sense for this to underpin more of the course. The general timetable has been slightly affected by this.

Not measuring hard outcomes

After meeting with an expert in local commissioning, we had hoped to develop an evaluation for the course’s “hard outcomes” which would have included proving reduced use of public services (GP, social worker, A&E, police, courts) and increased contribution to the economy (training and education, employment, volunteering). However, after creating a method of evaluating these outcomes, feedback from pilot organisations led us to not pursue this. One pilot organisation said:

- “I think the outcomes do not reflect outcomes of people on the course...I think the course is amazing and really helps people to move on but the questions aren’t relevant to the change.”

What have we learned from the in-person pilot courses?

Video subtitles

Facilitator and participant feedback from women with hearing impairments informed us that although they had been able to fully participate in the course, it would be ideal for them if the course videos had subtitles. All videos are now subtitled.

Providing participants with a support email

Facilitators of two pilot groups provided participants with an email address they could be reached on between sessions, and said this had been important to participants. We have incorporated this into the facilitator guidance to ensure participants have as much support as possible while doing the course.

Material edit

Participants and facilitators were invited to be part of our "editing team" and during facilitator training and throughout the pilot groups, they reported back on typos and other edits needed within the course materials. One concern raised by participants about the Own My Story journal was that the cover was difficult to write on due to it having a laminated coating. We have ensured that future versions of the journal are uncoated.

Added value

Pilot facilitators introduced additional content to the course based on what participants needed. For instance:

- After the Understanding the Brain video, a staff member of a pilot organisation (who is a qualified counsellor) provided participants with a session to learn grounding skills, which was reportedly really helpful.
- As a result of learning about bilateral movement, one pilot organisation now offers a drumming workshop to women. Some course participants who previously wouldn't have attended, have done now because they now understand the therapeutic benefits of drumming.

Developed course content

Due to participant and facilitator feedback we have added additional guidance and amended some of the activities. This has included:

- Stating in the guidance that the session timings are advisory rather than fixed.
- Adding guidance that fruit as well as biscuits should be provided when delivering groups.
- Adding an additional section to the String activity in Session 3.
- Adding a full group "circle time" activity at the end of each session.
- Creating a resource leaflet that is available on the e-Hub for facilitators to download and either email or print out to give to participants during the course, before they are able to take their journal home.

A key theme from the in-person pilot

“Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation. In her renewed connection with other people, the survivor re-creates the psychological facilities that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic operations of trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy.”

Judith Herman, Trauma Expert

Through our meetings with pilot participants and facilitators, we identified a strong theme running through women’s feedback about why the course is so effective.

Other resources and programmes run by the pilot organisations help women to recognise what abuse is and why someone chooses to be abusive.

However, in speaking with facilitators and participants, it emerged that this leaves women feeling there must have been something wrong with them in that they didn’t know it was abuse and were (or still are) unable to leave the abuser.

This feeling of “wrongness” interferes with women’s whole lives, preventing them trusting themselves or believing they are capable of making good choices. This impedes women’s recovery, making them doubt themselves and leaving them feeling fundamentally wrong and stupid.

Through giving women literacy about trauma, how their body works, how the abuser operates, and how patriarchal society socialises women, the Own My Life course enables participants to truly understand that they are not the problem, that they are “normal” and that the decisions they made in relation to the abuser were generally rational, logical and understandable. As women realise this, they very quickly stop feeling bad, wrong or stupid and begin believing their instincts, feelings and decisions can be good, positive and healthy.

The Own My Life course method enables women to understand that they are rational, normal and capable. When women are no longer constantly having to overcome negative self-perceptions about having not recognised the abuse, this changes everything and enables them to take ownership of their lives and move forward at a much faster rate.

These comments from participants evidence this perspective:

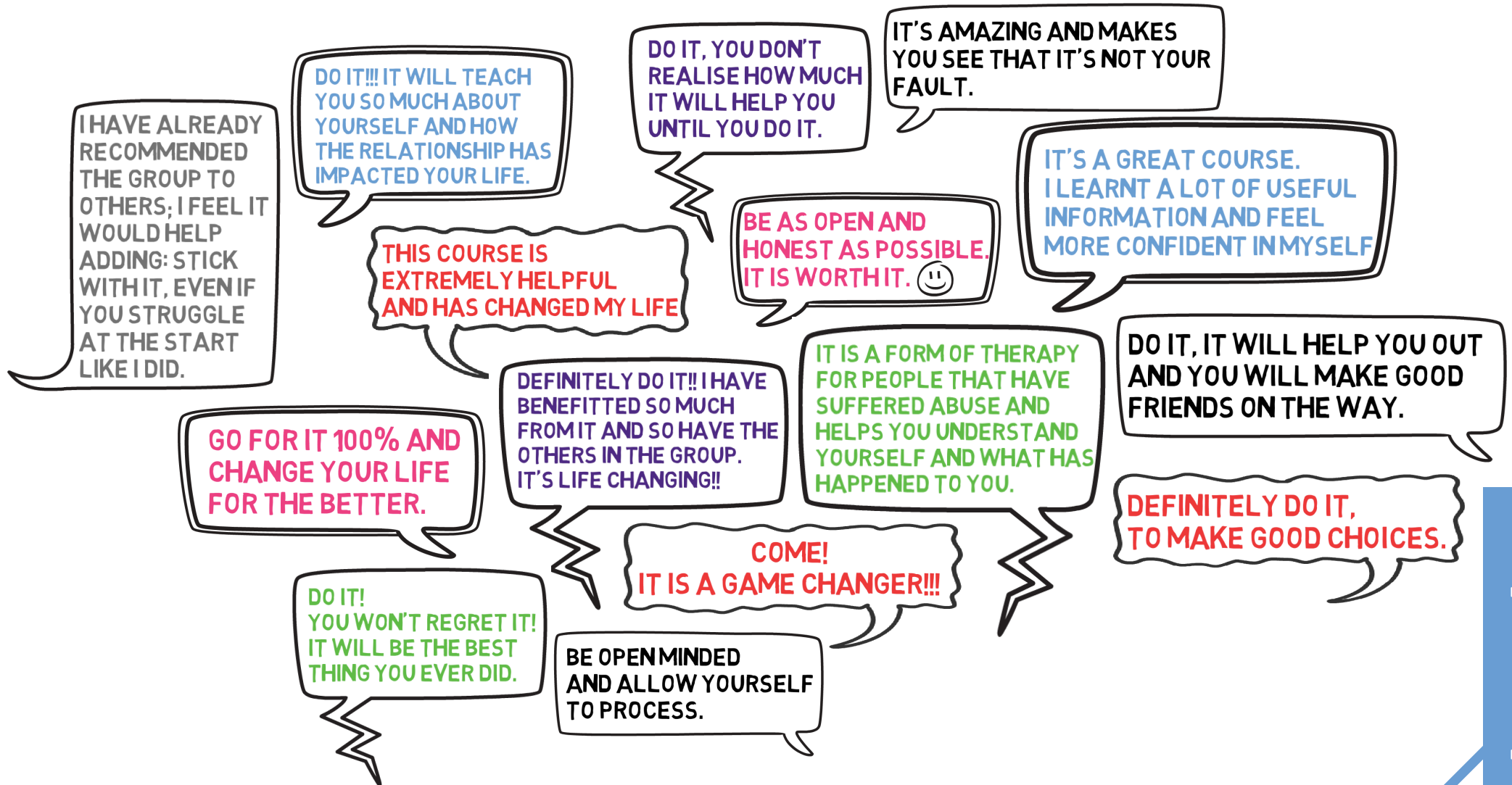
YOU’VE GOT ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO THINK YOU’RE SILLY FOR GOING BACK OR STAYING WITH HIM AND THIS COURSE HELPS YOU TO KNOW WHY, AND KNOW THAT YOU’RE NORMAL.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME UNDERSTAND THAT I’M NOT AS F*CKED UP AS I THOUGHT I WAS AND THAT LIFE CAN BE POSITIVE.

THIS COURSE HAS DEFINITELY HELPED ME TO GET TO A PLACE WHERE I CAN LEAVE MY PARTNER. IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND WHY I FEEL THE WAY I DO, WITH THE CORTISOL AND EVERYTHING AND THAT IT’S NORMAL TO FEEL LIKE THIS.

NOW I KNOW WHY, AND THAT I’M NOT TO BLAME, I DON’T FEEL GUILTY ANYMORE.

What would participants say to other women considering doing the course?

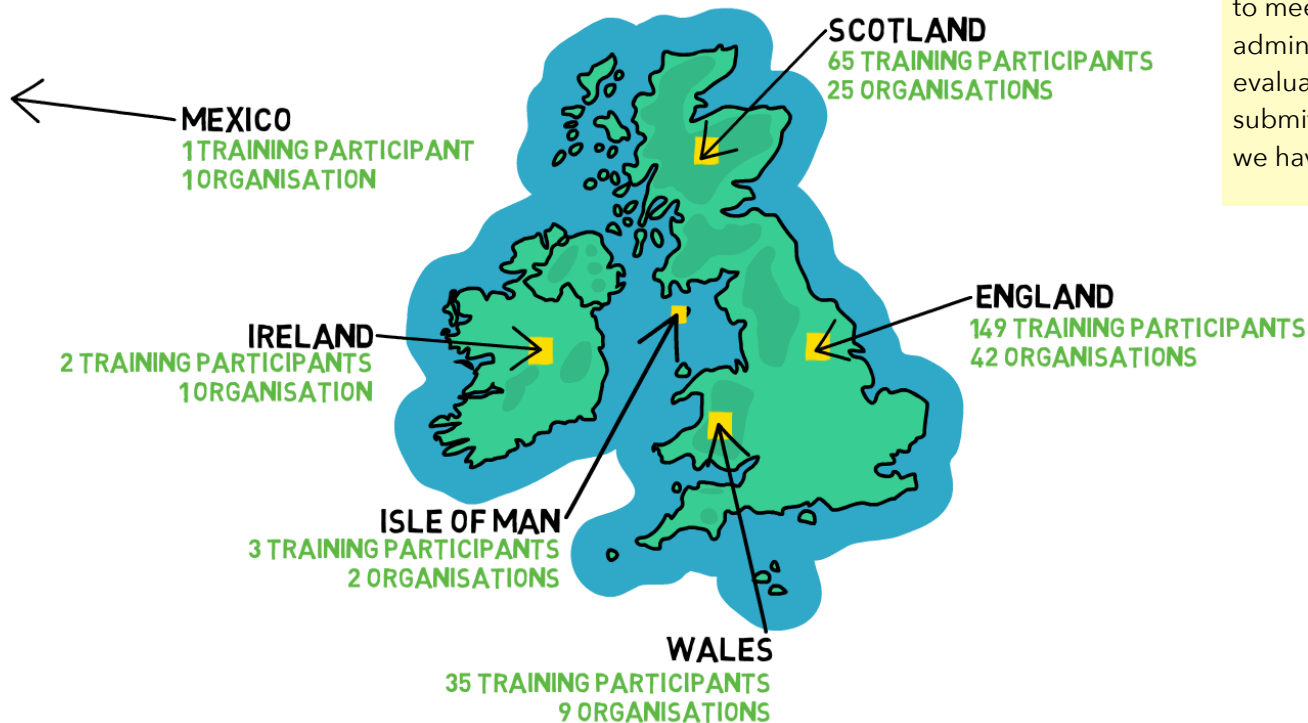


Own My Life course online pilot

While we intended to begin a subsidised rollout of Own My Life course facilitator training in 2020, COVID-19 measures meant that in-person training and course delivery became impossible. As a result, 2020 became an unexpected opportunity to redevelop the Own My Life course for online training and online course delivery. Over 2020, we delivered 13 online training events with 253 practitioners from the UK, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Mexico. 12 training events were on Zoom; 1 training event was on Teams. Practitioners (or their organisations) paid a nominal fee of £40 for the training and this included full training and a Zoom Coaching session. We also offered 2018/19 pilot facilitators access to Zoom Coaching sessions.

13	Online facilitator training events delivered	12	Training events delivered via Zoom (1 delivered via Teams)
253	Practitioners trained	80	Organisations trained
60	Zoom coaching sessions offered	150	Facilitators participated in Zoom coaching sessions
76	women (at least) have started online courses in 2020.	51	women (at least) have completed online courses in 2020.

Map of online trained facilitator locations



As the 2020 pilot was unplanned, we were unable to meet with course participants or manage the administration of insisting facilitators submit course evaluation data. Where organisations have submitted evaluation data for completed courses, we have included this within this evaluation report.

Online redevelopment of the Own My Life course

COVID-19 created an opportunity to embrace online delivery, not only to train practitioners to run the course, but also for women to access the course online. COVID-19 measures have enabled abusers' behaviour to escalate and decreased women's access to support. While there are many efforts to get the virus under control, it is likely that social distancing and sporadic lockdowns may be with us for the foreseeable future. Alongside this, in-person groups remain a barrier to participation for many women; particularly those with care responsibilities, those in rural communities, those with poor transport facilities and those who work long hours. Online courses will enable more women to participate in the Own My Life course than if organisations only offer only in-person groups.

We needed to adapt the training method and material to suit an online format, but it was also important to recognise that most practitioners who train to run the course will not have done online facilitation before. This means they will likely have low confidence and high anxiety about delivering the course online. Also, the training took place in the midst of a traumatic global pandemic. In order to make the online facilitator training and subsequent online course delivery a compelling option, we focussed on creating a powerful positive experience with high quality resources and equipping that would relieve facilitator anxiety and build their confidence.

Added online training delivery elements.

Before the training

- 30 minutes Zoom practise session for anyone who would like to understand Zoom functionality better, before starting the training.
- Clear instructions about how to join Zoom, what resources are needed and appropriate Zoom etiquette.
- WoManual posted out to training participants in advance of the training.

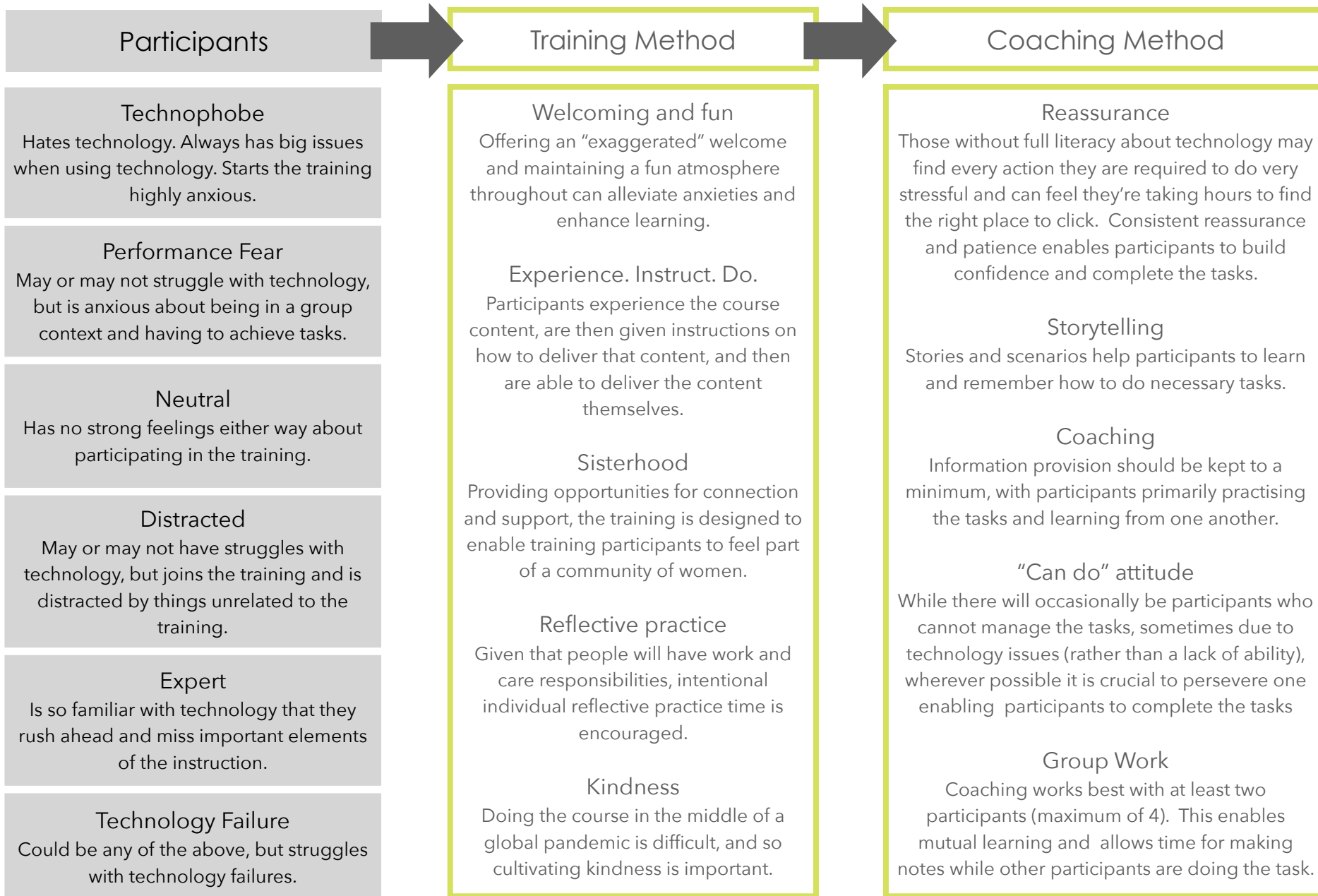
During the training

- Training takes place over 5 days (9am - 4pm), these may be consecutive or over 2 - 3 weeks.
- First training session includes full instruction in how to use Zoom.
- All participants receive a printed reflective workbook that they complete during the training.
- Zoom polls are used instead of the evaluation box and counters.
- Every hour there is a 7-minute comfort break.
- Each day participants have 1.5 - 2 hours break in which to have lunch and then do various activities including watching e-Hub videos, self-care activities and reflective workbook activities.
- The last day includes a singalong activity where all participants mute themselves while singing along to their voted for empowering song.

After the training

- The ZOOManual (accessed via the e-Hub) has full instructions in all elements of Zoom course delivery, including supplementary session plans.
- A 2-hour Zoom coaching session with up to 4 other trainee facilitators to practise using the Zoom host controls.
- Online course evaluation forms and evaluation system provided to facilitators.

Method for online Own My Life facilitator training



Online Own My Life course redevelopment

The course itself also needed redeveloping to make it viable for women. There were a number of changes that were made to ensure the course is safe for online participation. Women can join in-person courses while still with an abusive partner, but this would not be safe or sensible for online courses. The Own My Story journal has to be posted to each woman's home and even if the woman was able to join an online course from a friend's home or while her partner is out of the house, this would not safe,. The adaptations to course delivery are primarily ensuring physical and emotional safety.

Added online course elements.

Before the course

- The "[Thinking about doing the online course?](#)" webpage tells women about what the online course involves.
- Facilitators offer a one-to-one Zoom to give women a chance to try out Zoom, practise using the controls and talk about the course.
- Facilitators offer each half of the group a Zoom practice session.
- Journals are posted out to women.
- Women are provided with a self-care activity list and grounding activity to help them emotionally manage the course content.

During the course

- Facilitators should check in with course participants regularly to ensure they're managing with the course content.
- The e-Hub ZOOManual provides online versions of the "Own My Choices" Traffic Lights Activity for each session.
- Zoom polls are used instead of the evaluation box and counters.
- The icebreaker activity each week utilises items within a woman's home.
- The sexual control activity is excluded from online delivery, due to the traumatic nature of the subject. Women can read through the video script and other content if they want to.
- Courses are offered at times that fit women's care and work responsibilities; including an evening course.

After the course

- Google forms are used to gather evaluation data from participants.
- It is likely to be unfeasible to provide the Own My Group follow-on course online.

What did practitioners say about online training?

Feedback form data	
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent Good Okay Bad
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent Good Okay Bad
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent Good Okay Bad
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent Good Okay Bad
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent Good Okay Bad

Feedback form data	
How much would you say the training has increased your knowledge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very much Somewhat Not at all
How confident do you feel about delivering Own My Life course in-person?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very much Somewhat Not at all
How confident do you feel about delivering Own My Life course via Zoom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very much Somewhat Not at all
Did the training meet your expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceeded Yes No

What confidence level do facilitators have generally about using technology?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Totally confident Mostly confident A bit confident Not at all confident
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I CANNOT SING ITS PRAISES ENOUGH. IMMENSELY INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE. BEST TRAINING I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF COMPLETING.

THIS WAS THE MOST INFORMATIVE, AND MOST FUN, TRAINING COURSE I HAVE EVER BEEN ON!

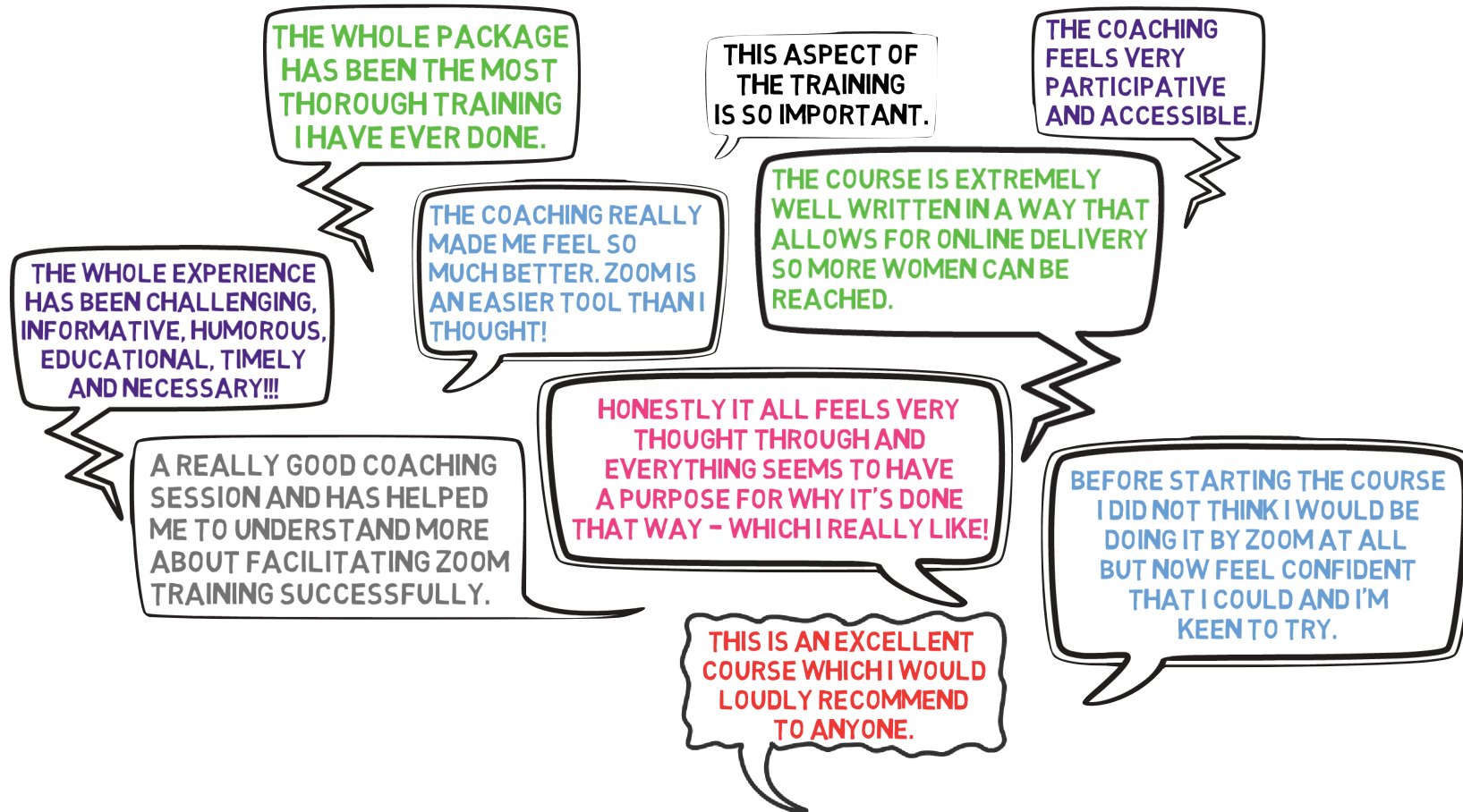
THE BEST ZOOM TRAINING I HAVE BEEN ON. REALLY REFRESHING AND ENERGISING.

	Before Zoom Coaching	After Zoom Coaching
How confident were practitioners about delivering the Own My Life course via Zoom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Totally confident Mostly confident A bit confident Not at all confident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Totally confident Mostly confident A bit confident Not at all confident

What did practitioners say about the online training?



What did practitioners say about Zoom Coaching?



What did online trained facilitators say about the course resources?

CLEAR, AN EXCELLENT GUIDE TO GROUP PLANNING. AS SOMEONE WHO HAS NOT RUN A COURSE PREVIOUSLY, IT WILL BE REALLY HELPFUL TO SUPPORT MY PLANNING WHEN WE START IN OUR OWN AREA

FANTASTIC TOOLKIT FULL OF POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE, A DOMESTIC ABUSE PRACTITIONER'S BIBLE!

IT IS FREAKIN FABULOUS! IT CONTAINS ALL THE MAJOR TOPICS WE WOMEN NEED TO BE UNDERSTANDING! EVERY GIRL IN EVERY SCHOOL, EVERYWHERE, IN EVERY LAND NEEDS TO KNOW THIS STUFF...

THE MOST THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED AND THOUGHT-OUT RESOURCE I HAVE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE TO READ. USER FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE TO WOMEN FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

ABSOLUTE GOLD DUST.

I REALLY LIKE THE ILLUSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT. I HAVE ADHD AND DYSLEXIA AND STRUGGLE TO PROCESS SOME INFORMATION. I FEEL THIS WILL SUPPORT OTHERS WITH DIFFERENT BARRIERS TO PROCESSING INFORMATION OR LEARNING.

ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT! THE BEST RESOURCE I HAVE EVER BEEN HANDED AS A DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKER. IT'S SO SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT FORWARD AND TAKES YOU STEP BY STEP THROUGH THE COURSE, SO THERE IS NO CONFUSION OR PLANNING TO DO WITH CONTENT OF THE COURSE.

I FEEL LIKE THIS IS THE JOURNAL I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR MY WHOLE CAREER WORKING AT WOMEN'S AID! SO CLEAR, WRITTEN SO WELL, EMBEDDED IN CURRENT AND RELEVANT THEORY. GREAT BALANCE OF TEXT, VISUAL AND INTERACTIVE.

ABSOLUTELY AWESOME, SO USER FRIENDLY. DESIGNED PERFECTLY TO MAKE DELIVERY AS STRESS FREE AS POSSIBLE. LOVE IT, LOVE IT, LOVE IT!

AS A SURVIVOR I FIND THE JOURNAL INCREDIBLY REFRESHING! VERY DIRECTIVE AND CREATED BEAUTIFULLY!

Teams training delivery will sometimes be necessary

One local authority who booked us to deliver training for their staff do not allow Zoom. As a result of this, we delivered the training via Teams to a group of 9 practitioners. The training worked well and feedback was positive. In order to make it work, we rarely used breakout groups and so couldn't this wouldn't have worked with a bigger group. The facilitators are currently only offering in-person courses because the Teams platform simply isn't designed for this type of course. We directed trained facilitators to engage with their local authority's technical team for support with this.

Timing

The first online training event was 3 days (10am - 4pm). Timing challenges from this led us to change the training to 5 half-days (9am - 1pm), but this did not leave enough time. Eventually we settled on 5 full days (9am - 4pm) with an extended lunch break for individual reflected working. This has worked well.

Online evaluation system

When delivering online training, we evaluated participation using Google forms. This worked incredibly well and we now have an online evaluation system for facilitators. They request annual forms and are provided with these and a Google Sheets spreadsheet which is automatically populated with their participants' Google forms data. We also automatically receive this data within a global spreadsheet which allows us to keep evaluating local courses as they run. Beyond labour, it is a free resource and makes monitoring and evaluation easier for facilitators and us.

Social interaction

We found that online delivery precluded most informal discussion that occurs during in-person training. To remedy this we added a 5 - 10 minute informal breakout room chat space at the beginning of days 2 - 5. Training participants said this worked really well. Practically it allowed the facilitator to let each person in individually without everyone sat waiting for the session to start.

What did we learn from the online pilot training?

Online training delivery works!

We found that online delivery works incredibly well, is much more cost effective than in-person delivery and that overall, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. The feedback from online participants has been incredible and it is unlikely we will regularly offer in-person training in the future.

Short breaks

During the first Zoom training, we provided hourly 5-minute breaks. Participants said these were not long enough. The breaks were increased to 7-minutes and seemed to work well for most participants.

Geographical diversity is powerful

Online delivery allowed for much greater geographical diversity in each training. Participants commented that this offered greater learning potential and cross-pollination across regions and nations.

Online course delivery works too!

Feedback from online course facilitators and participants has been very positive. We have found there is a higher dropout rate for online courses. It is difficult to know whether this is a result of the impact of COVID-19 on women's lives, because of the online format, or something else. When in-person courses can fully resume, we will encourage organisations to continue running at least one online course per week.

Pilot online courses start and end evaluations

How did we collect evaluation data?

- Each course participant completed start and end of course online Google evaluation forms (link set up and provided by us). We entered this data into a spreadsheet and sent it to the facilitator.

What does the data show us?

- In almost every category, course participants report significant progress.
- Participants from all pilot groups consistently describe the course as life-changing.



Map of courses currently running in the UK.

	Before Own My Life course	After Own My Life course
I feel like I am in control of my life and my future.	<p> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never </p>	<p> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never </p>
I can make sense of my life.	<p> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never </p>	<p> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never </p>
Overall, I feel good about my life.	<p> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never </p>	<p> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never </p>

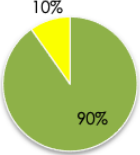
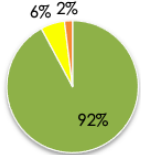
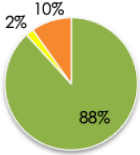
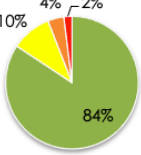
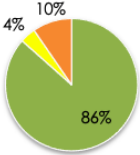
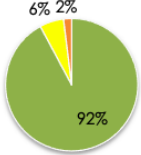
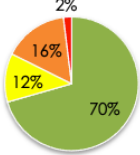
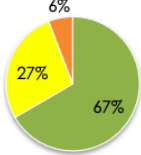
Pilot online courses start and end evaluations

	Before Own My Life course	After Own My Life course
I have family and/or friends that love and support me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I know where to go if I need help with difficulties in my life (e.g. money, health, job, education).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I like and feel safe in my neighbourhood and/or community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I am as healthy as I can be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I feel safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Pilot online courses start and end evaluations

	Before Own My Life course	After Own My Life course
I know what domestic abuse is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I think that the things I see and hear in songs, newspapers, TV programmes, magazines, and adverts affect how I see myself and my life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I feel in control of my finances/money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
If I am a parent and am in contact with my children, I feel able to meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
If I am a parent, I am confident that my children know that I love them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Women's experiences of online pilot courses

I enjoyed the Own My Life Course.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	The course facilitators were helpful and supported my learning.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I learned a lot through the course.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	I like the Own My Story journal.*	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
The course has helped me to understand my life better.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	I would recommend the course to other women.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never
I think the Own My Life course has changed my life.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never 	Doing the course via Zoom worked well for me.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definitely ■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never

*It emerged through the evaluation that one organisation had only provided some photocopied sheets and not the whole journal for their participants, hence the negative feedback. The organisation has committed to not doing this again.

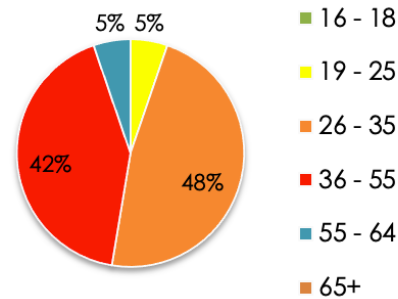
Who Attended the Own My Life course online?

While it is a small sample group for data comparison, there was a higher amount of ethnic diversity online and a higher number of disabled participants.

	In-person	Online
White participants	93%	66%
Disabled participants	15%	27%

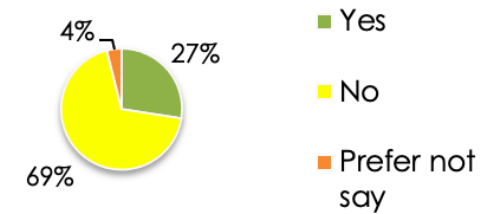
Age

The majority of participants were between 26 - 35. There were no women over 65. or under 18.



Disability

27% of women described themselves as having a disability.



Of those with a disability, 35% had mental health problems, 22% had learning difficulties, 22% had a long-term illness, 8% had a mobility impairment, and 1% had a sight impairment.

Sexuality

Women were invited to self-define their sexuality:

- 20 x heterosexual
- 25 x straight
- 1 x pansexual
- 4 x bisexual
- 1 x asexual currently

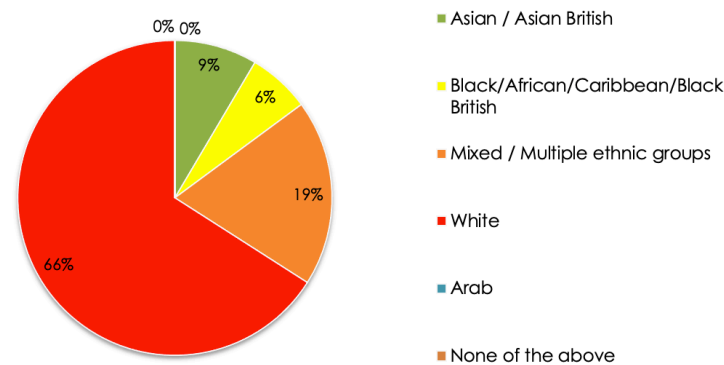
Class

Women were invited to self-define their class:

- 1 x upper class
- 17 x middle class
- 3 x lower middle class
- 5 x upper working class
- 23 x working class
- 1 x lower class
- 3 x not sure/no idea
- 1 x self-employed

Ethnicity

66% of participants were white. 19% were from mixed or multiple ethnic groups, 9% were Asian or Asian British and 6% were Black, African, Caribbean or Black British.



Religion

Women were asked to self-define their faith or religion:

- 16 x Christian
- 14 x None
- 11 x Spiritual
- 3 x Catholic
- 2 x Atheist
- 1 x Muslim
- 1 x Church of England

What did women enjoy most about the online course?

I FELT SAFE TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK OPENLY & WE HAD A LOVELY GROUP OF LADIES WHO ALL SUPPORTED EACH OTHER.

GAINING KNOWLEDGE WHERE PREVIOUSLY THERE WAS CONFUSION AND UPSET.

WE ARE WHOLE AND TO GET THROUGH LIFE WE HAVE TO CARE FOR OURSELVES AND PUT OURSELVES FIRST.

I WASN'T CERTAIN ABOUT A FEW THINGS REGARDING MY CHILDHOOD SPECIFICALLY, BUT NOW I AM AND I WILL FOREVER APPRECIATE THAT.

SOME TOPICS WERE HARD TO GO THROUGH BUT IN A GOOD WAY! AS HARD AS IT WAS, I'M GLAD WE WENT THROUGH IT. I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING ABOUT IT.

THE COURSE HELPED ME IDENTIFY THAT WHAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED IS NOT MY FAULT, BLAME DOESN'T BENEFIT, AND ABUSE HAPPENS BECAUSE IT IS HOW THAT PERSON CHOSE TO ACT NOT BECAUSE OF THEIR SITUATION OR EXPERIENCES.

FINALLY UNDERSTANDING SELF-EFFICACY. THE COURSE GIVES YOU THE TOOLKIT TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN YOUR LIFE AND NO NEED FOR NOT TAKING. ZOOM WORKED FOR ME.

CHANGING MY PERSPECTIVE ON MY LIFE AS A WOMAN.

THE CHANCE TO LEARN NEW THINGS AND PUT THE SKILLS INTO PRACTICE. IT WAS AN EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE.

VERY EMPOWERING COURSE THAT TOTALLY BUILT ON MY CONFIDENCE PROVIDING STRENGTH, HOPE AND LOVE, AS WELL AS FANTASTIC SUPPORT AND COPING STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE.

JUST NOW BEING AT A POINT IN MY LIFE I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET TO, OWN MY LIFE HAS COMPLETED THE HOLES THAT NEEDED FILLING.

LEARNING WAS EASY WITH THE JOURNALS AND THE VIDEOS AND THE FACILITATORS HELPED PUT IT INTO CONTEXT.

HAVING A COMMUNITY OF WOMEN, ESPECIALLY DURING LOCKDOWN.

THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUP. ALL AMAZING WOMEN. THE WAY THE COURSE WAS RUN. VERY HELPFUL FACILITATORS. EASY TO UNDERSTAND JOURNAL. A DIFFICULT SUBJECT THAT WAS COVERED IN A WAY THAT CAN BRING A SMILE TO YOUR FACE.

What else did women say about the online course?

IT'S GREAT TO TALK TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING THROUGH WHAT YOU ARE, YOU NO LONGER FEEL ALONE. WE HAVE FUN, WE SING AND WE ARE ONE BIG FAMILY.

IT WAS JUST BEAUTIFUL AND AMAZING AND I WOULDN'T CHANGE A SINGLE THING.

THIS COURSE TRANSFORMED MY WAY OF THINKING ABOUT BEING A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE & HELPED GIVE ME THE RESOURCES AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH MY FEELINGS - BOTH PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE.

AT A REALLY DARK TIME THIS COURSE HAS GUIDED ME BACK TO LIGHT.

IT HAS ENABLED ME TO HAVE A VOICE, AN OPINION AND MOREOVER, AN AWARENESS OF AN ABUSER'S MENTALITY WHICH HAS ARMED ME WITH THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE TO FACE MY ABUSER

THIS COURSE TAKES YOU IN LIKE A MEANINGFUL HUG, TO LET EVERYTHING GO IN THE WORLD AND OVERCOME IT.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME BECOME THE WOMAN AND MOTHER I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD BE AGAIN.

I REALLY LIKE THE COURSE. I AM MORE CONFIDENT IN MYSELF AND FEEL STRONGER THAN I WAS BEFORE. I FEEL LIKE A BETTER PERSON.

I LOVED EVERYTHING ABOUT THE COURSE. I FOUND IT LIBERATING.

THIS COURSE HAS CHANGED MY LIFE, MY OUTLOOK IN LIFE AND ALSO PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT I TRULY WANT AND NEED FOR MYSELF TO GROW AND RAISE MY DAUGHTER TO BECOME A POWERFUL WOMAN.

I HAVE EXPERIENCED DIFFERENT COURSES WHICH HAVE LEFT ME FEELING TRAUMATISED, STUCK AND UNSUPPORTED. HOWEVER, THIS ONE GIVES YOU THE TOOLS TO LOOK FORWARD AND NOT KEEP PICKING AT OLD WOUNDS WITHOUT INFORMATION OVERLOAD. IT ACKNOWLEDGES YOU AS A VALUED WOMAN IN SOCIETY. IT HAS CERTAINLY IMPROVED MY MENTAL HEALTH!

What did women dislike about the online course?

Traffic Lights exercise

Some women said they didn't like the traffic light exercise. Doing it online is less interactive and a significant number of the scenarios are about women who are still with an abusive partner. Given the safety needs for online delivery, participants need to no longer be with the abuser. To manage this, we plan to create new scenarios focussed on post-separation abuse and more general moving forward after leaving an abuser.

Lack of human contact

Some participants said that the lack of "human contact" on Zoom was difficult, but others said they really liked Zoom delivery as it allowed for a "wider reach."

I'VE FOUND IT REALLY TOUGH AND IT'S TAKEN SOME REFLECTION TO DEAL WITH THINGS ADDRESSED IN THE COURSE, WHICH IS WHERE FOR ME I FELT ZOOM DIDN'T WORK AS WELL. I FOUND SOME OF THE TOPICS RE-TRAUMATISING AND WAS PERHAPS MORE INTENSE WITHOUT THE FACE-TO-FACE PEER SUPPORT. HAVING SAID THIS, I WOULD ABSOLUTELY PREFER TO DO THIS ON ZOOM THAN NOT AT ALL AS IT ALSO HELPS TEACH RESILIENCE. THIS ALONE PROBABLY HELPED ME GET THROUGH THESE TOUGH TIMES.

THE JOURNEY IS HARD BUT SO WORTH IT. IT TOOK ME UNTIL SESSION 9 TO FEEL POSITIVE BUT I'M SO GLAD I CARRIED ON.

FINE AS IS. SHOULD REMAIN VIA ZOOM FOR A WIDER REACH.

TRYING TO FIT IT AROUND WORK MEANT I HAD TO DO A LATE-NIGHT COURSE AND I WAS TIRED.

Timing

As with the in-person pilot, some online participants felt they would have liked longer discussion time in some of the sessions. Some felt that online participation was the reason for needing for more time.

Nothing

On their evaluation forms most participants said there was nothing on the course that they would change or that they did not like.

Journal quality

Some women said that their journal had fallen apart by the end of the course. We have begun using a new book printing supplier to remedy this.

COVID-19

Some participants accepted online participation as a result of COVID-19 but said they would have preferred an in-person course. This leads to questions about whether there will continue to be significant take up of online courses if in-person delivery can resume.

Emotionally Difficult

As with the in-person course, some participants found the course emotionally difficult, however they generally said that this had not prevented them continuing on the course.

Technical issues

Some participants said they had wifi issues or other problems with using Zoom, but understood that these were generally part of online participation.

Managing commitments

As evening courses are available, women who work full-time can join. While this creates greater inclusivity, some participants mentioned that it was tiring working full-time and also participating in the course.

What next?

2021 Training

Our early 2021 training events are already fully booked, with further training events taking place throughout the year. We are currently announcing new training dates when previous dates are fully booked, but would like to secure funding that will enable us to have multiple training events available over the year.

Business development

We are keen to increase the reach of our work, build strong partnerships and have enough funding to be able to grow our work. We plan to begin developing a method for equipping train-the-trainers to be able to deliver the course training. To do this we need enough funding to pay a business development manager.

e-Learning platform

The course videos have proven to be hugely effective and we want to develop an e-Learning platform for two purposes:

- To provide accredited e-Learning courses about abuse, trauma and recovery for statutory and voluntary sector organisations.
- To enable those who will never need to train to run the Own My Life course to access the videos and show them to their clients or use them within training (e.g. counsellors, social workers, early help workers and male practitioners who would like access to the videos).

The e-Learning platform will be a subscription based service, with subscriptions used to fund the course training and delivery. We hope this will provide a sustainable model for funding the course and training in the long-term.

Reaching more women

The course is designed to work with women who have been subjected to abuse and can be delivered by domestic abuse and other organisations that work with women. We hope to continue training facilitators who work for organisations responding to domestic abuse issues, but would also like to find ways to train practitioners working with women in the following contexts:

- Women's prisons.
- Probation services.
- Women's centres.
- Children's centres.
- Mental health support services.

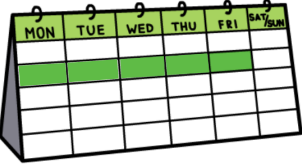




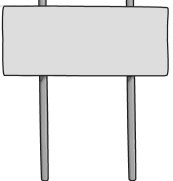

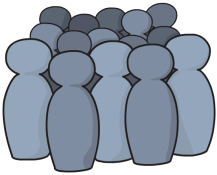
Material translation

Welsh Women's Aid have committed to funding the translation of the materials into Welsh, and we are working to make this happen. We would like to see the materials translated into other languages, and will be seeking support to enable this to happen.

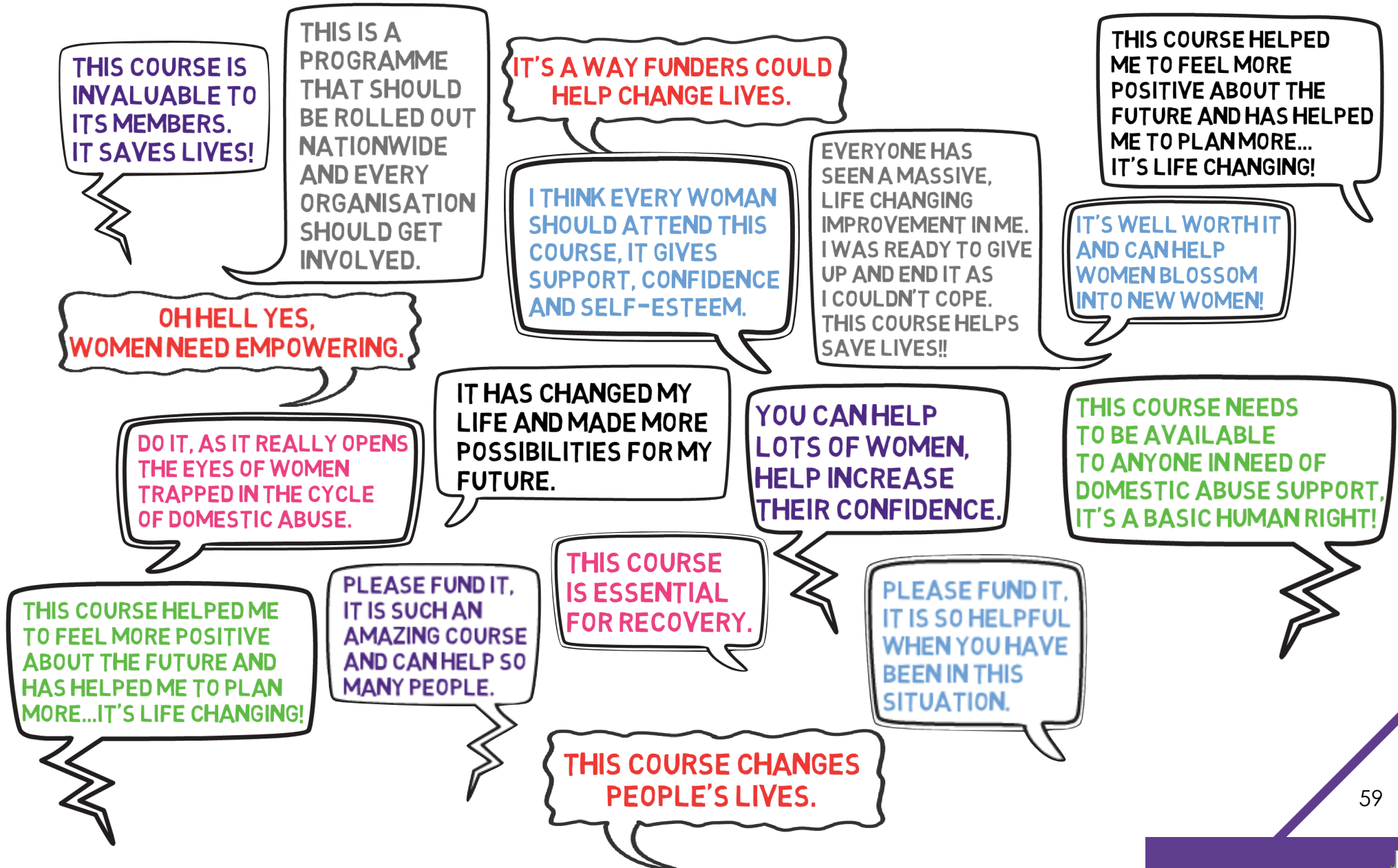


How can practitioners access Own My Life course training?

New online training dates are regularly announced on our website and via our mailing list: www.ownmylifecourse.org. We can also provide a group training event for larger organisations who would like to train at least 20 staff. For further information about the course or training, please email info@ownmylifecourse.org.

Course resources	Quantity	Training costs
 5 days online training	 1 per trainee	£449
 WoManual and e-Hub access	 1 per trainee	
 Other resources	 1 per organisation	£60
 Own My Story journal	 10 per course	£110

What do women want to say to those considering funding the course?



What could funding help us to do?

Training costs - £6770 per training

The training costs include:

- Trainer's time and expenses.
- Training resources.
- Refreshments.
- Administration.

While we currently charge local organisations for training, we would love to be able to subsidise the training to make it more affordable, especially for smaller organisations and specialist services (for instance those working with disabled women or black and minoritised women).

Training materials - £170 per organisation

In order to deliver the course each organisation needs:

- 10x Own My Story journals - £110
- 1x other resources - £60

Ongoing materials - £10 per participant

Each woman who participates in the Own My Life course needs an Own My Story journal which costs £10.

Running costs - £55,000 per year

As a small charity, with no central office, we have few overheads and our running costs are quite low. While we are applying for grants to fund specific projects, we do need to cover staffing costs, charity running costs, administration, along with website and tech support costs.

How can you help us to reach more women?

We are really excited about how the Own My Life course is changing women's lives. We need funding to get the course out to more women and you can help us do that! Here are some ways to help:

Donating online

We have a Paypal Giving Fund account. You can find us by [CLICKING HERE](#) or searching "The Women's Liberation Collective" on the Giving Fund website.



Buy a Sisterhoodie

The Sisterhoodie isn't just a jumper, all proceeds go to support our work and reminds the wearer of the powerful, yet invisible, bond between women. And they're only £35! You can buy one here: www.ownmylifecourse.org/sisterhoodie



Tell people about our work

Do you know individuals who sit on charitable trusts or people who might be interested in supporting our work? Take the time to call or email them about our work and let them know that they can support us. If you think they would like to be introduced to us, please email info@ownmylifecourse.org and we can arrange a time to connect further.

Regular giving

You can set up a standing order to give regularly to our work. [CLICK HERE](#) or visit www.ownmylifecourse.org/regular-giving for details of how to do this.

Support from charitable trusts

If you are involved with a charitable trust and think our work might be within the trust's remit, please email info@ownmylifecourse.org to let us know how we could apply to get funding.

Stay in touch

We have a mailing list that you can join to keep in touch with our work. You can sign up here: www.ownmylifecourse.org/signup.



CONTACT US

To request further information about the Own My Life course, please contact:

The Women's Liberation Collective



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ownmylifecourse.org