SURVIVORS EMPOWERING & EDUCATING DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES

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www.seeds-uk.org

SEEDS: Origins

- Started South Somerset 2002

- Issues identified by survivors in particular support for children and ‘moving on’

- Project completed 2004

- Ongoing demand for presentations and consultation led to SEEDS becoming permanently established 2005

SEEDS : Growth 2004- 20011

- Further studies Devon, Torbay, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole
- SEEDS groups established in Somerset, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and North Somerset
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- GOSW research Jan 2008 on work with survivors across South West Region

SEEDS Findings

- Moving on is a key issue
- Many women (59%) continue to be abused even after they leave the relationship
- Little proactive support for children (28% said they had been offered support/help with their children without asking for it)

SEEDS Findings

- Inconsistent delivery of mainstream services – significant variation between individuals even in the same team

- Not all about resources – major improvements if services could be :

  - sensitive & non judgemental
  - informed about services
  - understood nature of domestic abuse

SEEDS Findings

- Agencies have improved their services by listening to survivors and acting on what they hear
- Developing this dialogue takes time and money
- But services can be significantly improved without increased resources
- The process itself is empowering for survivors

How do SEEDS groups work?

- Independent facilitator
- Monthly meetings
- Clear communication links with local DA co-ordinator
- Survivors paid for attending plus expenses (travel & child care)
- Friendly venue –great refreshments
- Training for survivors

What do SEEDS groups do?

- Awareness raising /training front line professionals
- Consultation re service planning and delivery
- Researching / representing survivor views
- Give presentations
- Participants in DA Forum/Partnership meetings

What have SEEDS groups achieved?

- Changes in policies/approach
- Increased awareness and understanding amongst professionals

To hear a survivor and ask those questions that I have wanted to ask for many years, for example, why remain in a relationship?

- Empowered survivors

Being part of the SEEDS group has been empowering and I feel optimistic about the work we have done and feel reassured that it will be put to good use to provide better overall services for abused women and their children in this area. The importance of this work should not be underestimated.

What has been learnt along the way?

- Membership/Selection & 6 monthly sessions
- Training vital e.g boundaries/ presentations skills etc
- Attendance in pairs / debrief available
- New members pack and identified support
- Resources pack
- Regular review re involvement
- Communication/support between groups

Challenges?

- Length of time to build up confidence & skills
- Funding for co-ordinator, women & expense
- Lack of engagement from key partners (a few only interested in ticking boxes)
- Maintaining number of survivors/ ensuring healthy turnover