

Engaging in safeguarding training with lived experience of abuse

Our training is survivor-centred, prioritising the dignity, experiences, needs, and wishes of people with lived experience. If this is you, and you have any questions or concerns about the training, please contact our team training@thirtyoneeight.org.

Every individual is different, and you might already have helpful wellbeing strategies. Use what works for you and let us know how your trainers can support you during the session.

What to expect

Our training courses are based on the experiences of victim-survivors. They include scenarios, case studies, and quotes from them. Some of these may be read by your trainers, others appear as audio or video clips. Care has been taken to ensure these aren't graphic or gratuitous, but if you have concerns about how these might impact you, please explore the materials or contact our team ahead of your session.

Webcams

We encourage people to keep webcams on during training. However, if you need to turn your camera off to prioritise your wellbeing, feel free to do this. If you know in advance that you will need to have your camera off throughout in order to participate safely and comfortably, you could email training@thirtyoneeight.org so we can inform your trainers.

Trauma responses

When we are under threat, our bodies release hormones as part of a survival response. Sometimes, later situations trigger the same response in our bodies, even when the threat isn't present. Sometimes we are aware of when this is likely to happen for us, as something might have such strong associations with our experience that we know we might be affected. However, trauma responses aren't always predictable, and we can sometimes be taken by surprise. Coping with a trauma response is challenging.

You might experience physical indications – feeling hot, sweating, feeling your heart racing, for example. You might realise that you have 'zoned out' of what the trainer or others in the group are talking about and instead be reliving your own experience or feeling like your mind is 'paused'. You might experience an unexpected and overwhelming emotion, such as anger, fear or distress. These are just examples; we are all different and so are our responses. Look after your wellbeing as priority: feel free to turn your camera off, step away from your screen, get a drink or try some grounding techniques to help yourself regulate your symptoms.



Grounding techniques

Grounding techniques can help reduce the symptoms of a trauma response in the moment as they bring us back to the present where we are not under threat. They are simple but powerful tools as they can help us regain control over our body and mind. For example, tracing up and down your fingers- breathing in as you go up and out as you go down, or squeezing your hands shut and then releasing slowly several times. Here is a link to some other examples that you may find helpful: [Grounding Exercises](#).

Support

If you know your training is likely to be challenging for you because of your own experiences, you are welcome to have someone alongside you during the session for support. This could be through sharing a device with another member of your community who is doing the training as well. Alternatively, you could identify someone suitable who knows your situation and can act as a companion for the training and who is there expressly to support you. Companion places are free but uncertificated. You can email training@thirtyoneeight.org to book a companion place.

Following the course, your trainers will stay in the Zoom room for a few minutes at the end of each session for questions or comments. Our helpline is also available between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday for non-urgent calls if you would like to have a confidential conversation with a safeguarding expert. You can also reach them by email and get a response within 24 hours: helpline@thirtyoneeight.org. At the end of your session, you may find it helpful to reach out to someone in your own support network to talk through any feelings raised by the training.

Responses of others

One element of live training that we can't predict in advance is the responses of other delegates. Your trainers are there to maintain a safe environment for all and will challenge and guide any responses that are unhelpful. If you don't feel comfortable being part of unfacilitated discussions in breakout rooms, let your co-host know. If somebody's response is upsetting, privately message the co-host in the chat for support.

We hope that attending training will never leave anyone in crisis. However, if you ever find yourself in this position, anyone in the UK can call Samaritans for free on 116 123 [Contact Us](#) | [Samaritans](#).

