**AVA are recruiting Peer Researchers for a new project**

**Who are AVA?**

**AVA** (Against Violence & Abuse) is a feminist charity committed to creating a world without gender-based violence and abuse. Our mission is to work with survivors to end gender-based violence by championing evidence-based change. Our core [work](https://avaproject.org.uk/resources/) includes training, policy, research and consultancy.

**Role Title: Volunteer Peer Researcher**

**Main Functions**

* To conduct interviews with women who have faced forms of domestic and sexual violence and had children removed either temporarily or permanently. Domestic violence includes wider forms of violence against women including so-called honour based violence, forced marriage and FGM
* To contribute to the design of the research
* To help produce a guide for other women who have or are facing similar experiences
* To help review other materials produced as part of the project and offer an expert voice

**What is Peer Research?**

Peer research is conducted by people with lived experience of an issue that is being explored. Researchers receive training in research skills and work with professional researchers to use their experience to help shape the way research is carried out.

We are recruiting up to 15 women (aged 18 and above), to talk and listen to women about their experiences of domestic and sexual violence and the loss of having their child(ren) removed. The researchers will feed into a co-produced research report and develop a guide to support other women who have faced similar experiences. Researchers will also have an opportunity to review guidance and training created for professionals, ensuring that women’s voices are at the heart of recommendations for improving support for women affected by child removal.

**What is Staying Mum Project?** This new network of peer researchers is part of a UK-wide project that AVA are delivering called ‘Staying mum’. The Staying Mum project is focusing on women’s experiences of child removal, with the aim to improve professional’s understanding and responses to mothers facing domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of multiple disadvantage.

The peer research will be a fundamental part of the Staying Mum project. The invaluable evidence collected about women’s lived experiences of child removal will ensure that women’s voices are at the heart of the project and will ultimately improve professionals' responses.

**Is this project for me?**

You do not need to have done anything like this before. We are looking for women with experience who understand the lives and journeys of women they are researching and feel able to share their own stories. You will be given training and be supported to undertake the research – this is also about building your skills and confidence and we want to support you to do that.

**What are you looking for in peer researchers?**

We want to ensure that the voices of women who have faced the loss of having their child(ren) removed shapes the peer research. As such we are looking for women who:

* Have experience of domestic and/or sexual violence
* AND, have experienced the loss of their child(ren) being temporarily or permanently removed.
* We are also interested in recruiting women who have: experienced mental ill health, used substances in a way that has impacted on their well-being (substances may include alcohol, illegal drugs, prescribed and over-the counter medications), had contact with the criminal justice system; experienced homelessness; have been involved in sex work or sexual exploitation
* As part of the research women will be asked to share their own story with those they are interviewing as such, they need to be prepared to share their story with strangers - support will be put in place to do this safely.
* We would like women to share information about the impact of the project on their own well-being
* We ask that women are currently not an on-going situation of domestic or sexual violence.
* We are not a front-line service, as such we ask that women have a good level of support mechanisms in place and are not currently in a crisis situation
* We would like to ensure that the voices of BME, disabled and LGBTQI women are represented and would welcome applications from women from these groups.
* Participants will be asked to undertake a DBS check, AVA undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed and welcome applicants with a criminal record. The role of the DBS check is to ensure effective safeguarding.

If you feel like you have these experiences and would like to participate, then this project is for you!

**Qualities of a peer researcher**

The ideal peer researcher will:

* Be committed and reliable
* Be passionate about the project
* Be a good listener
* Treat others in a non-judgemental way
* Understand the importance of boundaries and be comfortable to ask for support
* Be keen to learn new skills
* Have discretion and ability to maintain confidentiality

**No previous research or work experience is necessary**

The ideal peer researcher will:

* Not currently be in a crisis situation
* Practice good time keeping
* Be able to work on their own initiative
* Be able to participate in a group
* A good level of conversational and written English is required

**What will I be doing?**

* You will receive training in research methods
* Help develop interview questions
* Interview women who have faced similar things to you
* Help to write a report about about women’s experiences
* Help inform a toolkit and elearning programme aimed at improving professional’s responses
* Help write a guide aimed at women who have faced similar experiences to you

We want to ensure that women’s voices are at the centre of helping to improve responses to women who have experienced the loss of child removal.

**What will I gain from the project?**

By participating in the project you will get a chance to:

* Create new understanding of women’s experiences of domestic and sexual violence and child removal and help shape a national response
* Gain key transferable skills that can be used as evidence for employers or access to further training including: verbal and written communication skills, analysis and investigation skills, evidence of self motivation and initiative, planning and organisational skills, evidence of drive, evidence of understanding systems and organisations, evidence of time management and evidence of flexibility
* Be involved in a high profile national project
* You will receive certificate indicating your achievement in the training and the research
* You will get a chance to shape the work of a national charity and help us develop our response to supporting women who have faced similar experiences to you.

**Time Commitment and expenses**

Volunteers will:

* Commit to attending up to 3 days of training in autumn of 2020 - this will be delivered in a series of online sessions.
* Attend, either in person or online depending on national advice around covid 19, up to 8 additional days over the course of the project.
* Arrange and conduct semi-structured interviews with at least two women in your local area
* Time commitment will be up to one day a month over the course of the project: 18 days over 18 months.
* We will pay travel and expenses to attend training including overnight stays
* We will cover the cost of travel to interviews and related costs, for example cost of phone calls.

This project has been funded with the support of The John Ellerman Foundation.

**How do I apply?**

If you are interested in becoming a Peer Researcher then please fill out the form on the next page. We want to recruit women with a wide range of experiences and as such it is fine to discuss the form with others and get help in filling it out.

We ask that you provide us with a reference. We would like this to be someone who knows you through their job for example a former employer or support worker. We ask that you choose someone that it is ok for us to contact before offering you a place.

Remember to complete:

* Why are you interested in the role
* What experience do you have that makes you suitable for the role
* The name of a person who can give you a reference
* Please also complete the equalities monitoring form

Please either email the form to Lucy Allwright at lucy.allwright@avaproject.org.uk Lucy will then give you a call to have a quick chat about the project. Unfortunately due to Covid we can not take post applications. However, we may be able to support you on the phone to complete the form if you are unable to email.

**The deadline for applications is Friday August 7th 2020**

**If you have any questions please feel free to email or call Lucy Allwright on** **lucy.allwright@avaproject.org.uk** **or 07908 995 337 - We are happy to call you back!**

**Please answer the following on no more than two sides – it is ok to hand write if you wish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Your Name:** |  |
| **Contact Number:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Email Address:** |  |
| **AVA have a range of training, events and opportunities. Please confirm if you would like your email address to be added to our newsletter**  | Delete as appropriate:YesNo  |
| **Contact details of Referee:****Name****Email address****How this person know you** |  |
| **Why are you are interested in the role?**  |
| **What experience do you have that makes you suitable for the role?** |

**Your wellbeing and mental health**

We want to ensure that the women we work with are in a safe place as such we believe it would not be suitable for women currently facing violence and abuse to take part in this project. Should your situation change we hope that you are able to access support.

We also understand that your mental health and wellbeing can change over time. We ask that you have strategies and support systems in place.

We ask that you complete a DBS check - we actively encourage women with criminal records to apply. AVA work with people who have faced violence and abuse and as such both paid staff and volunteers undertake a DBS check to ensure we can protect those we work with.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I confirm I am not currently experiencing abuse  |  |
| I have a plan in place for if I face abuse and know what services / supporters to contact |  |
| I confirm that I am able to access help or have strategies in place to support my own mental health  |  |
| I confirm I am happy to complete a DBS check  |  |

While AVA are specialists in domestic and sexual violence we are not a direct support service. We will support you in your training and development but are not able to provide direct support related to violence and abuse. We do have links to organisations that can offer support if you make disclosures to us that you need help.

If you are currently facing domestic abuse then you can contact the free 24 National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247, the helpline offers BT typetalk for callers with hearing difficulties and also offers access to interpreters.

If you would like support or information around sexual violence, including incidents that happened in the past, Rape Crisis have a national helpline It offers confidential emotional support, information and referral details. Open between 12:00-14:30 and 19:00-21:30 every day of the year. Number: 0808 802 9999

For a listening ear or just someone to talk to the Samaritans are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can call them on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

If you have faced the removal of a child(ren), below is a list of some organisations which may be able to provide legal / practical advice on your rights:

[Family Rights Group](https://www.frg.org.uk/) - <https://www.frg.org.uk/>

[Rights of Women](https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/) - <https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/>

[Child Law Advice](https://childlawadvice.org.uk/) - <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/>

[PAC-UK](https://www.pac-uk.org/) - <https://www.pac-uk.org/>

To access therapy, you can also speak to your GP to make a referral to local services.

**Equalities Monitoring Information**

AVA wishes to monitor the effectiveness of its Equal Opportunities Policy and ensure that no direct or indirect discrimination is taking place. In order to help us do this we would like you to complete this form. This form will be detached from your application form and will not be used to influence the selection process in any way.

Please choose one option from each of the sections listed below and then tick or place an X in the appropriate box. **If you prefer to leave any questions blank then please do so.**

**A. Age**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Under 16 |  |
| 16 - 24 |  |
| 25 - 34 |  |
| 35 - 44 |  |
| 45 - 54 |  |
| 55 - 64 |  |
| 65+ |  |

**B. Disability**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the terms given in the Equality Act 2010?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes |  |
| No |  |

**C. Gender identity**

Please describe your gender identity.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Male |  |
| Female |  |
| Non-binary |  |

**D. Sexual orientation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bisexual |  |
| Gay man |  |
| Gay woman  |  |
| Lesbian |  |
| Heterosexual |  |
| Other (please specify) |  |

**E. Ethnic group**

**Asian, Asian British, Asian English, Asian Scottish, or Asian Welsh**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bangladeshi |  |
| Indian |  |
| Pakistani |  |
| Any other Asian background (specify if you wish) |  |

**Black, Black British, Black English, Black Scottish, or Black Welsh**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| African |  |
| Caribbean  |  |
| Any other Black background (specify if you wish) |  |

**Chinese, Chinese British, Chinese English, Chinese Scottish, or Chinese Welsh, or other ethnic group**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chinese  |  |
| Any other ethnic background (specify if you wish) |  |

**Mixed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| White and Asian |  |
| White and Black African |  |
| White and Black Caribbean |  |
| White and Chinese |  |
| Any other Mixed background (specify if you wish) |  |

**White**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| British |  |
| English |  |
| Irish  |  |
| Scottish |  |
| Welsh |  |
| Any other White background (specify if you wish) |  |

**F. Religion or belief**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No religion |  |
| Baha’i |  |
| Buddhist |  |
| Christian |  |
| Hindu |  |
| Jain |  |
| Jewish |  |
| Muslim |  |
| Sikh |  |
| Any other religion or belief (specify if you wish) |  |

We understand that this form does not reflect you as a whole person and asks you to put yourself into categories. If there is anything else you would like us to know about you then please do write it below. Thank you for completing this!