

Welcome back

**SURVIVOR
RESILIENCE?**



Survivor Resilience?

Outline Of Session

- How society in general, and church in particular, **victimises the victims / survivors** of abuse
- Helpful model for **responding well**
- **Particular issues** for the Church
- **Plenary discussion**

But first, let's hear the voice of one famous, inspirational survivor...

Survivor Resilience?



MAYA ANGELOU

1928 – 2014

And Still I Rise

*'Out of the huts of history's shame, I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain, I rise'*

Survivor Resilience?

Victimising the victim
- negative stereotypes
of survivors



Victimising the Victim

Rolf Harris story

- ... the climate's great in Britain now for making lots of dough*
- ... slimy little woodworm, make him burn*
- ... get your 50 year old hooks into his dough*
- ... come and join the feeding frenzy girls*
- ... that old bandwagon you crawled out of (rotten to the core) conceals a host of foul accusers*
- ... perhaps you believe you're pretty still, some perfumed sultry wench*



Why does the Church do the same?

- Lazy thinking
- Defensiveness
- Most survivors don't fit our stereotypical image of 'victim'
- Ignorance (naïveté?) about how to 'respond well'
- Confused thinking about theology and forgiveness

UK Church of Latter Day Saints' story

Engaging with desperate people, e.g. someone making their disclosure, can be very difficult. People may:

- show **stronger emotion** than is socially the norm
- overlook **unwritten rules about 'give and take'** – desperation leads to more take than give
- forget **culturally adaptive learning** e.g. personal space, looking into /away from eye
- feel that what is offered can **never ever be enough**, so can appear begrudging of help offered in good faith.

Other ideas? Please discuss with neighbour and put thoughts down on post-it.

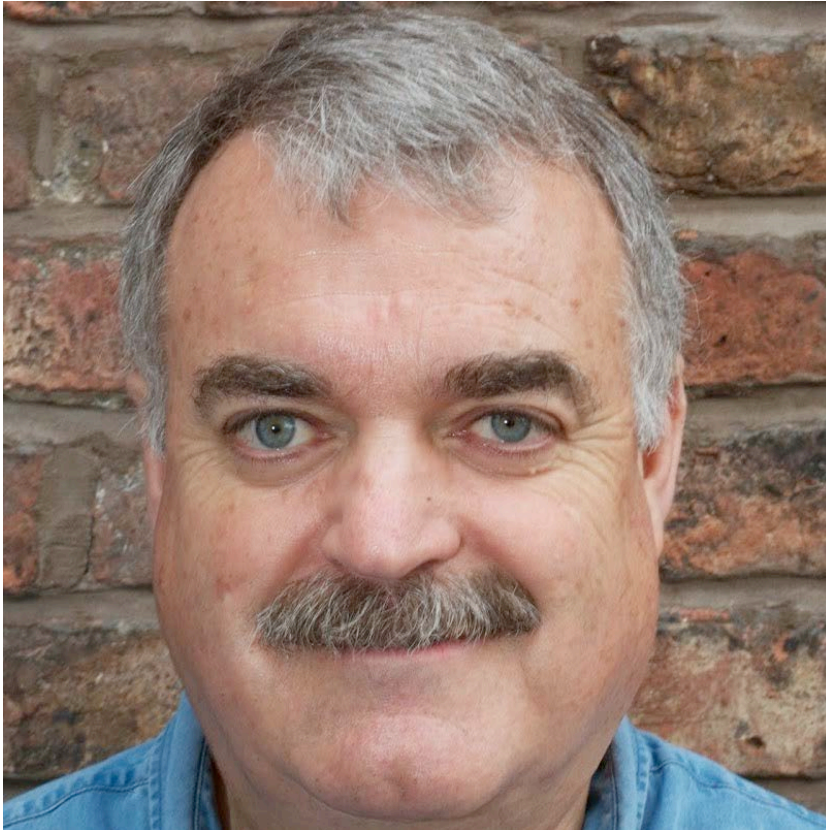
Survivor Resilience?

**Useful model for working
with survivors**



Model for working with survivors

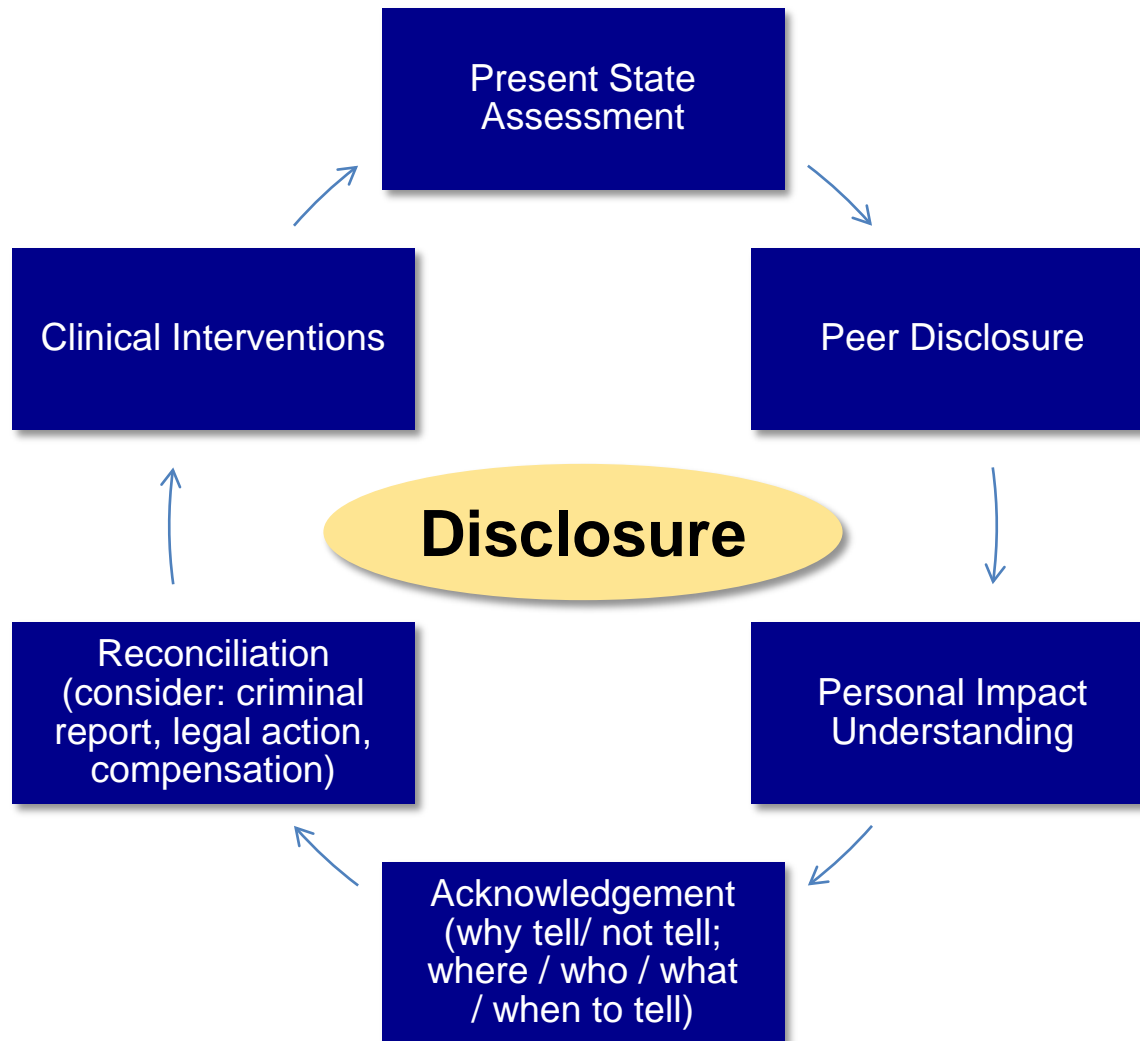
Graham Wilner MBE, Lantern Project



- Merseyside UK project, set up early 2000's
- Worked with over 2000 survivors
- Offers help to adults and children
- Local health services have contract for referrals (same model as with psychologists)
- Graham was on the initial reference group for the current UK Inquiry into Institutional Abuse
- Although a survivor of church abuse himself, Graham is keen for the church and its community presence to become part of the solution as well

Model for working with survivors

Lantern Project: Unstructured Therapeutic Disclosure



Model for working with survivors

Lantern Project: Unstructured Therapeutic Disclosure

- Engagement always starts with the Present State Assessment
- Other parts can overlap, change order, depending on other events and the survivor's choice
- Holistic : *'our approach is to view 'disclosure' as being a much wider event, encompassing not just the detail of the trauma itself but everything that has resulted from it, together with a comprehensive explanation of how the abuse will have impacted on the victim's development into adulthood and so on. **In our experience, the process should begin with helping the victims understand everything that has happened since the abuse and as a result of the abuse'.** * (my emphasis)*
- Pragmatic, crisis-orientated approach - 'The Bridge Test'. Links to our definition:

**Resilience is the capacity for survival
following soul-shattering trauma**

Survivor Resilience?

The Church and Survivors



The Church and Survivors

Key Questions

- What are the roles the Church can play in supporting survivors?
- How can the Church respect the choice of survivors to engage in church processes or not?
- How can the Church ensure as far as possible that proper disciplinary, criminal, safety and support procedures are followed whether or not the survivor chooses to engage?
- How does the Church engage in healing ways with survivors?

Key threads in any answer

- Respect the traumatic impact of coming forward to the church even if we respond well
- Identification of appropriate ways forward should rest as far as possible with the survivor
 - *Four women's story*
- Transparency about resource constraints
 - *Lesley's story*

The Church and Survivors

Further Questions:

- Role of counsellors or legal advisers with their own agenda vis-à-vis the Church
- Local versus more senior response – who decides?
 - *John's story*
- How should the Church acknowledge the reality of abuse in its worship and community life?
- Impact on survivors of the Church's work with offenders
 - *Stuart's story*
 - *Jenna's story*

Final question:

How do we, in our various roles, work **on behalf of** those survivors who are silent, and **in partnership with** those who are vocal?

– *Ken and James' story*

A final thought:

We will go wrong times without number, but when we get it right, we help the Church as a whole to move forward.

Plenary discussion

Survivor Resilience?



MAYA ANGELOU

1928 – 2014

‘Phenomenal Woman’

*‘Now you understand
just why my head’s not bowed
I don’t shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud’*