

Involving young people in research on abuse

These findings are based on a co-produced project between academic researchers and young people volunteers (the 'Changemakers'*) from SafeLives – a charity working to end domestic abuse in the UK. The findings reflect the views of young adults with experience of abuse in romantic relationships during their teenage years.

Participating in research has benefits for young people but they still appreciate remuneration

Taking part in research can be healing and empowering for young people. Being remunerated can break down financial barriers to participating and make them feel that their time and voices are valued.

"Giving someone a voucher or something, kind of paying them for their time ... you know... it's showing them that their voice is valued"



"...stereotypes of domestic abuse typically involve the idea of a man abusing a woman ... it would be really good to hear from those voices that don't fit that stereotype"



Researchers should reach out to a variety of young people

Broadening the voices we hear and value, including those often overlooked because they do not fit stereotypes of violence and abuse, and addressing evidence gaps, such as boys' and men's experiences, would lead to better research.

***Changemakers at Safelives** <https://safelives.org.uk/survivor-voices/ypav-and-changemakers/>

This infographic highlights key messages from the project "Too Soon Too Late: Understanding Teenage Relationship Abuse Through Listening to Young People's Voices". For more information, please scan the QR code.



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“...a good researcher would be able to repeat in confidence what a young person has just said, using the same language they said [...] it’s really important, especially for marginalised communities, and... when you’re building rapport, especially with new communities”



Language matters

Using young people's language, agreeing clear terms from the outset, and maintaining consistency throughout the research process would help build rapport, improve research quality, and ensure young people feel genuinely heard.

“sometimes, when you feel like you’re not adding to something by speaking... you don’t feel part of the group... you might feel a bit guilty and shameful on yourself. But, if you’re able to add in a different way, that suits you, that can be equally as powerful, and it’s just making sure that every participant feels heard, and feels the ability to take part”



Research process/researchers should provide choice, safety and clarity

Offering inclusive, flexible, and proactive ways to participate; safe and creative ways to share perspectives; valuing all contributions equally (regardless of how much each person contributes); and allowing space for ongoing reflection/input would help make research more accessible and engaging.

“‘Look, we might not be able to give you an update next week, but here’s an expectation of the timeline...’ that is really powerful, and really important.”



Being informed is important for young people

Keeping young people informed about research process and findings, allowing time for reflection and providing feedback, sharing future opportunities to contribute, and demonstrating the tangible outputs of their participation helps to ensure they feel valued, taken seriously, and connected to the impact of the research.