

Freedom Together

Together we can make a difference

ECCLESBOURNE FREEDOM PROGRAMME REPORT APRIL 2014



Funded by the London Borough of Croydon Local Authority-

Shirley Park Primary School Shirley:

Group Facilitator: Freedom Together- Lou Moultrie

Volunteer Shanel

Ecclesbourne Children Centre Freedom Programme Group

Start date: 24/4/14

End date: 17/7/14

19 Women registered

9 Women attended the group

39- (approx) Number of children within the families who registered

13- Number of children who were offered crèche places

55- Individual sessions completed

All women were asked to complete a registration form for the Centre. Mums registered to use the crèche are encouraged to visit children Centres before the group starts in order to settle in children and to allay any fears and anxieties. Some women already use the Central Collaboration Children Centres.

Ecclesbourne children's centre was the set venue for the Local Authority funded Freedom Programme. Posters were displayed in Children Centre's across the borough and collaboration Managers have debriefed FEP teams about the Programmes. All children centre staff were offered places on the free training held on 29th April to familiarise staff about the programme. There is a web site for the Freedom Programme where the facilitators' details are currently available. Information was also sent by email to local services and professionals working with vulnerable adults and children. This group had limited places due to room size, maximum capacity for 12 ladies. This group saw many drop outs however it enable last minute referrals to be taken.

Referrals have been received from a varied sources: FEP, Health Visitors, DV Helpline, CPN , Social Services, Refuge, Key workers, IDVA, Key workers and Solicitors. The process has become much more streamline and allowed women to be booked into groups with as little hanging around as possible. 'Freedom Together' was able to confirm places on the group mostly within 48 hours, each worker had been given information to discuss with their client. This was to enable women to feel more equipped emotionally to join the course. However some women complained of professionals failing to give them the venue and date details in time. All self referrals were contacted directly by the group facilitator.

It was extremely important that each session was made as welcoming, warm and unobtrusive. Ecclesbourne venue was used for the first time for the Freedom Programme. The venue was a great, the staff were all welcoming and friendly and crèche workers were exceptionally warm. Most women walked or drove to the venue, free parking was available on surrounding roads however sometimes roads had limited spaces.

Movement: This group had lots of movement from the women and two breaks during the programme due to inset days and strike action which I feel may have also had an impact on attendance. Three women were re-housed out of borough. One left her perpetrator and fled to another borough another lady had serious mental health problems and was unable to return to the group. One lady left the country returning to her home land to get support from her family and away from her ex-partner, another lady was imprisoned. Her crime was related to the abuse she had

suffered, the perpetrator is now stalking family members who are caring for their children! As predicted some women – 9 did not make it to the group at all. We also lost ladies after a film on Domestic Abuse was ‘Murdered by my boyfriend’ was on television. This film had a huge impact on the group and took some time to ground the ladies who had attended the group that week. Women spoke of watching the film and recognising their perpetrator and themselves. There was a core of 5-6 women who attended regularly, none completed the whole programme.

Collaboration Works: Freedom Together have now established strong links with local services collaborating with SV and DV services in Croydon. The Sanctuary Project/ CASA –Refuge/ RASASC/ NHS-Parenting/ Croydon Homestart/ NSPCC / Off the Record/ Family Lives and Encounter Freedom. All are involved with the continued support and education for Freedom Together client group.

Local Services: From the very onset of the course all women were given information and support regarding safety and the potential danger for anyone in abusive relationship. A list of local and national support agency and emergency numbers were provided for every woman throughout the 12 week programme. Freedom Together invited local services into some of the sessions with the sole purpose of giving the women vital information for support or how to go onto volunteer and train in the community. Services were invaluable as it encouraged women and families to use the support to recover and enable them look at their future aspirations. They received information on training, volunteering and education. Three women went on to use counselling services. Four women also went on to continue their growth with other services.

Half way into the course the women were given the opportunity to leave some feedback of what they felt so far this what they wrote:

- ✓ I find this programme very soothing for my soul, course has put in words feelings that I have had. I admire the job of putting all this information together. It’s been helpful I’ve found myself more stronger and looking at my feelings accompanied by helpful tutor and people that has been in some situations made me realise about my actual strength at going through hard times and being able to go out.
- ✓ It feels relief and refreshing and empowering after each session.
- ✓ It’s lovely seeing women become more powerful for themselves looking more beautiful and alive after 5 sessions. I find that miraculous-and lovely cookies and teas...thank you all
- ✓ Best programme ever, I’ve learnt so much about myself and others, I’m so grateful to have been a part of this group. Our teacher is such a kind lovely caring lady and she has helped us all. I now have a future that’s positive and strong. I’m so grateful thank you is not a good enough word, but thank you so much. I’m free to live my life and be happy.
- ✓ Feeling very positive after each session love this course such a great eye opener.
- ✓ This programme is amazing. I feel my eyes have been opened and feel that I am gaining the life skills needed to aid my journey.
- ✓ Lou is a fantastic facilitator and I hope once I’m in the right point that I can support and share the knowledge she has to empower others.
- ✓ The course has really helped me recognise DV Lu who runs the sessions is very thorough and covers everything that involves DV. I would definitely recommend the course and do the course again.
- ✓ I am enjoying the course really enlightening me of something’s I have never thought of.
- ✓ The course is helpful, I am gaining a lot from the fantastic topic we have done.

Evaluation forms

Only 2 women attended the last session:

None of the women on this group completed all of the sessions.

Compared to before attending Freedom, how do you think the course affected your?

Results from end session	Much Worse	Worse	The Same	Better	Much Better
Personal safety?	0	0	0	1	1
Knowledge of domestic abuse?	0	0	0	1	1
Knowledge of local services?	0	0	0	1	1
Self-esteem & confidence?	0	0	0	1	1
Understanding of the effects on children?	0	0	0	1	1
Ability to 'spot' potentially abusive behaviour in you?	0	0	0	1	1
Ability to 'spot' potentially abusive behaviour in others?	0	0	0	0	2
Ability to deal with potentially abusive behaviour?	0	0	0	0	2

Emerging themes: We had lots of disclosures from survivors regarding professionals not listening, minimising the violence and judging them. In particular one housing officer's name came up several times from unlinked sources. The women were able to voice their concerns and a professional was able to offer an exploration into the matter. Some women spoke of feeling they had to prove they were responsible and good mothers and felt the system was letting them down by not putting more emphasis on the perpetrators behaviour rather than their inability to control or avoid the perpetrators abuse. Over half the women were happy with Refuge workers and felt Croydon CASA staff had helped and supported them far better than Refuge in other boroughs-(unknown boroughs). Two women spoke of having criminal records linked to the abuse and being unable to get work or jobs, feeling they now look like the perpetrators. Other women agreed this was a concern that their own perpetrators could manipulate a reaction or a situation and as a result the women end up in trouble.

Availability of course – 100% of the ladies want to see this available throughout the borough to professionals and in schools. Yet again women felt Social workers should attend training such as the Freedom Programme to help them understand the pressures women are under when in an abusive relationship.

Blame – 100% of women said they felt they were to blame for their situation before attending the group. After the course 100% of the women now felt it was not their behaviour that was to blame for the abuse it was the perpetrators.

Children –47% of women registered on the group had children on Child Protection plans. 100% of the mothers who attended the group felt the course had made them better parents and had positive impacts on their children's lives.

Emotional aspects – 100% of women said they were positively affected by attending the course. Half feeling really positive about their future and their choices.

Facilitators – Excellent and absolutely amazing was the feedback.

Group Aspects – The importance of hearing other women talk about similar situations was highlighted; they recognised each other's struggles and the women felt less judged. Many of the women exchanged numbers and were arranging to meet on a regular basis.

Learning – 100% of ladies felt it has been a beneficial learning about abusive behaviour. Some clearly struggled when learning about the tactics used to control the women. 100% of the women would like to see this available in secondary schools. One woman said she wanted her daughter to do this course and all said they would use what they had learnt to educate their sons and daughters about respectful healthy relationships.

Self Awareness – Most women said they felt more confident to use outside agencies for support and would no longer see it as a weakness to ask for help or support. 50% of the women recognised abusive behaviour in themselves, 100% of those said they have been able to take positive steps towards changing.

Practical aspects – There were suggestions for films on abuse and videos of the tactics. There was no projector at this venue.

Results – Over the duration of the course some women were waiting to be moved- four were moved during the course. One ladies child was taken off of child protection and she was able to return to her country of origin. One lady acknowledged she had suffered sexual abuse and was considering seeking counselling. One lady recognised that not only was her ex-partner an abuser but also her children's father, whom was currently making demands on her is also an abuser. She felt able to recognise the effects on her children and herself and finally put a name to the abuse. All women said they had gained confidence and felt more positive. 95% of women spoke of positive changes to their future life plans and many spoke of volunteering to train and gain a career.

Recommendation – 100% of women said they would recommend the Freedom Programme to a friend. 100% of women want to see the Freedom programme available to their children

Suggestions :

- Projector for films and videos

Changes for future groups:

- I have found we are losing valuable feedback from the women who sporadically attend the groups and women who attend less than 3 sessions. Their feedback is necessary to look at areas in which we may be able to improve as we have no record of why these women are unable to attend or do not want to attend. Something to be given some consideration as it is also important not to be intrusive to these ladies if they have chosen to leave and also consider their safety. This may not be possible!

Women's Feedback

What tools or skills will you take from this programme?

- ✓ Relief
- ✓ Knowledge

What would you like to dump in a bin since attending this course?

- Being made to feel worthless

- I want rid of my fears
- My fucking perpetrator
- Pain

What have you kept in your heart from this course?

- ✓ Happiness
- ✓ Laughter
- ✓ Future
- ✓ Love my daughter the way she needs to be loved
- ✓ Happiness
- ✓ Peace

Your personal comments about the programme please be honest about what you have gained or felt about the course:

- Lou you are amazing at what you do, the programme has exceeded my expectations. I wish this course was accessible to more women and men.
- I thank you for sharing your knowledge and opening my eyes and giving me something to look forward to each week. I prey that your able to keep sharing the freedom Programme with the community and keep expanding to clamp down on DV
- This has been so hard at times as I'm still facing some issues.
- Since attending the Freedom Programme and listening to what others have been through I feel I am not alone in this journey. The Freedom Programme has touched all aspects and elements of my own experiences and covered basics that I never would have pin pointed myself. I have become more aware of what abuse is and the different elements. The facilitator Lu has been absolutely amazing (understanding, sympathetic and apathetic and very thorough in teaching methods).
- The programme has really changed me as an individual and a parent (I don't feel scared anymore).
- I can move on with my life and start again. I do wish the programme was available to me when I met my perpetrator!
- I would also like to say the crèche workers have been amazing and my child has been happy and safe.

Comments about other services

- **Police** brought my perpetrator into my house when I had asked them not to. The officer were inconsiderate towards the situation and have judged me because I had him-my ex-partner back before.
- The **police**, especially DC Eve of Plumstead police station was really helpful and very supportive, I'm so happy
- I was supported by a Greenwich **Police** Officer by giving me encouragement, boldness and supportive for domestic violence caused by my husband and have moved down to Croydon, which

I am so pleased by the advice, training and counselling giving me by my key worker and police around the Croydon area.

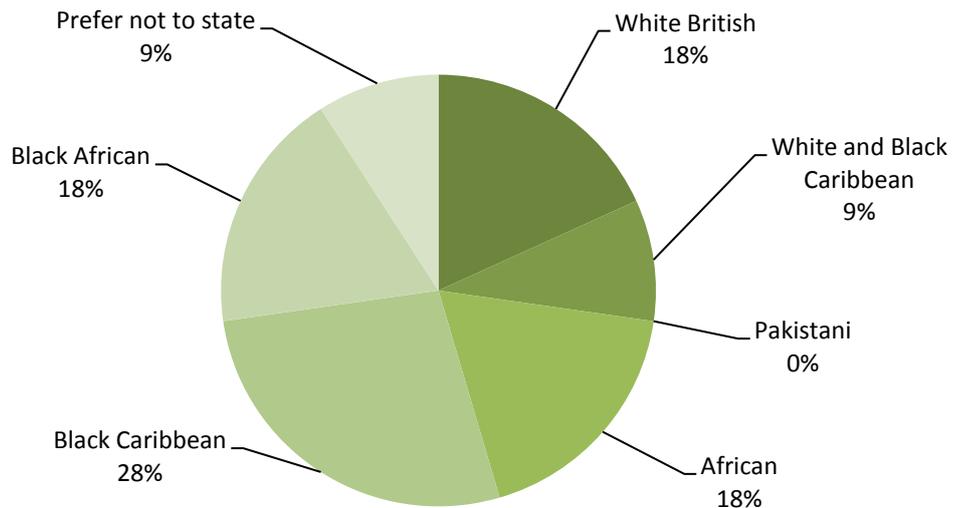
- I was limited to services to support me because I responded to the perpetrator and obtained a criminal charge. (CJS)
- **Social Services** have given my perpetrator ammunition to abuse me
- I was arrested due to defending myself. Whilst I was in my interview the **Police** had a call to say that my phone was in my interview. I then came out of my interview they strip searched me and said if I didn't they would force me to. It was my ex-partner that had complete control. I was supposed to be in a safe place!!
- I came from Bromley Borough which had where I had interactions with the **Police** on three occasions due to the Domestic situation. This situation had been going on for over a year and a half and I found them very unsupportive and uninformative to services and possible solutions.
- Since being in **Women's Refuge-CASA** in the borough of Croydon I have found there has been more information about services around to support people in domestic situations.
- I have had a great experience at the **Justice Centre** with Cathy, even though nothing has been solved she has been the first person that has not made me feel like I am going MAD and I believe she will support me into sorting this out
- I have had to use **Croydon Council housing department** for being homeless and the lady I saw should by no means be dealing with sensitive cases and women suffering with DV. She had no compassion and understanding which I find appalling from a woman. She made remarks and seemed unhappy to be seeing me, she was huffing and puffing!!.

Continued: Client information gathered from completed diversity forms

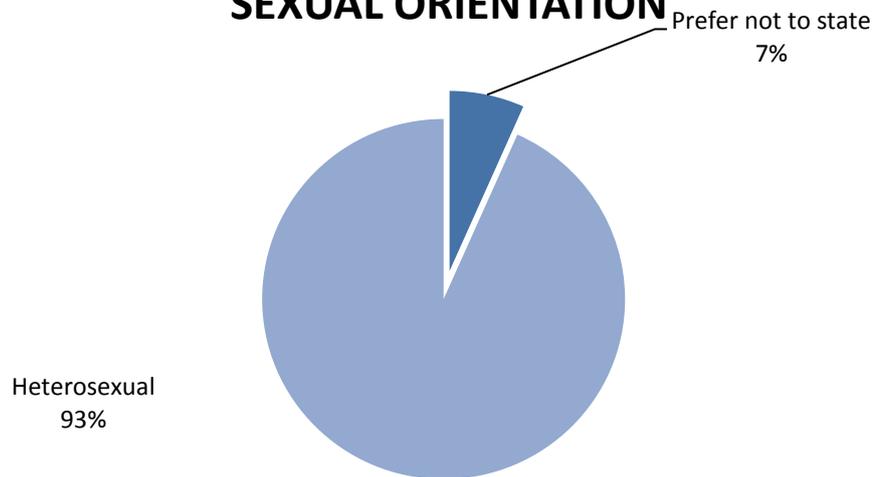
All clients completed a diversity form on the first session they attend however the information may not always be accurate. Women disclosed throughout the programme significant harm and affects that are not supported in their completed forms. This is the nature of Domestic Abuse – **Hidden! We only know what people feel safe enough to tell us!**

ECCLESBORNE Freedom Together Diversity Monitoring Information

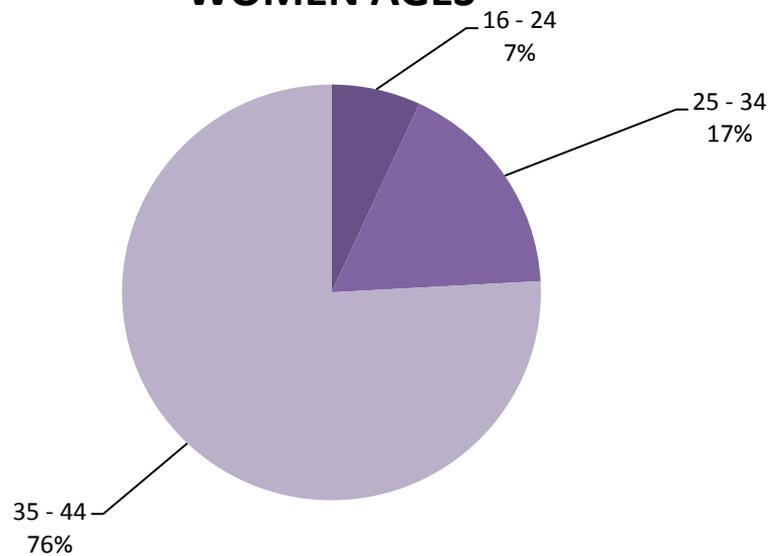
ETHNIC ORIGIN



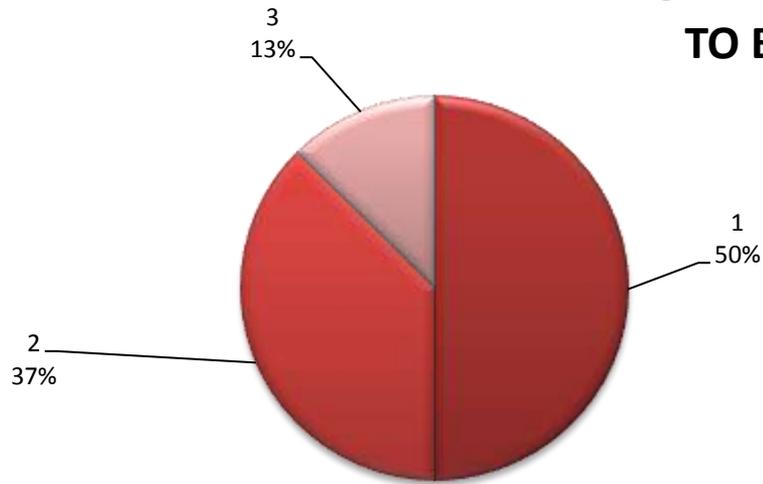
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



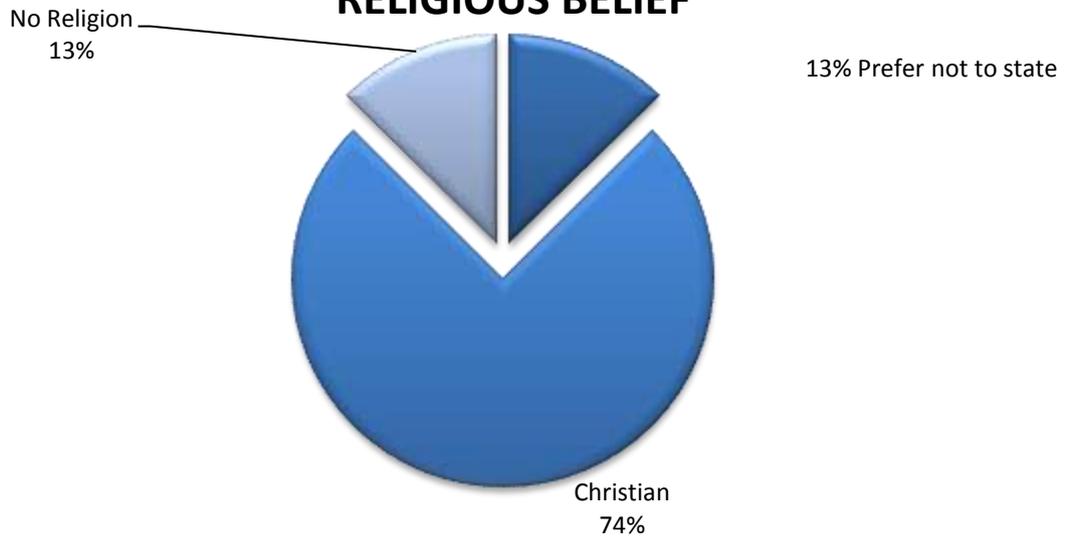
WOMEN AGES



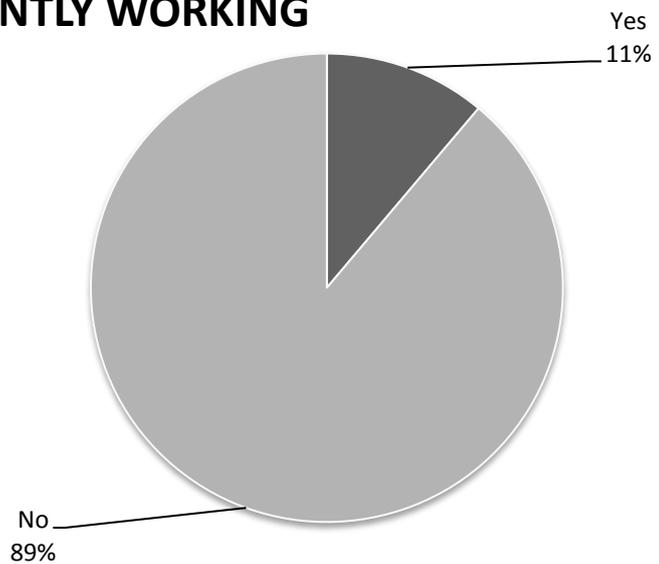
NUMBER OF CHILDREN TO EACH FAMILY



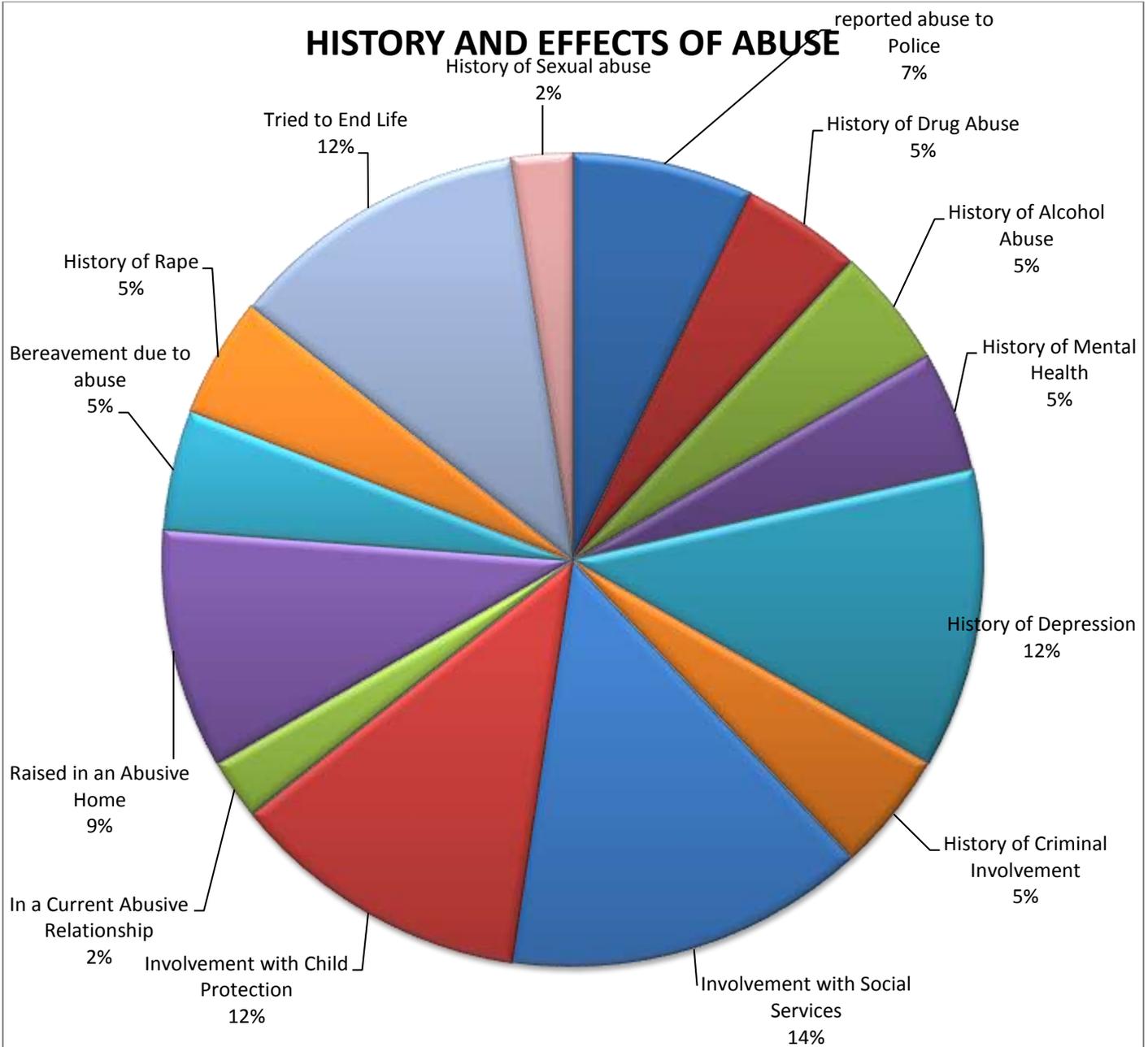
RELIGIOUS BELIEF



CURRENTLY WORKING



HISTORY AND EFFECTS OF ABUSE



HISTORIES OF WOMEN AND EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE- SEXUAL ABUSE AND RAPE WERE DISCLOSED THROUGHOUT THE 12 WEEK PROGRAMME. THIS INFORMATION IS TOO SENSITIVE TO DISCLOSE ON A FORM ON SESSION 1.

- 7% Reported to the Police
- 2% Criminal record
- 5% Criminal Involvement
- 4% In current abusive relationship
- 5% History of drug abuse
- 5% History of alcohol abuse
- 5% History of mental health
- 9% Raised in an abusive home
- 14% Involvement with Social Services
- 12% Involvement with Child Protection
- 5% Suffered a bereavement due to abuse
- 12% History of depression
- 2% History of sexual abuse
- 5% History of rape

END OF REPORT

'Freedom Together' would like to say a special THANK YOU to the London Borough of Croydon Local Authority for the funding 'Freedom Together' and to Croydon Children Centres for the safe venues and excellent crèche facilities provided to all the families attending the programme, and lastly to all the local agencies for your endless belief, time and support towards helping END VIOLENCE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Freedom Together

Together we can make a difference!

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