

# Our values: what we meet people with...



Belief in the power of uniting in lived experience to ensure your needs, wants & views remain at the centre of GINA & all we do. GINA belongs to you.



Recognition that sexual harassment, sexual violence & abuse exists on a spectrum; with society's acceptance of harassment facilitating acceptance of sexual violence & abuse.



Acknowledge that no two narratives will ever be identical; we believe you don't owe anyone a perfect narrative.



The belief that the Criminal Justice System is failing individuals; we believe justice could look different, feel different & take different forms for you.



The rejection & challenging of all forms of victim-blaming & rape myths.



Recognition that education is important in addressing sexual harassment, violence & abuse; while recognising that simultaneously addressing misogyny & systemic change is needed too.



Belief in a world revolving with hope & compassion to hold you in your truth & embrace you in living into your power. we invite you to step into shared power with us, in celebration of individuality, rebellion & connection.



An approach that acknowledges trauma can be carried within ourselves; this approach rejects labels & recognises trauma responses as normal reactions to abnormal situation.



The belief that your trauma does not define you.



A desire to hold you in your truth & embrace you in living into your power.



# Our Stance

## supporting women & girls

becoming trauma informed, responsive & insightful  
challenging diagnosis & the medical model

being believed | promoting education  
challenging the criminal justice system

acknowledging sexual harassment, violence & abuse  
opposing safety advice enhancing inclusivity exploring language

## working within a feminist framework

opposing the porn industry | advocating for pro-choice

## leading by lived experience

challenging the objectification & sexualisation of women & girls  
acknowledging the impact of the patriarchy on males

## challenging victim-blaming

providing a tailored, holistic, strengths-based approach

challenging the need to report | challenging professionals on a pedestal

increasing access to support & reducing barriers





# Our Stance



becoming

## trauma informed, responsive & insightful

We acknowledge that 'trauma informed' has become somewhat of a 'buzzword' & coined by many organisations without living into the values of the approach. We do not subscribe to the idea of this being a checklist or final destination, but rather a continuous process of learning, exploration & curiosity. We act on our knowledge about trauma & actively respond to the needs of the individuals we support - our approach moves beyond trauma informed, to continuously become trauma infused, responsive & insightful. GINA continues to live into this approach in ensuring that all communications, actions & processes are trauma-reducing, as opposed to trauma-inducing. We believe trauma is not a label & it does not define an individual. A trauma informed, responsive & insightful approach recognises the impacts of sexual trauma as natural & a normal response to extreme circumstances. Instead of viewing trauma responses as abnormal, disproportionate, unjustified & irrational, we support individuals with the belief that their trauma responses are normal, justified, proportionate & rational responses to acts of violence & abuse.

We believe in a relational approach where trust, collaboration & connection remain central. We also believe in partnerships, communication, reflection, collaboration & openness with other organisations to work collectively in a trauma-reducing manner to meet the needs of individuals.

challenging

## diagnosis & the medical model

Currently, the mental health system conceptualises distress & extreme behaviours as symptoms of mental illnesses, with the medical model pathologising women's responses to sexual violence & abuse by labelling normal human responses to trauma as abnormal 'disorders.' It ignores the perpetrators' responsibility by holding the individual accountable for their recovery, with individuals often being diagnosed with PTSD, BPD, depression and anxiety.

We challenge the medical model of distress & diagnosis of individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse with psychiatric 'disorders.' We also challenge the idea of medication being the only response to this – while medication can help (especially in the short-term), a tailored, holistic approach to support is needed to explore & address the impacts of sexual trauma. However, we also acknowledge that a mental health diagnosis can support individuals in accessing support; for different individuals, a diagnosis can be both empowering & disempowering, validating & invalidating, helpful & harmful (Bailey & Taylor, 2022).

Normal human responses to trauma should not be pathologised & labelled as 'disordered'. This has led to an urgent call for a structural and societal shift toward effectively recognising & appropriately responding to individuals who have been subjected to sexual violence & abuse.

increasing

## access to support & reducing barriers

All individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse deserve support to meet their needs compassionately, humanely & empathically. It is vital that individuals can access immediate, specialist support to minimise the impacts of sexual trauma on long-term wellbeing. Individuals are often subjected to trauma-inducing processes when accessing support. Individuals often have to navigate a complex & disjointed system to access the support they need, which results in them often approaching medical or general support services, which fails to address the origin of the impacts (sexual trauma). We seek to reduce barriers to accessing support including awareness about sexual violence & abuse, fear & consequences of disclosure, false beliefs/rape myths & stereotypes. We also believe that continually re-telling your story when accessing support services can be traumatic, triggering & trauma inducing, rather than trauma reducing.

supporting

## women & girls

We support & acknowledge the evidence which demonstrates that women & girls are disproportionately subjected to sexual violence & abuse, which is influenced by the oppression, sexism & misogyny present in our society. Systemic change is needed to address deep-rooted misogyny that facilitates sexual violence & abuse disproportionately affecting women. However, we also acknowledge that men & boys are also subjected to sexual harassment, violence & abuse.

working within

## a feminist framework

We are led by feminist values & work within a feminist framework which recognises that women & girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual harassment, violence & abuse due to the oppression, sexism, misogyny that is at play within our patriarchal society.

challenging

## the objectification & sexualisation of women & girls

The objectification & sexualisation of women & girls is widespread & perpetuated by the media. We challenge the objectification & sexualisation of women & girls as this trivialises sexual harassment, violence & abuse. Research has demonstrated a link between objectification & sexualisation in the media & sexual relationships, whereby exposure to frequent objectification & sexualisation of women & girls can subsequently lead to attitudes & behaviours that perpetuate sexual harassment, violence & abuse (Moraes, Magrizos & Hebberts, 2019).

## acknowledging the impact of the patriarchy on males

We believe that the patriarchy & misogyny also harms males; it perpetuates myths such as males 'needing to be strong', 'men can't be abused' & 'boys don't cry.' It also makes it very difficult for males to disclose & seek support if they are subjected to sexual violence & abuse.

## acknowledging sexual harassment, violence & abuse

We believe individuals should have access to support for all forms of sexual harassment, violence, abuse, exploitation & trauma – we believe all forms can be devastating & have complex, long-term impacts. The scale of the problem is expansive & all trauma deserves to be heard, understood, believed & validated. We believe that sexual harassment, violence & abuse if not a spectrum, it's a line that shouldn't be crossed. Ever. In any way. It's all violence & it's all traumatic. You can't quantify trauma. We believe it is a privilege to be able to debate sexual harassment, violence & abuse from a place of emotional detachment.

## providing a tailored, holistic, strengths-based approach

We believe in a strengths-based approach that empowers individuals, recognises lived experience, celebrates unity & connection, builds upon the foundations of trust & connection, seeks to redress power imbalance & focuses/builds on the strengths that helped an individual survive the trauma they have been subjected to. We believe holistic support is needed to meet the physical, emotional, social & embodied needs of individuals. For instance, there can be a range of ways to release the impacts of sexual trauma (movement, music, breathing, art, exercise).

## leading by lived experience

We believe in lived experiencing being embedded at the centre of support provision. The infusion of lived experience enables a deeper understanding & knowledgeable, empathic response to individual needs without presumption or misunderstanding. We strongly believe in the power of co-production with individuals who possess lived experience, both inside & outside of organisations. The voices & lived experience of individuals subjected to sexual trauma are often not heard, reflected or infused in organisations, leading to services which do not accurately respond to & meet their needs.

## challenging victim-blaming

We challenge all forms of victim-blaming.

being

believed

Believing individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse should be intrinsic & universal. We believe that any shame, blame & stigma surrounding disclosures should be removed & a disclosure should be met with compassion. We will always believe individuals – we do not believe that individuals lie about sexual violence & abuse any more than any other type of crime.

exploring

language

We recognise that the commodification of language can result in misinterpretation &/or active harm. We endeavour to avoid the use of labels for purposes of definition that limits self-agency & identity. Language can hold power & can often be very personal; therefore, we endeavour to, where possible, offer you the opportunity to tailor how we use language.

enhancing

inclusivity

We believe some individuals face particular barriers/obstacles to disclosing, to receiving appropriate support & to seeking justice if they identify as belonging to marginalised & disadvantaged communities. This often results in inequalities, difficulties in accessing support & a lack of specialist services to sensitively & culturally appropriately meet individual's needs. We need to do all we can to address & remove these barriers.

promoting

education

We believe education is important in tackling sexual harassment, violence & abuse. However this education needs to focus on addressing the behaviour of men & boys while empowering women & girls to recognise sexual harassment, violence & abuse. Education should not surround teaching women & girls to modify their behaviours to 'keep themselves safe.' (This is written within the framework of acknowledging how women & girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual harassment, violence & abuse). We believe education at an early stage about consent, sex education & the treatment of women (in a socially & culturally, age appropriate way) has a place. Despite education being important, systemic change is needed to tackle the full scale of sexual harassment, violence & abuse.

opposing

the porn industry

We believe that porn can perpetuate, condone & profits from violence against women & girls. Upon viewing, porn can influence attitudes towards & distort views surrounding bodies, relationships, consent women & sex.

advocating

## for pro-choice

We believe that bodily autonomy is a fundamental human right & that this includes full and free access to all forms of reproductive healthcare. We support all efforts to ensuring that reproductive healthcare is safe, accessible, affirming & based on principles of bodily autonomy & consent. We believe that abortions are healthcare & should be free, safe, decriminalised & easily accessible to everyone who requires one. We believe that there should be no stigma surrounding abortion.

We believe that reproductive rights also include the right to conceive & to complete a pregnancy, safely & with full social support. We are aware that many marginalised groups have been denied access to this kind of healthcare (for example, LGBT+ couples who wish to access IVF, disabled people being stigmatised for wishing to become parents, & trans men & non-binary people who risk misgendering during antenatal care). We support all actions that address these inequalities in reproductive healthcare.

opposing

## safety advice

We oppose safety advice that is targeted towards women & girls in an attempt to modify their behaviours. This is a form of victim-blaming that shifts responsibility away from the perpetrator (where it belongs) & onto individuals to 'keep themselves safe.' These safety measures have not proved to reduce violence against women & girls. However, we do acknowledge that advice on helping individuals feel safer can support individuals who may feel triggered or unsafe in certain environments/circumstances due to being subjected to past trauma.

challenging

## professionals on a pedestal

We believe the impacts of sexual violence & abuse are too often, minimised, trivialised or ignored by some educational & medical professionals, with a lack of empathetic understanding or insight. Sometimes, professionals can perpetuate the dynamics of power & abuse. There can be a barrier originating from a place of professionalism where a professional is perceived as being above the individual accessing support, which can cause a power imbalance, hinder a connection/relationship & actually disempower individuals accessing support. We believe in balancing these power dynamics to reach equality so individuals can be supported in a safe, empathic, supportive therapeutic relationship.

challenging

## the criminal justice system

We believe the Criminal Justice System is failing individuals - it victim-blames, favours perpetrators & involves trauma-inducing (not trauma-reducing) processes for individuals. Often, individuals are not able to access justice via the Criminal Justice System. Therefore, we believe that justice & healing can be found in different ways, outside of the criminal justice system & can look/feel different for everyone.

challenging

## the need to report

No individual is ever under any obligation to report to the police or authorities about what they have been subjected to. No individual 'owes' it to other individuals to report – this belief shifts the responsibility away from the perpetrator (where it belongs) & onto the individual. Reporting the police can be a trauma-inducing process & often does not result in justice (with low conviction rates). The decision about whether to report should always remain with the individual.

