



our use of language



**words only have the power that we, as individuals, choose to give them.
how we choose the language we use at GINA.**

individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse

terms such as *victim* & *survivor* are often used to identify individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse. some people identify as a *victim*, while others prefer the term *survivor*.

at GINA, we endeavour to limit the use of these terms as they can often label an individual & there is an association with the individual being defined by what an abuser/perpetrator subjected them to.

therefore, where possible & where necessary, we will use the term *individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse* in reference to the people we support.

we believe 'experienced' does not adequately describe the action of the perpetrator who chose to subject an individual to harm. therefore, we use the term 'subjected to' wherever possible as this keeps the action & responsibility where it should be...with the perpetrator.

as a reflective, responsive & evolving organisation, we have made this decision in 2022 following a desire to ensure we do not use a label for purposes of definition that limits self-agency & identity. we use this term in recognition that you have been subjected to sexual violence & abuse, but the magic that makes you you, is your power; a power which will always remain with you (regardless of trauma), a power that is yours alone, to redefine time & time again, & to channel into your healing at whatever time & in whichever way feels right for you. we use this term in the interests of reducing labels.

we are continuously learning, which means that any resources & communications created prior to March 2022 will use the term *survivor*. we previously reclaimed the term *survivor* & repurposed it's meaning to simultaneously acknowledge the sexual violence & abuse you have been subjected to, while denoting a sense of empowerment, strength & freedom in healing (whilst recognising that there are times when healing is messy, there is no set definition/expectation of 'healed' & healing looks/feels different for everyone).

sexual violence & abuse

we know that everyone will identify with a different term to define what they were subjected to. we use the term *sexual violence & abuse* in an attempt to capture all forms of sexual trauma & sexual violations that individuals have been subjected to. this includes any form of sexual violence, abuse, assault, harassment, harm, exploitation, trauma, violation (including any form of sexual trauma that individuals have been subjected to during childhood).

trauma informed, infused, responsive & insightful

we take an approach which acknowledges trauma can be carried within ourselves. this approach recognises experience, understands responses to experiences that are overwhelming as normal, rational and often really sensible, explores stories, rejects labels, seeks to redress power imbalance & builds upon foundations of empowerment and connection. instead of labelling you or the ways you have coped with sexual violence & abuse, GINA will focus on your strengths, how these helped you survive & explore how they can be built on.

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. however, we do not subscribe to the idea of this being a checklist or 'buzz word,' so we focus on the importance of this approach being encompassed within the embedded **lived experience** that we keep at the centre of GINA, our activities & our decisions. the infusion of lived experience enables us to deeply understand & respond to individual needs knowledgeably & empathetically, without presumption or misunderstanding. we continue to ensure all GINA's services, products & resources are co-produced with individuals who have been subjected to sexual violence & abuse (those accessing our services, from the wider community & within our team).

we believe *individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse* does not encompass the experiences of individuals subjected to sexual violence & abuse; we believe such trauma is incomparable & that being subjected to sexual trauma does not define an individual. you can define on your own terms. how you feel about what you have been subjected to & the impacts of trauma surpasses any term we could give it & goes beyond the use of any terminology.

***survivor* or *victim* you can be both, you can be neither & you can be more than either.
we believe you can be more than either so we will continue to cease use of these terms.
we believe you are your magic (whatever your magic is & whatever makes you, you).
we believe you define you, always.**

we recognise that the commodification of language can result in misinterpretation and/or active harm. we are yours. if you'd like specific identification as a *victim* or *survivor*, or use of a specific term to reference what you have been subjected to, let us know & we can do this in our direct communications with you. however, in the absence of any preferences you convey, we'll refer to you, as *you*, because we think you're magical. we respect your identity preferences & regardless of terminology, we believe every individual deserves the right you identify in whichever way they wish.