

**Belief and sexual violence: what it means and why it matters**

## Information sheet for panel participants

*You are being invited to take part in a research study called Belief and sexual violence: what it means and why it matters. Before you decide whether you want to participate it is important that you understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish.*

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of the 'Belief and sexual violence' project is to gather perspectives on existing definitions of belief from victim-survivors, as well as to develop evidence of what belief means to them in the context of sexual violence.

**Who is organising and funding it?**

The study is funded by a small grant from the University of Glasgow. It is being conducted by researchers working at the University of Glasgow and Loughborough University: Kelly Johnson, Olivia Smith, and Michele Burman. All three researchers have experience of undertaking research in the area of sexual violence, and with victim-survivors who have experienced sexual violence.

**Why is the study important?**

Despite 'belief' being centrally important to understanding the experience and context of sexual violence, it remains an overlooked and under-explored idea. As someone who has experienced sexual violence, your knowledge and perspective are vital in contributing to a stronger evidence base. We think that your views will help develop better understanding about different meanings and experiences of belief. We hope this work can also contribute to developing new approaches to responses to sexual violence that incorporates a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of what belief means and looks like.

### Do I have to take part?

No, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part in any aspect of this research project, you can change your mind at any time without having to give reasons for doing so. If you decide not to take part, this will in no way affect any support you receive. If you decide you no longer wish to take part, we will no longer use your responses to inform the project. Please note that if you decide you do not want to take part after you have already completed a panel/panels and we have written up our findings, it might not be possible for us to remove your anonymised responses from the dataset. Please do get in touch with us if you have any questions or concerns about this.

### What will taking part involve?

You are being asked to take part in two panels. The panels will involve a group discussion about different understandings of belief and what belief means to you. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer, you do not have to do so. Panels will be arranged at times that are as convenient to all participants as possible. With your permission, we would like to record the panel. We would then use the recording to create an anonymised transcript that we would use to inform our findings. The recordings will be deleted once the anonymised transcript is prepared.

Also, with your permission, we would like to have visual notes taken following some of the sessions – where a visual note taker would listen back to the recording and make anonymised visual notes from the discussion. Visual notes are used to capture ideas, information, and concepts using a combination of words, pictures, symbols, diagrams, and other visual elements rather than words only. These notes will not contain any personal information, details, or likenesses and will not identify individual participants. We will share them with you after the session to check that they are accurate and you are comfortable with the information that has been captured.

### How long is the panel?

The panels will follow a workshop format and will take approximately 90 minutes each. For the first panel, we are asking you to bring an object of your choice that represents what belief means to you and you will have the chance to share your perspectives with the group. Your object could be something like a photograph or picture, an object from nature or the household, or a poem. Please note that, due to time constraints, we won't be able to listen to songs or screen any clips, but you can still choose an object of this type and discuss what it represents to you. You do not have to bring an object, and can still participate simply by engaging in the discussion during the panel if you would prefer this.

During the first panel, we will also present brief information about some ideas relating to belief we have been exploring, also drawing on some objects and images, and offer an open-ended space to provide time to discuss anything relating to the topic that feels important to you. In the second panel, we will share discussions and key information from the first sessions we held with different participant groups, and ask you for feedback and your perspectives. If you feel uncomfortable, upset, or distressed during a panel, please let us know and we will ask you how you would like to proceed. If you decide you would like to

stop participating during a panel, you can do so without giving any reason and it will in no way affect any support you receive.

### Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

Yes, you will be offered a £50 high-street voucher for participating in the panels. The voucher payment will be made even if you withdraw at any point so if you attend a panel and then wish to withdraw, you will still receive the full voucher amount for that session. Vouchers will be sent to you as soon as possible after the conclusion of each panel.

### Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information will be treated in confidence. The only exception for this is if you tell us about someone who is at risk of immediate, serious harm. In these circumstances we would need to engage with our ethics board about necessary safeguarding action, but we would always want to undertake this process in conversation with you where possible.

If you choose to participate in a panel, we will ask you to provide some basic personal contact details to arrange the panel. The personal details you provide will not be seen by anyone other than the researchers and will be deleted at the end of the project in July 2027.

The panel questions will not ask for any personal information. The panel recording will be used to create an anonymised transcript, and possibly anonymous visual notes, and the recordings will then be deleted. All research recordings and documents will be stored electronically in a secure file that only the researchers have access to.

At the end of the study, we will produce outputs to present our findings, including a planned book and online exhibition. Short quotes of what you say may be used in these outputs, but we will not use any identifying details so no one will be able to recognise you or what you said.

### What if, as a result of my participating, I need support for my mental health or wellbeing?

We have provided a support sheet detailing organisations that you can contact for additional support. Additional services may be available in your local area and you can contact the research team who will try to direct you to a relevant source of support.

### What will happen to the data and results from the research study?

The information collected will be used to write a book about belief in the context of sexual violence. The findings may also be written up and published in academic articles or presented at seminars/conferences during or after the study is completed. In line with University of Glasgow data management policies, anonymised research data will be stored in a secure electronic repository for 10 years after the study so that it can be accessed by the research team if required (e.g. for future academic articles).

We are also planning an online exhibition of photographs of your chosen objects and visual minutes from the panels. We will be in touch about this when there is more information to share, but we would only include a photograph of your object if you give your consent. Please note that photographs of identifiable individuals (including of yourself) will not be

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able to be included in the exhibition for privacy and anonymity reasons. Similarly, images subject to copyright will also not be able to be included in the exhibition. In these cases, the researchers will work with you to find a suitable alternative so that you can still participate in the exhibition if you want.

### Contacts for further information

If you would like more information, please do let us know. You can e-mail the researchers: Kelly Johnson, [Kelly.Johnson@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Kelly.Johnson@glasgow.ac.uk); Olivia Smith, [o.smith@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:o.smith@lboro.ac.uk).

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the project, you can contact Professor Gerda Reith, School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Officer, [Gerda.Reith@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Gerda.Reith@glasgow.ac.uk).

**Thank you for reading this information.**