



AN
ABC
OF
CSA
FINDING THE WORDS
TO TALK ABOUT
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**With huge respect and gratitude to
our ABC participant groups**

Women's Centre Cornwall groups: The **DIVAS** – a group of women with learning disabilities and autism who fight for their rights against discrimination and abuse; **YEW** – The Young Empowered Women's project for women aged 11-18 years; and the **Women's Group** – a newly formed group for this project. As well as **MoMENTum** – a support and campaigning organisation by and for male CSA survivors and our **Open Group** of adult CSA survivors who joined our online sessions promoted through **SARSAS** and **Devon Rape Crisis**.

Viv Gordon Company is a CSA survivor-led arts activism organisation. We creatively campaign for increased voice, visibility, community and leadership by, for and with CSA survivors.
www.vivgordoncompany.com

Imogen Harvey-Lewis loves to draw. She draws people feeling feelings. Working for a wide range of clients, her drive is to capture and communicate the equality of emotional expression.
www.imogenharveylewis.co.uk



A guide to using the cards

An ABC of CSA is a creative resource to support better conversations about child sexual abuse. The cards have been developed by our community for our community, with over 40 survivors involved through a series of workshops with Viv Gordon, and have been illustrated by Imogen Harvey-Lewis.

Each card can be seen in different ways. They are intended to start conversations, not to tell anyone how to think or feel. They are designed to spend time with, to come back to more than once, to discover different details each time... Some may be hard to look at or provoke strong reactions. Others may feel like a warm hug from one survivor to another.

The words and images offer a snapshot of our experiences, but not every card will be meaningful for every CSA survivor. Our community is devastatingly huge. There are an estimated 11 million adult survivors of child sexual abuse in the UK. It would be impossible to represent each unique, complex journey in 26 cards.

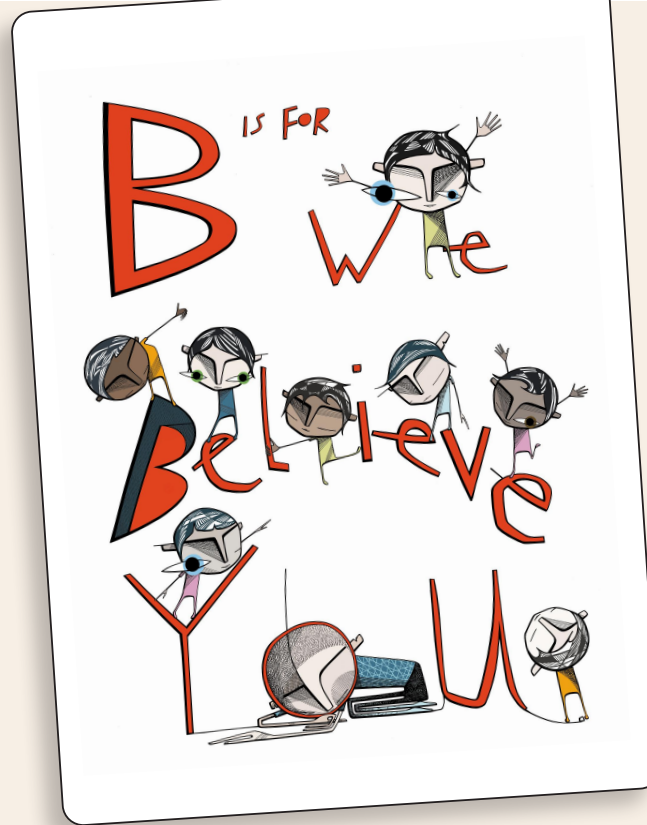
We hope they offer insight and healing. Most importantly, we hope they help us find ways to talk about our experiences as survivors of child sexual abuse.



**The cards sing with the deep
wisdom and creativity of survivors.
We will not be silenced.**

Before you start looking at the cards it's useful to share the following information:

- The words and images can be understood in different ways. It's OK if we see them differently to other people or differently each time we look at them.
- Some of the words are hidden in the images, so each phrase is also typed clearly on the reverse of the card.
- There is no right or wrong way to look at them and no right or wrong way to feel looking at them.
- You don't have to look at all the cards at once. If some cards are difficult to look at, you could put them away for another time. There is no rush. Think about self care while you look at the cards – you could have a hot drink or wrap yourself in a blanket.
- Think about how you will ground yourself if you feel anxious or dissociated – you could breathe deeply, stroke a pet or dance to your favourite music.

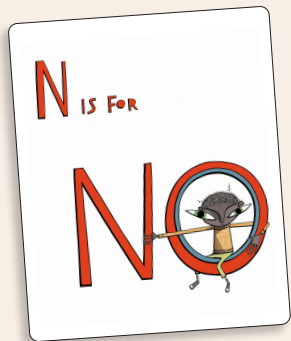


How to use the cards

We recommend the ABC is used in spaces where we have support to explore our feelings and understand our own responses such as in therapy or group work.

If you do choose to look at the cards on your own, please take good care of yourself. Ask a friend to be available on the phone if you want to talk and keep the details of these organisations below to hand to access information, helplines and live chats:

Rape Crisis England & Wales
www.247sexualabusesupport.org.uk
The Survivor Trust
www.thesurvivortrust.org



Look at the card(s) you have chosen:

- Talk about what you can see – does something grab your attention?
- What are the people on the card doing?
- How does the picture make you feel? Do the words speak to you?
- Do you connect with the card? Is your experience different? If so, how?
- If you could change the words or images – what changes would you make?
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Get creative and make your own alphabet

Draw, collage, doodle, scribble, paint or take photos of objects that express how you feel. Do what is meaningful to you, your alphabet doesn't have to make sense to anyone else. You could work alone or in a group.

To pick cards you could:

- Mix the cards up and pick one out without looking
- Lay all the cards out face up and pick one that draws your attention
- Choose cards that spell your name or a word like "HOPE"