

# Ask Me Training: Essential Information

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We hope this document will answer all of your questions ahead of the Community Ambassador training (please get in touch if it doesn't!).

## Who are My Sisters Place?

We are a local Middlesbrough charity who specialise in domestic abuse support. We keep the voices of women and children at the heart of our work by listening and responding to their needs.

## What is Ask Me?

Ask Me is a free course for anyone who wants to help create a world where abuse is no longer tolerated and to ensure that survivors get the support they deserve. During the Ask Me training we will work together to create a safe and supportive space where you can learn how to break the silence and raise awareness about domestic abuse and how to help provide a supportive response to survivors in your communities. For more information on the Community Ambassador role please [visit our website](#).

## What can I expect from the training?

The online course is made up of 6 modules delivered across 2 zoom sessions. For each module you will receive a variety of resources for you to read/watch/listen to before joining the Zoom workshop. You will also be asked to do some quick activities and exercises. We will do our best to make these easy, engaging and fun to do. When learning about domestic abuse it is really important that we spend time reflecting on what we have learned and how this may be impacting us. Preparation for each workshop should take you no more than a few hours- you may take more or less time depending on your individual pace.

At the end of the training course we hope you will have the skills and knowledge to help build a community that plays an active role in ending domestic abuse.

## Requirements for the course

We want to make the training as inclusive and accessible as possible. However, unfortunately, Ask Me Online won't be right for everyone as participation requires the following:

- Access to a computer/laptop/mobile phone with internet, a camera & a microphone
- An email address
- Basic computer literacy – being able to open emails, click on hyperlinks and participate in video calls

## Is Ask Me right for me?

People come along to our training for a variety of different reasons. Some people who choose to attend have personal experience of abuse or they know someone who has. Others are simply interested in finding out more. Everyone is welcome as long as they are committed to working towards a world where domestic abuse is no longer tolerated.

We recognise that many of our attendees may have personal experiences of abuse. Survivors of abuse can make fantastic Community Ambassadors, however as this training is now delivered online and participants will mainly be attending the online workshops from their homes we recognise that **this course may not be safe for people living with their abuser** or for survivors who may need support for their own experiences first. If you're not sure whether this applies to you, please get in touch and we'll be happy to chat to you to help you decide.

If you are a survivor, and would like to access some information on triggers, impacts of abuse and coping strategies before you start the training you can read [this booklet](#).

## Is Ask Me accessible?

We will do our best to accommodate anyone who wants to attend, and ask that all participants are supportive of the needs for others. Where possible we will:

- Give participants the opportunity to speak to a co-ordinator on a 1 to 1 basis to ask questions or meet them.
- Provide you with a variety of resources, including options to watch, read or listen to

- Use Zoom for our online workshops and utilise any accessibility functions the group may find useful. To see the options of what Zoom can do please [click here](#).

We do however appreciate that the considerations above won't cover every need. For example, if you have mobility, hearing or sight impairments, social anxiety, learning difficulties or any health conditions that may affect your participation, or if you aren't fluent in English, you may need additional support to attend the course. If this is the case then please do let us know by contacting your local coordinator.

### What will happen during each Zoom call?

- We will open the Zoom call 15 minutes before the session start time. If you try to log on before that, you will get a message telling you to wait for the meeting organiser.
- Once we've opened the Zoom call you may be asked to wait in the 'waiting room'– this just lets us make sure we are ready before people start joining. Where possible, please try to log on 10 minutes before the start time so that we can make sure everyone is set up with working tech.
- When we admit you from the waiting room, you will then be in the main meeting. Once all participants have entered we will lock the virtual room. This means that only participants of Ask Me can attend the training. However, this also means that if you get kicked out of the room for any reason you will have to wait in the waiting room until we can re-admit you. Please be patient with us while we do this.
- In the main meeting room you'll be able to see and hear everyone in the meeting, talk to others and use the chat function (where you can type messages privately to the host or to everyone in the group). We will go through how all this works when we first meet. We will also come up with an agreement around use of cameras, microphones and the chat function etc.
- During the Zoom workshops we aim to create a safe and supportive space for you to talk about what you've learned in that module. We will check in with each other, have a mix of large and small group discussions and take part in some group activities, then check out.

## What should I bring to the Zoom workshops?

It is entirely up to you what you have with you. However some things we think would be useful include:

- A pen and paper if you want to make any notes
- A glass of water or other refreshments
- A box of tissues

We also encourage you to arrange something you enjoy doing afterwards – whatever that may be (e.g. a phone call to supportive friend, a dog walk, watching a funny TV show).

## What is our “Zoom etiquette”?

In the first session, we will collectively create a group agreement that will cover how we use Zoom in a way that feels safe to us all. However, there are some things we would like you to be mindful of from the outset:

- **Who can hear you and other participants?**

Please try to make sure you are in a room where you can't be overheard. If that's not possible, we advise you to use headphones. The nature of the course means that people may share things they don't want to be overheard so it is important that we keep other participants contributions private. Also some of the training content may not be appropriate for children, so you should try and ensure that they aren't listening in. In addition, please make sure that all listening devices are turned off – such as Alexa, Google home or Bixby.

- **What in your background can other people see and hear?**

Please have your camera on. This will make it much easier for us to work together. You might want to think about what (or who!) could appear behind you on camera. There are [options on Zoom to blur your background](#) or have a virtual one if you prefer.

- **What in your background can other people hear?**

When you are not talking, please put yourself on mute. At times, the facilitators may also mute you. This is not because we don't want you to talk, it is simply to reduce background noise. When you want to contribute you can unmute yourself.

- **Can you actually concentrate on the session?**

Like all training sessions, we ask that wherever possible phones are muted and not a distraction. If other people will be in the house when you are on the call, you might want to ask them not to disturb you during the workshop.

- **What should you do if you find the session challenging?**

Please use the chat facility to type contributions if that is easier for you. If you are finding the session tiring or the content distressing please use the private chat function to let facilitators know. Whilst we encourage you to keep your camera on, you may choose to turn off your camera and microphone to give yourself space if you need to.

## Security

We will host all of the Zoom workshops meeting from a My Sisters Place laptop, which is protected with anti-virus software. We have a paid for Zoom subscription so we will encrypt our room. The session will not be recorded by us and participants will not have the ability to record it. The session will be password protected with a waiting room. Only people who have the correct details including the password will be able to access the room.

## What support is available to me if I'm affected by the training content?

To help ensure a supportive training environment, we will:

- **Schedule chats with you if you want to talk about things further.** This might be to share concerns you might have about the training content, personal experiences you might want us to be aware of or to raise things that have come up for you.
- **Provide you with a list of specialist support services you can access.** This resource will be sent to you alongside the welcome email.
- **Build support into the Zoom calls.** There will be a minimum of two facilitators so that we are able to provide any technological or emotional support needed, including checking in with anyone who becomes visibly upset or distressed. We'll also ask for a mobile phone number when you sign up. We may use this to contact you in case you disappear from the session so that we can check that you are safe and well.
- **Prioritise your well-being and weave self-care throughout.** We will make time to check in with each other at the start of both Zoom workshop and check out at the end and ensure that you have access to resources and ideas of things you can do to look after yourself. We will discuss self-care throughout the training and share a variety of ideas and resources. In the meantime however, we recommend taking some time to consider what this

training might bring up for you, and what you might need to help you participate in the session and manage your wellbeing.

- **Keep to time.** We will ensure that we always start and end the Zoom workshops on time and that any latecomers are briefed on what has already happened and any group agreement before they participate in the full group. We will also ensure that activities are broken up to protect your energy levels.
- **Help you control your own learning environment.** As a group you will agree a group learning agreement to ensure we work together in a way that we all find supportive.
- **Enable you to make informed choices.** We'll give you as much information as we can about what is coming up and encourage you to choose what to participate in, to opt-out of activities if you prefer and to ask for what you need from the facilitators and the group. Where we identify something as particularly sensitive or potentially distressing we will aim to give a clear content warning beforehand and make participation optional.

### What do I do if I can't attend a Zoom workshop or do the pre-reading?

Whilst we understand unanticipated things can come up, we ask that you only sign up to this online course if you feel reasonably confident that you can manage the pre-session work for each module. Doing the preparation is essential if you want to go on to become a Community Ambassador, and you will also get much more out of the Zoom workshops if you are prepared. If independent study is a barrier and something you feel would prevent you from participating, please let us know and we can arrange for you to attend the training face to face where all the content is covered together in the training space.

### What happens at the end of the training?

Our hope is that after taking part in the training you become a Community Ambassador. However, sometimes we may decide that it is not the right time for someone to be an Ambassador, for example, if they haven't attended all of the sessions, or if they don't share the values and qualities we believe are necessary to do the role safely and effectively. Should this happen and we decide that it's not the right time for you we will always explain why. Where we can, we will also work with you to overcome any barriers or direct you to a more suitable opportunities.

Other people may complete the Ask Me training and then decide that becoming a Community Ambassador is not right for them. That's absolutely fine, and you are welcome to get in contact in the future. Completing the training does not oblige anyone to become an Ambassador.

If you have a question that hasn't been covered, please get in touch with us.

If you would like to discuss further or sign up please email me  
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Thank you

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