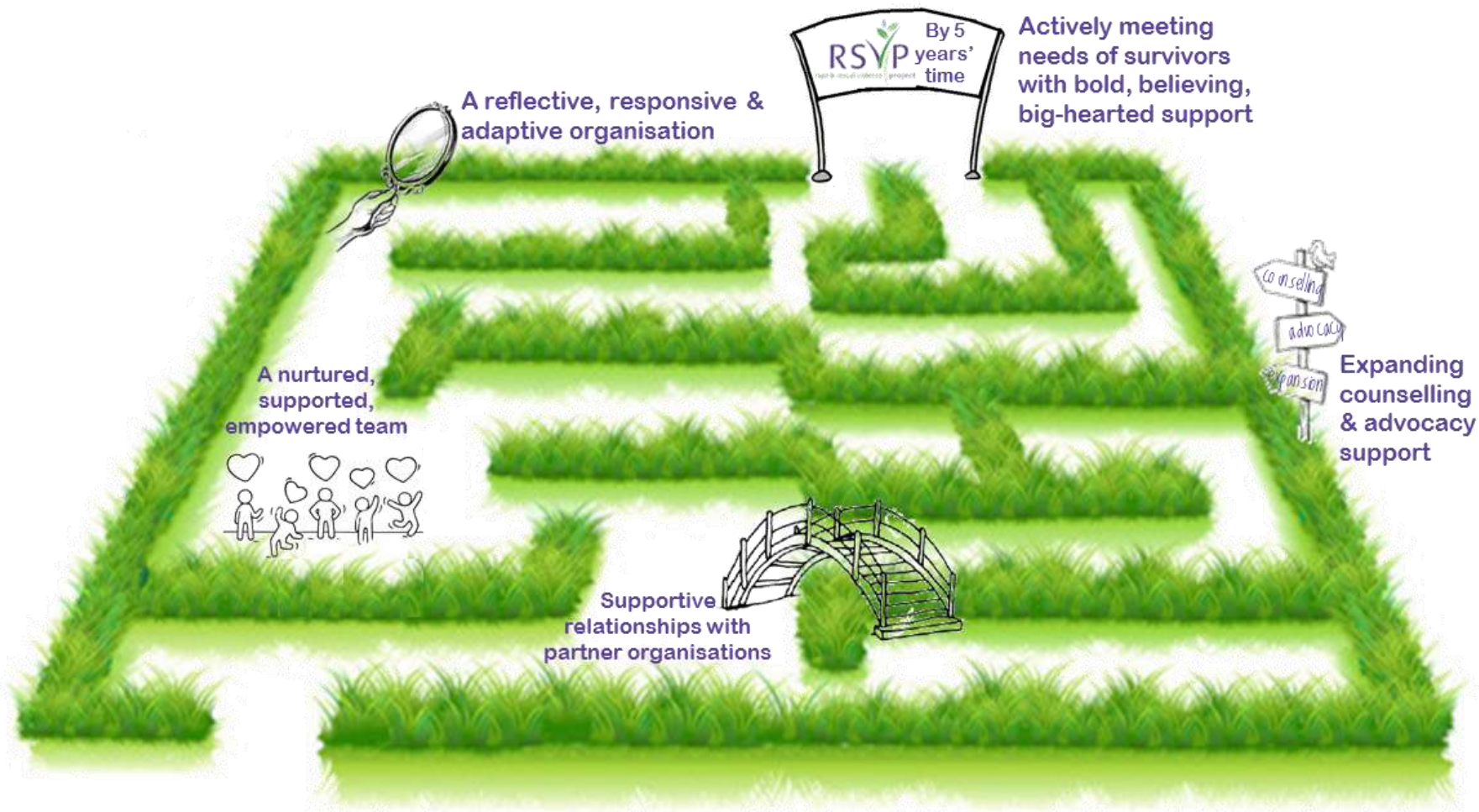


Navigating the Maze: The Future of Support for Survivors of Sexual Violence & Abuse



Navigating the Maze: The Future of Support for Survivors of Sexual Violence & Abuse



RSVP's future will be one in which we meet the needs of growing numbers of children & adults across Birmingham & Solihull who have been subjected to sexual violence, abuse & exploitation through...

Our specialist support services becoming increasingly **BOLD • BIG-HEARTED • BELIEVING**

We will continue to go the extra mile, show empathy & compassion whilst accepting what is shared with us & having faith in everyone's ability to recover & heal. We intend to expand our **counselling support** services so in the future, adults only wait 12 weeks and children only wait 4 weeks for counselling, whilst **expanding our advocacy support** to have a 7 day a week service... achieved through additional, sustainable & creative fundraising.

Supportive relationships with partner organisations which will inform, influence, improve and challenge their understanding of sexual trauma and their responses to survivors. By encouraging partnerships, communication, reflection, collaboration and openness, these relationships will model a safe, trusting, connected way of relating that recognises and responds to the impacts of trauma. The aim of our future relationships and partnerships is for all organisations to respond compassionately, humanely and empathically to the needs of survivors.

Our amazingly bold, big hearted and believing team who will become increasingly informed and responsive to the physical, psychological and emotional impacts of trauma.. We will ensure that our team feels well cared for and supported through all their relationships and interactions at RSVP, so they can flourish, grow and develop in their role whilst supporting survivors in a way which increasingly recognises and responds to the impacts of trauma.

Becoming a **reflective and responsive organisation**, where we continually evolve, learn, improve and adapt. This will allow us to build upon our organisational strengths and resources in order to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of survivors, and our team who support them.



How are we going to do it...?

Supporting Survivors Through Counselling

Where We Want To Be

We want adults requesting counselling to only wait a maximum of 12 weeks, and children to only wait a maximum of 4 weeks.



The Challenges

- Responding quickly to a growing need for counselling
- Supporting survivors whilst waiting for counselling
- Understanding and reducing barriers that make it difficult for survivors to attend counselling



How Are We Going To Do It?

- Expanding our counselling team and locations
- Enhancing our blended counselling approach to increase choice
- Introduce more support for survivors waiting for counselling



The Impact of Covid-19

Needing to respond differently (through a blended counselling approach) to the needs of survivors.



Supporting Survivors Through Counselling

The Challenges

1. Finding a way to respond quickly to the large and growing numbers of children and adults who need RSVP counselling, so we can provide this type of support when it is needed.
2. Ensuring that children and adults feel supported and know how their other needs could be met through RSVP's holistic services while they wait for counselling, and are prepared when they begin counselling.
3. Understanding the barriers that make it difficult for children and adults to attend counselling, so we can reduce them (where possible) enabling survivors to feel supported and more able to attend counselling.

How Are We Going To Do It?

1. Respond to the growing need for RSVP counselling by expanding our child and adult service, our team and the locations where we offer counselling from. We will ask survivors where they would like to receive RSVP Counselling from and increase the number of outreach locations in line with what they tell us, thereby increasing choices.
2. Having a more blended counselling approach, offering face to face, telephone and online counselling, increasing choices, reducing some barriers that prevent survivors accessing face to face support and enabling us to tailor support more effectively to a survivor's needs.
3. Introduce more support for children and adults while they wait for counselling, including testing a new service which will regularly contact survivors on our waiting lists. We will also share with survivors: a) better information about our other services by producing a new 'welcome pack'; b) better information about how to prepare for when they begin counselling by creating a new 'pre-counselling' resource; c) expanded resources by developing our self-help information and our information outlining the different support that partner organisations can offer. This will all be in accordance with what survivors tell us.

The Impact of COVID-19

Covid-19 and its restrictions resulted in us being unable to provide face-to-face counselling for 6 months of the year. This required us to respond to the needs of children and adults differently over the telephone, and remain committed to our blended counselling approach; something survivors previously told us they needed. Blending face to face counselling alongside telephone counselling ensures that as future lockdowns and restrictions are imposed, we will continue to offer children and adults counselling. Extra Covid-19 funding allowed us to train our team in online counselling and offer this alongside our current blended offer, thereby increasing survivors' choices. As national lockdown restrictions ease, we expect a surge in the numbers of survivors needing counselling, especially children, as their ability to disclose and ask for support increases.

Where Do We Want To Be?

In 5 years' time, we want adults requesting counselling to only wait a maximum of 12 weeks and children to only wait a maximum of 4 weeks, so that the support can be provided quickly and when it is needed.



Why This Is Important For Our...



Clients



Team

A quick response to provide support when survivors need it. Understanding barriers will enable us to reduce them so more survivors feel supported to attend counselling with our team, with a blended approach also providing our team with more flexibility.

Supporting Survivors Through Advocacy

Where We Want To Be

We will have a 7 day/week ISVA service; offering more choices of when survivors can be seen.



The Challenges

- Due to Covid-19, ISVAs are supporting survivors for longer
- Ensuring survivors can seek justice (not just through reporting) in a confusing, disjointed, victim-blaming system
- Survivors needs being missed by other organisations



How Are We Going To Do It?

- Expanding our ISVA team
- Ensure other organisations are aware of ISVA support
- Develop partnerships with organisations who want access to ISVAs from their premises
- Upskill and train partner organisations to meet the needs of survivors



The Impact of Covid-19

Covid-19 delaying court proceedings so ISVAs are supporting survivors for longer and we are expecting a surge in survivors approaching us for support due to Covid-19.



Supporting Survivors Through Advocacy

The Challenges

1. Due to Covid-19, our Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) are under more pressure as they support larger numbers of child and adult survivors. This is due to: a) courts having to cancel and rearrange sexual violence trials, resulting in distress for and lengthy delays for survivors; with ISVAs supporting survivors who have reported for longer and b) a surge (after lockdown) in the number of survivors needing our ISVA service. Both impact on our ability to respond as quickly and effectively to the needs of adults and children.
2. Survivors knowing ways they can seek justice (that are not just confined to reporting to the police), and of the ISVA support which could help them navigate services and systems that are often disjointed, confusing and victim blaming.
3. Survivors' needs being missed when they attend other organisations due to professionals lacking the knowledge and confidence to enquire about and explore abuse. Increasing ISVA support across these organisations would enable survivors to feel better supported and professionals to be more equipped to respond appropriately to survivors' needs.

How Are We Going To Do It?

1. We will expand our ISVA team by seeking funding for more ISVAs, including for a Senior role. This will allow us to respond to growing numbers of survivors needing ISVA support and reduce the likelihood of burnout for ISVAs.
2. We will ensure that organisations (especially health) know about the ISVA support that can be offered to survivors when they attend health, police and other appointments.
3. We will develop partnerships with any organisation who wants ISVAs to work from or be co-located in their premises to improve their response to survivors.
4. We will upskill and train partner organisations to increase their knowledge and confidence to routinely enquire, sensitively explore and respond appropriately and effectively to survivors' needs. Training will also ensure organisations know about our ISVA, counselling and other RSVP services, and support also offered by other organisations.



The Impact of COVID-19

Covid-19 is causing a delay in court proceedings so ISVAs are supporting survivors for longer and we are expecting a surge in survivors approaching us for support due to Covid-19.

Where Do We Want To Be?

We want to expand our ISVA service so more survivors are supported when they seek services from other organisations (such as police, schools, A&E, mental health services and GP surgeries). We also want to recruit more ISVAs so they can respond effectively to the increasing numbers of survivors who need our support (often for longer periods of time) without our ISVAs feeling traumatised, stressed or burnt out themselves.

We will have a 7 day/week ISVA service; offering more choices of when survivors can be seen and we will have a new ISVA Senior role to provide wider support to the ISVA team, ISVA Team Leader and Head of ISVA Services.

Why This Is Important For Our...



Clients



Team

Enabling us to meet their needs (so they aren't missed) and provide support in other ways of seeking justice (as well as criminal justice); whilst allowing us to support our ISVA team in reducing the likelihood of vicarious trauma, stress and burnout.

Supporting Survivors Through Our Wider Services

Where We Want To Be

Removing obstacles and barriers within RSVP for particular survivors, including through an introduction of a BAME community outreach service and enhancement of our offer for LGBT and survivors with learning disabilities.

The Challenges

- Some survivors face barriers and obstacles to disclosing, receiving appropriate support and seeking justice
- Many service responses fail to address the physical, holistic, embodied and social needs of survivors
- Survivors' voices and lived experience are often not heard, reflected or infused in organisations

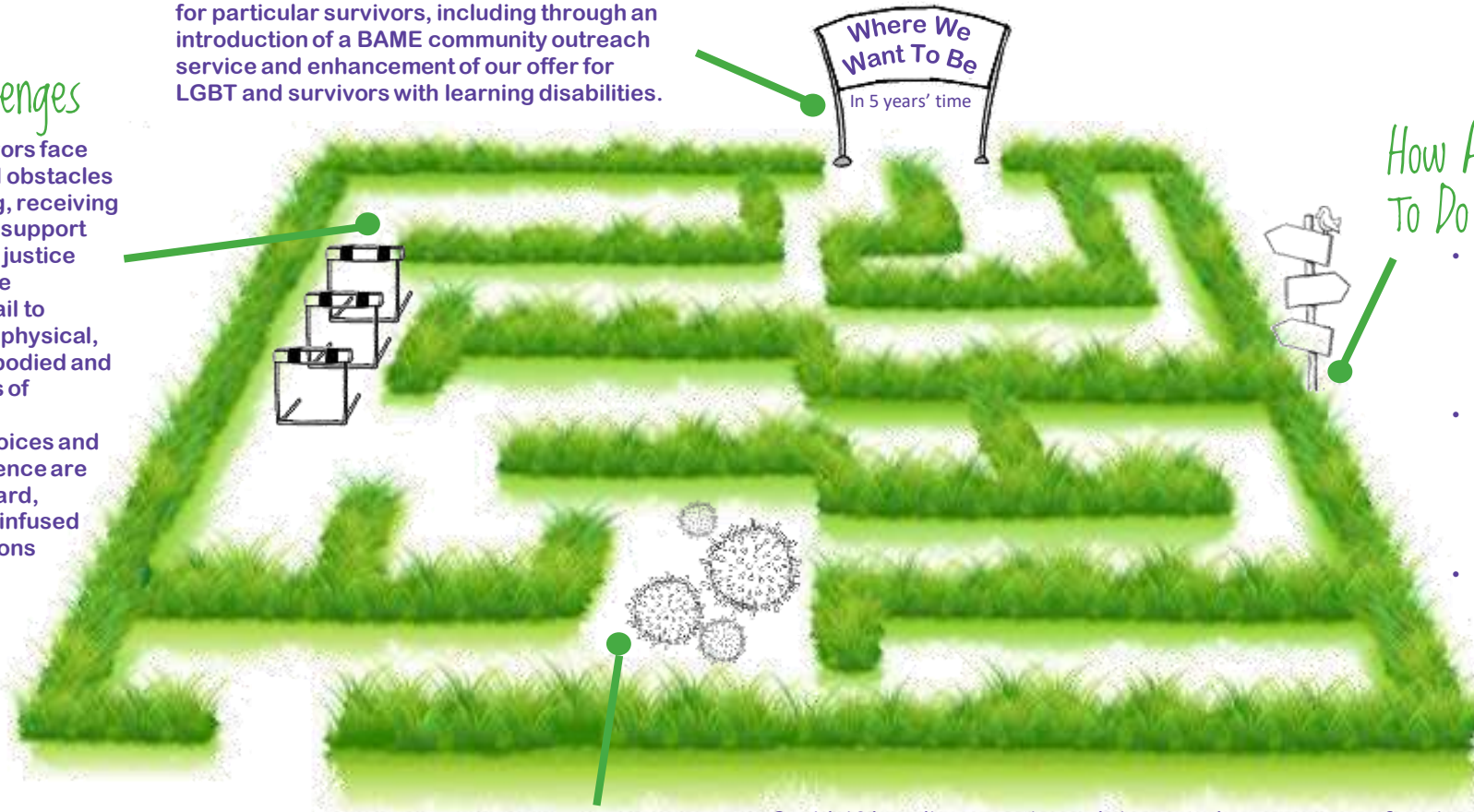
Where We
Want To Be
In 5 years' time

How Are We Going To Do It?

- Expand our wellbeing services (including an additional women-only coffee morning and young people's social group)
- Consult with, infuse voices and use lived experience of survivors to further our understanding of barriers
- Keeping the voices and lived experience of survivors at the centre of everything we do – infused throughout all aspects of RSVP

The Impact of Covid-19

Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted some groups of society (including women, the BAME community, sex workers, refugees and asylum seekers, children and young people). Covid-19 has exacerbated the impacts of sexual trauma due to reduced social contact, lockdown and other restrictions.



Supporting Survivors Through Our Wider Services

The Challenges

1. Some survivors face particular barriers/obstacles to disclosing, to receiving appropriate support and to seeking justice (BAME, LGBT, disabled, refugee and asylum seeker survivors). This often results in inequalities, difficulties in accessing support and a lack of specialist services to sensitively and culturally appropriately meet survivors' needs. To ensure that every survivor can access the support they require to meet their needs, we will identify and take positive action to remove the barriers and obstacles that exist within RSVP for certain survivors.

2. Although trauma is embodied, many service responses are based solely on talking therapies and fail to address the physical, holistic, embodied and social needs of survivors. We will ensure that our wider wellbeing services (helpline, groups, coffee mornings, self-help info) address these needs so they can release embodied trauma, feel connected to themselves and other survivors and have options to heal which are not solely talking therapies.

3. Survivors' voices and lived experience are often not heard, reflected or infused in organisations, leading to services which do not accurately respond to and meet need. We will ensure that survivors' voices and lived experiences are at the centre of everything we do; informing, influencing and infusing across our services, at all levels of our organisation, our team and our responses.

How Are We Going To Do It?

1. We will expand our wellbeing services that offer a social and embodied approach, by offering an additional women-only coffee morning and a young people's social group.

2. We will consult with and use the voices and lived experience of survivors to further develop our understanding of the particular barriers and obstacles that face some survivors. This will include LGBT, BAME, refugees and asylum seeker and survivors with learning disabilities. We will then take action in RSVP to remove these barriers and ensure our services appropriately and sensitively meet their specific needs.

3. We will keep the voices and lived experience of survivors at the centre of everything we do and develop two peer consultative groups (one for adult survivors and one for young survivors) to comment on, feedback about, inform and develop existing and new services.



The Impact of COVID-19

The impacts of Covid-19 (including health, social and economic impacts) have disproportionately affected some groups of society (including women, older people, BAME people, sex workers, people with no recourse to public funds and refugees and asylum seekers). Impacts are exacerbated for these groups where they have also been subjected to sexual violence, abuse and/or exploitation. Covid-19 has also impacted on child and young survivors, and had a massive impact on their emotional wellbeing, their safety and their ability to disclose and seek support. Disproportionate impacts may result in the voices of these groups feeling disempowered and are even less likely to be heard. Finally, holistic, embodied responses and services are even more necessary now as the impact of Covid-19 has resulted in survivors (already traumatised as a result of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation they have been subjected to) now living with additional stress and trauma, exacerbated by reduced social contact with others, due to lockdown and other restrictions.

Where Do We Want To Be?

We want to remove the obstacles and barriers within RSVP for particular survivors, to enable us to respond appropriately and with cultural sensitivity to their needs. This will ensure that we are better able to reach and support survivors from all groups in society. This will include an introduction of a BAME community outreach service and enhancement of our offer for LGBT survivors and survivors with learning disabilities.

Why This Is Important For Our...



Clients



Team

Removing barriers and obstacles allow us to respond appropriately to survivors with particular needs, to create equality and equality of access for all; whilst allowing our team to better support survivors (with specific needs).

Our Organisation: Supporting Our People & Creating A More Supportive Culture

Where We Want To Be

Continue to provide a space where our team can flourish grow and develop in their role.

The Challenges

- Higher risk of our team experiencing secondary and vicarious trauma, overwhelm and burnout due to responding to sexual trauma every day
- An increasing number of survivors needing support increases potential pressure on our team
- We need to define additional steps to support our people and create an increasingly supportive culture

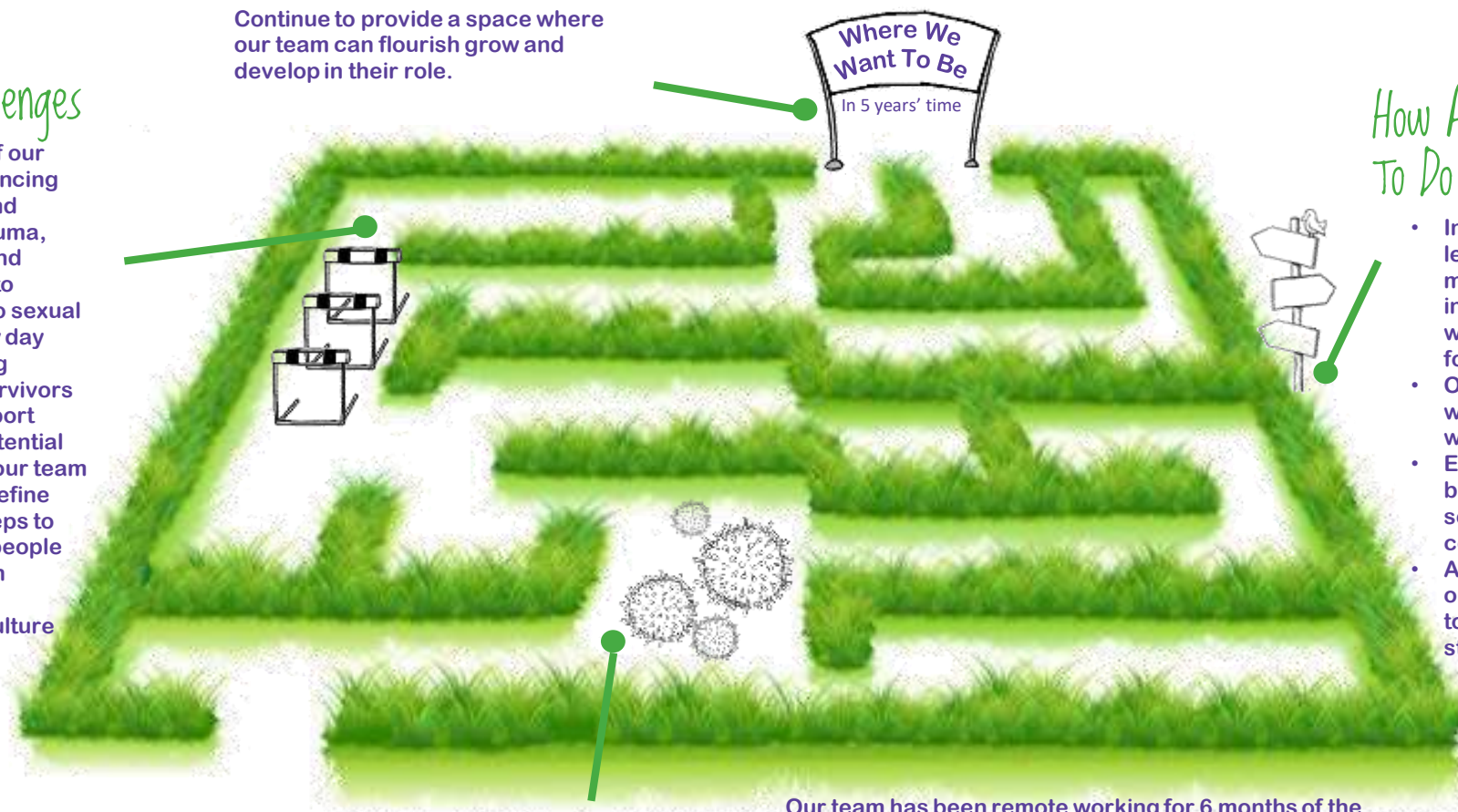


How Are We Going To Do It?

- Increasing annual leave (for some team members) and introducing two wellbeing days a year for all
- On-going consultation with our team about wellbeing
- Enhance space in between counselling sessions for our counsellors
- An outline of training opportunities for staff to be presented at the start of each year

The Impact of Covid-19

Our team has been remote working for 6 months of the year; creating challenges in team connection and unity. However, also providing opportunities to reflect on how we can create enhanced space and flexibility for our team and survivors (a blended approach to support).



Our Organisation: Supporting Our People & Creating A More Supportive Culture



The Challenges

1. Our amazingly bold, big hearted and believing team is hearing, responding to and immersed in sexual trauma every day as they support survivors. This creates a higher risk of us experiencing secondary and vicarious trauma, overwhelm and burnout. We need to increase the ways in which every person on our team feels cared for and supported in all their relationships and interactions at RSVP, to ensure that the team's wellbeing is protected and remains at the very heart of what we do.
2. As the number of survivors needing our support increases year on year, the potential stress and pressure on our team also builds. Since we're committed to meeting each and every survivor's needs we have a desire to respond as quickly as we're able, within the constraints of our limited resources and capacity. This can result in us leaving our organisation and our individual team members a lack of space to reflect on positive outcomes and interactions, how we evolve, learn and improve and how we can build on organisational strengths and resources.
3. We have not defined the additional steps we need to take that will lead us to enhance support for our team, which will continue to keep their wellness and wellbeing at the very heart of everything we do. Everyone on our team does not yet feel RSVP has a culture and space that fully supports and cares for them to flourish, be healthy and reflective. We clearly need to take more space to learn and reflect on the actions we can take to ensure we model and embody the values of an organisation with a an empowering, supportive and nurturing culture.

How Are We Going To Do It?

1. We will introduce further wellbeing by increasing the annual leave of our team members who have been at RSVP for longer than 5 years. For the whole team we will also enable them to have two wellbeing days each year (pro-rata for part time team members) to undertake an activity to look after their own wellbeing. All team members will be asked to share how they spent their wellbeing days on Workplace.
2. We will consult with our team about their wellbeing on an ongoing basis, so they can feedback their voices and ideas into our new annual plan of wellbeing activities and strategies. To ensure that we are best supporting their wellbeing, we will also conduct an annual wellbeing survey every year, giving us a measure of how many of our team feel well supported and cared for by RSVP.
3. For our counsellors we will ensure that there is more space in between each counselling session, so they have more time to prepare for the next survivor they see and for their own wellbeing.
4. At the start of each year our trainer will outline our annual plan of training, learning and development for our team, delivered by both the RSVP team and trainers from other organisations outside of RSVP too. This will provide us with further reflective space and opportunities to flourish, develop and grow in our roles.

The Impact of COVID-19

Covid-19 has resulted in our team working remotely from each other for 6 months of the year, creating challenges in how we feel like one united team and how we continue to support and care for each other. However, remote working has also created opportunities for us to reflect on how working from home could improve the wellbeing of some of our team, as well as produce a more flexible and blended approach to meeting survivors' needs (through a mixture of face to face, telephone and online counselling).

Where Do We Want To Be?

We want our team to feel as though RSVP is a place where they can flourish, grow and develop in their role. We want our team to feel that there is space for us to reflect on and celebrate our work, and to connect with each other professionally, socially and humanely. we would like all our team to feedback that they experience RSVP as a safe and supportive space, organisation and employer. We want every member of our team to feel cared for and well-looked after, as we believe that every individual brings something unique to our organisation and that RSVP is nothing without our team and people.

Why This Is Important For Our...



Clients



Team

Continuing to enhance our organisational culture, that provides space for reflection, wellbeing and connection for our team. If these values are infused in all areas of RSVP, these values will be modelled in how we support survivors through our connections, interactions and responses.

Our Organisation: Sustainable Funding

Where We Want To Be

Using our resources as efficiently and effectively as possible to enhance sustainability. We will also increase our unrestricted income & reserves.



The Challenges

- Competition for increasingly dwindling funding from trust and foundations is high
- Restricted funds are too small for the size of our organisation
- Increasing unrestricted funds and flexibility of our income through earned sources
- Evaluating which types of fundraising bring the best returns is challenging



How Are We Going To Do It?

- Developing our financial reserves
- Diversify income and increase unrestricted income
- A long-term view of fundraising to identify the best types
- Feeding voices of survivors into local/regional sexual abuse and assault strategies
- Identify trusts and foundations which strongly align with our ethos and aims



The Impact of Covid-19

Trust and foundations have less income to donate to charities, along with a continued reduction in public funds and potential reductions in foundations from the public due to the financial implications of COVID-19.



Our Organisation: Sustainable Funding

The Challenges

1. Funds available from trusts and foundations are dwindling, and in a society crowded by other excellent charities, competition for funds is extremely high. Also, some trusts and foundations will only support organisations with an annual income of less than £1 million.
2. Our restricted funds, which pay for staff, volunteer, service and project costs, are too small for the current size of our organisation. This increases risk as it means we are less able to flexibly respond and meet need. Also, we have smaller reserves compared to organisations of a similar size; threatening our future sustainability.
3. 96% of our income is raised from trusts, foundations, grants and contracts, and only 4% is generated ourselves through fundraising and earned sources (sales of specialist training and goods). More of our annual income needs to be generated ourselves through earned sources, to increase unrestricted funds, grow reserves and improve the flexibility of our annual income.
4. With many varied ways to fundraise (all bringing in different amounts compared to the resources and time invested), it is hard to evaluate which types of fundraising will bring the best returns. This leaves RSVP with the challenge of where our fundraising resources and efforts will be most effective.

How Are We Going To Do It?

1. We will develop our financial reserves as key priority, since it will link to our aim of improving our future sustainability for years to come
2. We will diversify our income and increase the amount and % that comes from unrestricted income that we have generated ourselves. This will include from fundraising and earned sources. This action will decrease our vulnerability and risk and enable us to maintain and grow our services more flexibly, in line with survivors' needs.
3. We will take a focused and long term view of fundraising, identifying which types of fundraising will ensure the best results and yields, in order to maximise income and use our resources effectively. This will include reviewing the returns on our fundraising every year and identifying opportunities to raise funds online, especially as Covid-19 has resulted in the better use of digital resources.
4. We will feed the voices and lived experiences of survivors into local and regional sexual abuse and assault strategies, ensuring we have a presence on key strategic boards to influence commissioning. This will include speaking to MP's and councillors to influence policies, and targeting Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) since over a third of our referrals are from health and survivors tell us their needs could be better understood and met by health organisations.
5. We will define our unique value and identify trusts and foundations which strongly align with our ethos and aims, ensuring we effectively target which funds to apply to, maintaining our success rate.

The Impact of COVID-19

Trusts and foundations will have less annual income to donate to charities and are likely to support charities that they already know and/or award grants which are smaller in size. There will also be a continued reduction in public funds (central and local government funding) due to the continued effects of the recession and the tightening of the public purse, which will be further exacerbated by Covid-19. At the same time as reduced funding, the need for and numbers of survivors approaching our services are expectedly to massively increase, leaving a potential gap. Finally, public confidence in charities was already dwindling pre-Covid-19. Confidence in and donations from the public is likely to further dwindle, meaning that income from individual giving, individuals taking part in RSVP events (difficult now because of COVID) and legacies will be reduced. All of these factors will make for a very challenging funding environment.

Where Do We Want To Be?

We want to be using our resources as efficiently and effectively as possible to enhance sustainability for our organisation and support sustainable growth of our services to respond to the growing numbers of survivors who need our support. We will also increase our unrestricted income & reserves



Why This Is Important For Our...



Clients



Team

We need to protect the future, long-term sustainability of RSVP for our team and survivors, so we can continue to provide bold-believing and big hearted services, to respond to and meet the needs of growing numbers of survivors who need our support.



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