

# **The inclusion of lived experience knowledge in research on the prevention of child abuse in sport**

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(2025) and from the Olympic Studies Centre (Advanced Olympic Research Grant, The International Olympic Committee) for a project on Australian sport organisations' responses to disclosures and reports of gender-based violence experienced by women in sport. In 2024 I received funding from Football Victoria (2024) for a primary prevention project on gender-based violence. I have received funding from various organisations to contribute to expert panels as a survivor researcher on projects focused on violence prevention in sport, including: Sport and Recreation Victoria/ La Trobe University. (2022-2025), Sports & Rights Alliance - Athletes Network for Safer Sport (2024), The National Survivor Foundation, previously the In Good Faith Foundation (2023/2024), and The Army of Survivor (2022/2023). I do not hold any formal organisational positions outside of my university. My theoretical and social positionings are acknowledged within this manuscript.

**Content warning:** This manuscript mentions grooming, child sexual abuse, legal and disciplinary processes and trauma consequences. Read with care.

### **Preface**

This manuscript is a talk I gave on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2025, at the pre-congress for the scientific community at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress for Safe Sport Research (ICSSR 2025) hosted by Laval University in Quebec City (June 18-20, 2025). The pre-congress was organised by the International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sport (IRNOVIS). The research network, led by Dr Tine Vertommen (at the host University of Antwerp at the time) and co-founded with my research team and several other research teams<sup>1</sup>, was funded by a 5-year Scientific Network Grant from the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO, Belgium), from 2020 to 2024. This pre-congress symposium was the concluding event of the IRNOVIS' activities, and I thank Dr Mary Woessner, A/Prof Emma Kavanagh and Dr Tine Vertommen for inviting me to present on lived experience inclusion in safeguarding in sport research. This presentation was given with PowerPoint slides which can be found in the appendix at the end of this manuscript.

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<sup>1</sup> IRNOVIS Landing Page: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/violence-and-integrity-in-sport/> and LinkedIn Page <https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-research-network-on-violence-and-integrity-in-sport-irnovis/posts/?feedView=all>

### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper was to introduce the concept of lived experience knowledge, specifically from individuals who have experienced diverse forms of child abuse in sport and its ongoing consequences. It also explores the value of this knowledge and offers practical principles to support the participatory engagement of people with lived experience in research, in ways that are meaningful, safe and inclusive. Drawing on my research into child abuse prevention in community sport, I integrate insights from mental health research, community participation methods and critical theory, while weaving in reflections from my own experience of child abuse in sport and its lasting impact. My hope is that the paper itself serves as a demonstration of the approach I encourage. The first section defines lived experience knowledge, as a valid form of knowledge that is grounded in epistemic justice and can meaningfully contribute to decision-making in research projects. I then examine the theoretical, political, ethical, and practical values of involving people with lived experience of violence in sport in research. Finally, I introduce principles for their genuine and ethical inclusion as active contributors. It is my observation that child abuse prevention in sport research in sport lacks a critical and participatory lens. By positioning lived experience as a valid and valuable form of expertise, this paper encourages a shift toward more inclusive, justice-oriented research practices in violence in sport prevention research. I invite researchers to critically reflect on whose perspectives most influence research questions and outcomes, and to consider how power dynamics, within research, sport as well as within ‘lived experience groups’, can influence the trust placed in researchers by those most affected, especially when their lived experience is used to generate evidence.

### **Acknowledgement and introduction**

Good morning everyone, I'm very excited to be here. I'd like to thank the symposium committee for inviting me to speak on a topic I'm very passionate about. For those who don't know me, my name is Aurélie, I'm a senior research fellow at the Institute for Health and Sport at Victoria University. I completed my PhD in 2020 on Paralympic sport policy and I started publishing on child abuse prevention in sport in 2022. Since 2024 I've been receiving an early career research fellowship from the Victorian Health Promotion agency, which allows me to fully focus my work on researching the topic.

I'd like to start by acknowledging that we're all meeting today on the land of first nations peoples, the Wendat people, the Innu people and the Abenaki people. I come from the beautiful Aboriginal lands of Naarm and pay my respect to their traditional owners, elders, past and present. I recognise the ongoing harmful impact of colonisation on First Nation's peoples around the world and also their leadership in caring for communities and in addressing inequities for indigenous children and young people. I extend my acknowledgement and respect to any first nation people in the room today.

I also want to acknowledge the lived experience of people harmed by violence in sport. The safe sport movement is where it's at in great part because of the courage of so many impacted by interpersonal and systemic violence in sport, and by their tireless advocacy. I also want to thank our allies for their ongoing commitment. I keep in mind our collective strength and stand with you in our struggles towards social justice for safer and more inclusive sport. I extend this acknowledgement to any survivor or person with lived experience today. Just a quick note on terminology. I personally identify as a victim-survivor and this term is important to me, but not everyone uses it, so I'll use the two terms interchangeably.

My talk is on the what, the why and the how of lived experience knowledge inclusion specifically in the context of my research on the prevention of interpersonal violence against young people in sport. I hope to be publishing a paper from this presentation soon. While I specifically talk about the engagement of adult victim-survivors of child abuse in sport, I also recognise that if we want our safe sport research, policy and practice to be inclusive and relevant we need to also critically include children and young people. I encourage you to reflect on how what I present today may apply to your own research, or to policy and practice.

I come to this research not only as a scholar but also as someone with lived experience of child sexual abuse in sport and its consequences. I was groomed, sexually abused and exploited by my basketball coach for the three years he coached my team when I was a teenager. I played at the grassroots level in my local hometown in the suburbs of Paris. I experienced the French legal system for this, when I was 19 - and more recently, between 2020 and 2024, I went through two investigations, one within the French Federation of Basketball, and one with the local child protection authorities when I realised he was still coaching all these years later – and still is because French laws allow him to coach in a youth club despite his conviction. These experiences of abuse of power, complex trauma, betrayal, grief and injustice make me feel, think, and act in ways that are different from people who have not experienced what I did.

### **Lived experience knowledge as a valid form of knowledge and as epistemic justice**

This is basically what lived experience knowledge is. It's the insights individuals acquire when going through personal experiences. Lived experience knowledge is influenced by systemic factors (Crenshaw, 1989; Fanon, 1967). I'm a very educated white cis-gender woman and so I benefit from social capital and white privilege. I'm also neurodivergent so I

experience marginalisation due to ableism and neuronormativity. My lived experience of abuse in sport can be highly different from people with different social positions.

Lived experience knowledge is a valid form of expertise that can contribute to the evidence base and social change in a meaningful way (Voronka & King, 2023). I'll get back to this notion of 'validity' – which is central to scientific arguments. Lived experience knowledge is tacit and it's embodied (Voronka, 2016). Within the context of social interactions having a particular lived experience can provide someone with intuition and insights on a situation that others without that knowledge may not have. For example, sometimes when I work with sport organisations or with survivors, I will feel and think about things related to what I've experienced. And this gives me information I use and reflect on – or at least I try. My survivor identity is strong because what I've experienced has defined so much of my life, so I inevitably bring it to what I research and how I research it. I explicitly draw from my experience and integrate it with my research training and overall professional knowledge. So within myself I value these two forms of knowledge that sometimes are in tension with each-other. This idea of valuing and integrating different forms of knowledge is the principle behind the collaboration between researchers and those with lived experience.

For me, and for many others that have come before me, lived experience inclusion and representation is also an issue of power, social and epistemic justice (Barker et al., 2023; Fanon, 1967; Fricker, 2007; Joseph, 2024; Smith et al., 2022; Spivak, 1988) (see slide 7 page 24). This point starts the conversation as to why the inclusion of lived experience knowledge in research matters. Talking about epistemology, I'd like to talk a little about the philosophy of scientific knowledge, and its history, which is one of my favourite topics, so bear with me. But I think it's important to understand the theoretical rationale for the inclusion of lived experience knowledge in research. And for this I thought it might be useful to visualise the spectrum of lenses that researchers may use to approach their work (see slide 8 page 24). As



you can see, researchers' approaches can vary between an overt objective view of evidence on the left and an explicitly value-based approach to knowledge creation, one that is about social change (Lincoln et al., 2018).

### **Value of lived experience knowledge**

#### **Theoretical value within the context of a hierarchy of knowledge production**

While it's slowly shifting, there's still a hierarchy of knowledge in research and society (Parkhurst & Abeysinghe, 2016). By that I mean that diverse research funding bodies, scientific disciplines, and sectors believe some forms of scientific evidence are more 'valid' than others. And that's usually the evidence that can be 'proved' by statistical significance, like in meta-analyses and trials because that's what many believe is the information needed to show effectiveness of prevention programs for example. This objective view of evidence generation continues to be what's considered the most acceptable evidence, especially in health sciences (Parkhurst & Abeysinghe, 2016).

The critique and limit of this view is that it treats people as objects and numbers, and the research is on them. And so, people's voices and experiences, and the acknowledgement of power dynamics created by society, programs, policies and even by science itself are missing (Joseph, 2024; Lafantaisie et al., 2019; Voronka, 2016). But there are other, and as valuable approaches that provide nuance to the evidence base that is needed to work towards social change and preventative actions. And that includes more critical and participatory approaches to knowledge development, with people with lived experience, where their active participation is included because of the explicit social justice lens that researchers take (Enderle & Mashreghi, 2021; Rich et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2022).

## **Historical value of lived experience knowledge and advocacy**

The term lived experience knowledge/expertise has a long history in mental health research and practice due in part to a social movement called the psychiatric survivors or consumer movement. It's been so impactful that lived experience is now embedded in some mental health systems and research (as evidenced by the several reviews that can be found on this topic). There's a recognition of the value of the direct feedback provided by people with lived experience of mental health conditions and services. But there are also important critiques around the politics of lived experience roles, which I believe is of relevance for the sporting sector to keep in mind as well (Voronka, 2016; Voronka & King, 2023).

Lived experience/ community participation gained momentum in the 1960s thanks to feminist, black, indigenous, gay and civil and disability rights movements – with communities saying that they should have a voice on decision impacting their lives, including in research, policy and practice (Voronka, 2016). And I want to acknowledge that in sport it's also gained momentum with the foundational activism of athletes, survivors, youth and scholars like Celia Brackenridge, who I wish I could have met (Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997).

In recent decades, with movements around the democratisation of science and the need for researchers to show the societal impact of our work, consultations with communities in research has intensified, but not without challenges and harm (Ross et al., 2023). As we move towards preventative research and organisational efforts for the prevention of violence in sport, as a community of researchers we need to be open to social movements, to the politics of knowledge production and to critiques on how our research and policies can lack legitimacy or relevance when diverse survivor voices aren't consulted (Voronka, 2016).

From a value position, I think there's an ethical imperative to consult those who've been most impacted by research, policies and practices, and create opportunities for them to provide feedback on 'safe sport' research and evaluation. Right now, we aren't included

systematically or explicitly. [Added note: there are only a few examples of survivor-led research/ survivor involvement in research and violence prevention in sport initiatives by Rulofs et al. (2019), Harris and Hartill (2020), McMahon et al. (2022), Mountjoy et al. (2022), Hartill and Jones (2025) and Pankowiak et al. (2025).] And this brings me to second point, explicit and visible community representation is important.

### **The ethical, political & practical value of lived experience knowledge**

As a survivor of child sexual abuse and exploitation, I've often felt very much alone which I know is a feeling shared by others. It's due to trauma but it's also related to a lack of shared experience with others and feeling like our struggles aren't seen or rectified by the sport institution. So when I see survivors included in research and industry – and that they are visible in their identity as survivors – I feel that my voice is being represented, to some extent. This isn't to dismiss those who bring lived experience to their work and choose not to openly identify it. But because community representation matters, it's critical to make sure that people are visible in their capacity as someone with lived experience. And having survivors on panels as speakers is not enough, how we engage with them and respond to their views matters (Ross et al., 2023).

This is in part why my research team started to more holistically embed lived experience in the way we work. There's a limit to what I can bring and there's a tension with my profession. I still need to be a researcher even if that's informed by lived experience. And importantly, I can't represent the diverse and intersectional views of those who've experienced child abuse in sport. So our team has a paid Lived experience advocate role, and we are embedding lived experience advisory committees into our projects (Pankowiak et al., 2025).

The third point, which links back to the theoretical argument but also to practice is that diversity of expertise and knowledge is useful – my argument isn't about saying that we

must value survivors' views above everything else and uncritically. But the point is that we have to work collaboratively with diverse forms of knowledge and expertise, co-create solutions together and be aware of power dynamics while doing so. Diversity of knowledge allows us all to challenge assumptions and bring much needed nuanced understanding. And research and data lag in time, so including people with lived experience means we get direct feedback embedded in our research, which can improve its impact and relevance (Smith et al., 2022). So how do we approach this in practice.

### **Principles for the inclusion of people with lived experience of child abuse in violence prevention in sport research**

#### ***A spectrum of engagement in research***

Very briefly, I want to acknowledge there's a spectrum of lived experience involvement and voice in research, and that can be influenced by many things. It varies from people having the least decision-making power and choice in the research – so the extreme of that would be survivors' involvement being only limited to a one-off survey or interview – to them having the most power and control over the research (Lamb, 2023). And you'd see that for example in first nation-controlled community research (Watego et al., 2025). There are few things I want to highlight for reflection when planning to collaborate with people with lived experience of violence in sport.

#### ***Reflect on power dynamics and symbolic violence in academia and sport***

We need to acknowledge that academia as an institution is incredibly hierarchical, bureaucratic, process oriented and a powerful business. Similarly, sport, as an institution is also very hierarchical and a powerful business. As researchers we have a lot of authority and the research process itself involves a lot of power dynamics that can potentially mirror the

harm people have experienced in sport. So it's imperative to be reflective, and be open to feedback and critique (Malpass et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2023).

***Symbolic violence in safe sport research.***

For example, it's been shared with me that some survivors have felt like some researchers collect their stories, publish and have successful career, and that makes some survivors feel like their stories of suffering were used for someone else's gain. And that really made me reflect on how I approach my research. Because that's a research practice that's very normalised for us, but it can have very real harmful impact on people, which we need to prevent as much as we can.

***Reflect on power dynamics between sport and survivors, and within the sport survivor community.***

When our research collaboration include sport, we need to be mindful about what some organisations may represent for survivors involved. And I'm going to bring my experience to illustrate this. When I went through the internal investigation within the basketball federation, the lack of communication, transparency and the overall silence was incredibly harmful. Both my lawyer and I, in two separate instances, specifically asked the integrity panel not to have me confront my abuser because he had already been convicted by the court 10 years prior. At the very beginning of my hearing with the tribunal of the basketball federation, the chair of the panel opened by saying that my abuser's lawyer that had been heard just before me, had asked to bring him to my hearing. So the chair ignored our written request and asked if I could confront the coach who abused me. There was no warning, no explanation about this request. And so I literally fell apart. I was distressed for the entire session where I was supposed to share my story and I couldn't. Because of their disrespect of my boundary for safety, I was silenced all over again. This happened quite recently in 2022 so it's still quite raw. So you could imagine how hesitant I would be to

engage if the France Basketball integrity unit wanted to collaborate with researchers on a participatory project with survivors.

We also need to be mindful about other forms of power differential in sport. For example, at different point in my self-advocacy journey, interactions I had with journalists made me deeply aware of the fact some survivors' stories aren't as valued as others. Several journalists asked me if I was a former high-performance athlete and I was told that, because I wasn't, they wouldn't write on my story.

Recently in 2024, I went through an investigation with the child protection authorities to report the fact that the coach was still working in a youth club. I was told that the committee meeting which was going to decide on a potential coaching ban for my abuser, was going to be delayed because members from this very committee were somehow also involved in the delivery of the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games. So I had to wait several more months for the committee to meet and take a decision.

People who've been through investigations know how painful these are and how much the delays make it worse. So that in and of itself was hard. But the fact that they noted the process was impacted by the Games made it even harder for me. It showed me where the priorities in sport were for them: the delivery of the Games and not the potential danger in which children are or the wellbeing of survivors. And just before the Games, they decided he could still coach because of 'his right to be forgotten'. I won't even talk about how this was communicated to me. After going through all this, seeing that a Dutch athlete convicted of sex offences on a child was allowed to represent his country at the Games in my home city was like rubbing salt into the wound.

I just want to clarify. All of what I'm sharing isn't a personal criticism towards individual sport journalists, those working in elite sport, those delivering the games or those working in investigation units. I'm sharing this to illustrate how the discourse and practices

I've experienced, highlight a pattern, which is that performance status, major sporting events and sport tribunal processes are valued above survivors' wellbeing and needs for justice, and above the safety of children in sport. And we know this pattern of symbolic and institutional violence is experienced by many others as shown in the literature e.g., Roberts and Quigley (2022) and Nite and Nauright (2021).

So because of these experiences, I'm aware of the power that some survivors can have over others, and also of the extreme lack of power and dignity of survivors, when contrasted to sport organisations and their brands. And this has implication for our work. So in my research I wonder: Could that person from that sport organisation represent a symbol of harm for the people with lived experience I'm working with?

I've also noticed that most survivor-advocate represented are white or former able-bodied elite athletes, and when they're not former elite athletes, they're academics like me. And so I try to be mindful about including the voices of grassroots sport survivors, and of black, first nation, disabled and men survivors of child sexual abuse in sport. So we need to reflect not only on our own power as researchers, but also on the power of the organisations we work for or with in relation to the lived experience participants, and on the power dynamics within the survivor community (Voronka, 2016).

### ***Establishing safe and inclusive research processes<sup>2</sup>.***

Assume strength and competence. My experience also highlights an important point. You never know where - in their healing or justice journey - a survivor is at. Our research teams and processes need to be as safe and inclusive as possible and focused on what people can do. In practice this means we need to accept and assume that people have the strength to

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<sup>2</sup> These principles are a result of my interpretation of different frameworks and guides I have reviewed and engaged with in my research practice, including: engaging with survivor of violence from a trauma-/healing-perspective (Lamb, 2023; Mountjoy et al., 2022; Vertommen et al., 2024), the neurodiversity paradigm and neurodivergence (Asasumasu, 2015; Walker, 2021), participatory research paradigms (Rich & Misener, 2019) coupled with my reflections from my personal experience as a neurodivergent person with lived experience of child abuse in sport involved in both research and policy/ practice.

engage and importantly that they have the rights to do so regardless of where they're at (see neurodiversity affirming page 27).

Choice and transparency for trust. People need to have the choice to step back from research meetings or activities, or to ask for accommodations. And to be able to give people choice and autonomy we have to be transparent. This isn't only the basis for informed consent in research participation but it's also how we build trust. Child abuse survivors have often had their bodily and mental autonomy taken from them, and their trust betrayed, so it's critical that we don't repeat this. So we need to be very clear about the goals of the projects and not make promises about what our research will actually change. We also need to be very clear about people's role in the project and what they have the actual power to influence in the research and how. And we need to be transparent about which sport organisation we work with, how and for what purpose.

Accommodate. If a participant expresses hesitation with a sport stakeholder or otherwise, we need to make an effort to have hard conversations and accommodate people as best as we can so they can engage and have a voice – because if we don't accommodate, this means giving power to sport and potentially silencing survivor. And I acknowledge this is a difficult balance to strike.

Reflect on distribution of power. In specific situations we need to look at how power is shared across the research project. So not only being reflective about our own power positions, but also for example, if there's an advisory or steering committee for the project, composed of only one or two survivors and everyone else represent the sport industry - how will we ensure the survivor voice is heard, how will we make sure they're safe ?

Understand and apply trauma-/ healing-informed and neurodiversity affirming lenses. Assuming strength and competence of people with lived experience doesn't mean ignoring the fact they may live with trauma and related mental conditions caused by trauma, or simply



with a lot of anger from the oppression they've experienced. So we need to both understand how trauma may manifest and also be neurodiversity affirming. In the practice of group interaction in research, this means that people could withdraw or in contrast react emotionally and expressively, or critique certain situations in ways that aren't necessarily palatable or that make us feel uncomfortable.

Assume conflict and tension will occur. So we need to be ready for potential conflict, resistance and tension. As people in power, we need to reflect, unpack and support when or if such situation arises. And I acknowledge it's easier said than done, but as someone who's been on the other end, this is very important.

Create safety without being patronising. As we know, safety is a deeply relational process, and engrained in power, so it should never be on research participants or student and junior researchers with lived experience alone, to assess whether the research environment is safe and inclusive for them.

Be accountable. Finally, it's also almost inevitable that you we will hurt or disappoint someone in the process. So, we have to be accountable. If someone expresses clear distress or anger either verbally or in their body language, it's our duty as people in power to follow-up, check-in, reflect, take responsibility and change what we did to repair. This can be actually healing for the person.

### **Peer lived experience experts/ survivor advocates important in my professional and personal journey**

I thought I would close the presentation on this idea of healing. Meeting with and collaborating with other survivors as part of my journey has been not only one of the greatest honours but also incredibly healing. The power of peer support and solidarity cannot be underestimated. These individuals include (in chronological order of appearance in my life): Gloria Viseras, Karen Leach, Ian Ackley, Mike Hartill, Mathilde Grenet, Julie Ann Rivers

Chochran, Mhairi Maclellan, Joanna Maranhão, Ali Quigley, Nikky Dryden, Kim Shore, Lucas Machado, Paoline Ekambi. and peer-survivors who want to keep anonymity.

To honour my commitment to lived experience. I want to finish with a quote from Ali Quigley. Ali is a doctoral student in law and child safeguarding in Australian gymnastics, and she just joined our research team as a Survivor-Advocate. This is what Ali shared with me last year (2024):

*“We come to this collective work with our vulnerabilities exposed, anxieties laid bare, and with a sense of charged optimism. We rally with our voices so that the script that was written in a more shadowy past is raised towards the light. Beyond any appreciated expressions of sorrow for our loss and sympathy for what we have endured, we seek to be included in the conversations that take place in the corridors of change. We ask to be included in these critical conversations about change not because our egos require it, but because logic does. Who else knows better how to fix a broken system than survivors who were choked down by it? Together, let’s unpack the cultural resistances to survivor input, and then the challenges of placing children’s needs first in all that we do. Herein lies the power of truly collective work.”*

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**APPENDIX: PowerPoint slides presented with this talk.**


# The inclusion of lived experience knowledge in research on the prevention of child abuse in sport

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 **VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**  
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

**INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH & SPORT**

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**Acknowledgement of country**

People of the lands we're meeting on today:  
**The Wendat, Wabanaki, Innu, Atikamekw, and Wolastoqey people.**



Peoples of the land I live/ work on:  
**Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri – Naarm (Melbourne)**



## Acknowledgement of lived experience

I acknowledge the lived and living experience of people harmed by violence in sport.

The safe sport movement is where it's at in great part because of the courage of so many impacted by interpersonal and systemic violence in sport, and by their tireless advocacy.

I keep in mind our collective strength and stand with you in our struggles towards social justice for safer and more inclusive sport.

*Inspired by the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse*

## Agenda

01

**What is lived experience knowledge ?**

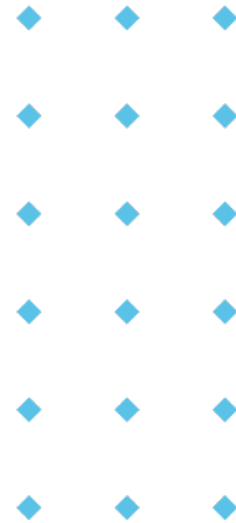
02

**What is its value ?**

03

**Principles for engaging people with lived experience in research**

## My experience



## Lived Experience/ Survivor Knowledge

01 What is lived experience knowledge ?

- ◆ Knowledge gathered from “situated, immediate, activities and encounters in everyday experience ...” (Oxford dictionary ‘lived experiencephenomenology’).
- ◆ Influenced by systemic factors (privilege and oppression).
- ◆ Valid form of knowledge/ expertise.
- ◆ Tacit and embodied.
- ◆ Integrated forms knowledge: “ lived experience researcher” or “researcher and survivor -advocate”.



## Lived Experience/ Survivor Knowledge

01 What is lived experience knowledge ?

### ◆ An issue of power and social/ epistemic justice

Epistemic injustice:

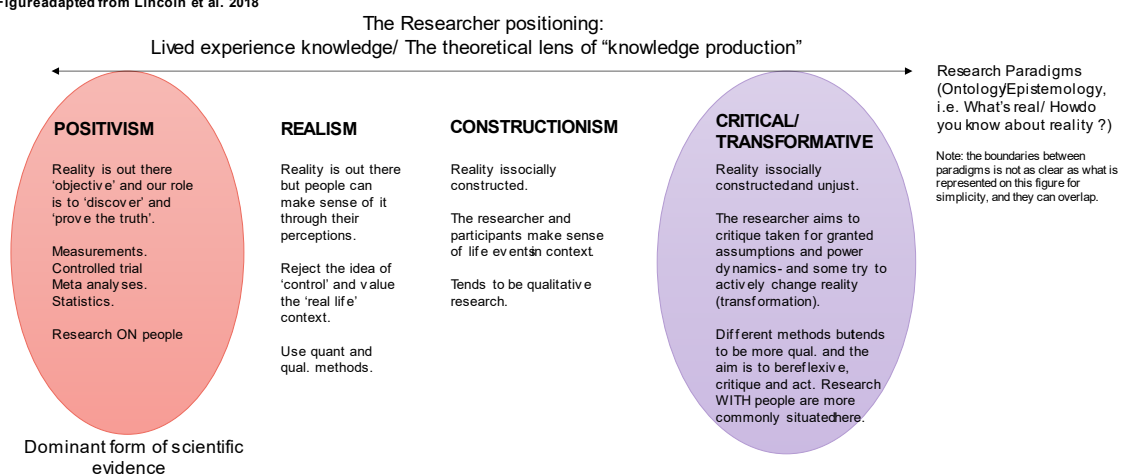
Unfair treatment or lack of authority of people because of perceptions/beliefs that they lack knowledge or are unable to be reliable and speak for themselves (e.g. saying to a teenager their story of being abuse is a lie or that they seduced their coach so their abuse is their fault).

The term 'epistemic injustice' was coined by the philosopher Miranda Fricker, but the underlying ideas of epistemic violence and injustices were introduced earlier by Black Liberation/ Civil right feminist Audre Lorde in the 1980s and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak Postcolonial Feminist 1980s

## Theoretical value of lived experience knowledge

02 What is its value ?

Figure adapted from Lincoln et al. 2018



## Historical value of lived experience knowledge/ advocacy

02 What is it's value ?

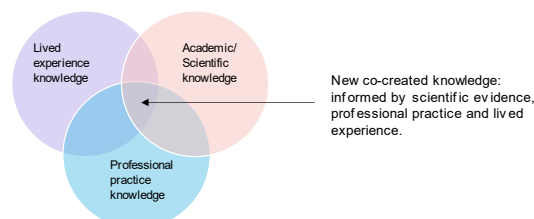
- ◆ The Psychiatric survivor/ consumer movement -> mental health system.
  - ◆ We need to critically reflect/ not co-opt lived experience
- ◆ Social movements - “nothing about us, without us” (disability rights movements) + athletes/ sport survivors/ youth activism in sport.
- ◆ Increased democratisation of science (related to above).

Psychiatric survivors are those who have been harmed by forced incarceration in psychiatric units, forced treatment and/or traumatised forms of therapies for example Applied Behavioural Therapy for autistic people (see Voronka, 2016).

## Ethical, political & practical value of live experience knowledge

02 What is it's value ?

- ◆ **Ethical imperative** – the right to have a say.
- ◆ **Explicit and visible community representation** – healing and justice.
- ◆ **Diversity of expertise is useful** - relevance/ impact of the research.



## A spectrum of engagement in research

03 Principles for engagement

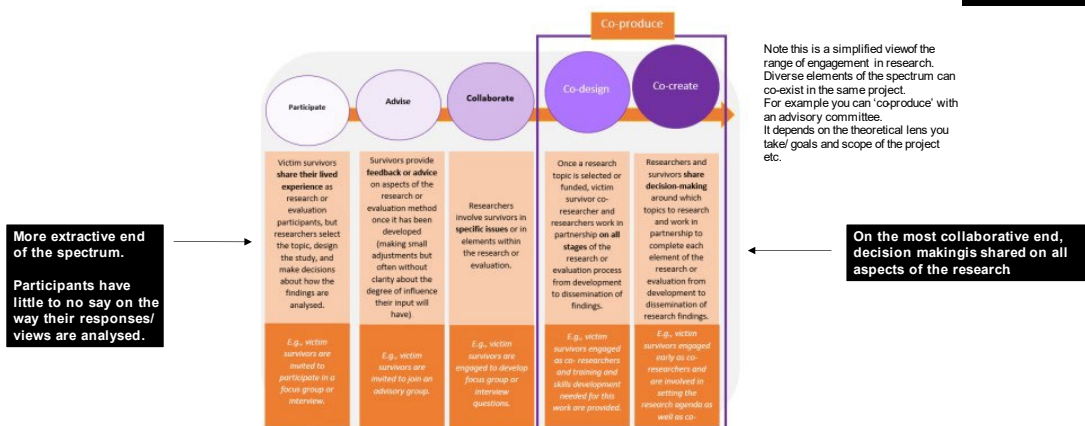


Figure 1:

Continuum of participation of victim survivors in research about intimate partner and sexual violence.

In Lamb, K. et al. (2023). An Australian Framework for the ethical coproduction of research and evaluation with victim survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence.

## A few principles for reflection when collaborating with sport survivors

03 Principles for engagement

- ◆ Reflect on power dynamics and symbolic violence in academia & in sport
  - ◆ Some feel that their stories of suffering were for researchers' career gain.
  - ◆ What does [this sport organisation] represent for survivors involved?
  - ◆ Power differential within the community of people with lived experience of child abuse in sport.

### Symbolic violence

Refers to how the power of symbols, language, norms, beliefs, values, every day practices of institutions can have real harmful impact on people oppressed by them (Pierre Bourdieu in the early 1970s).

Also pay/ financially compensate people with lived experience when they engage with you.

## A few principles for reflection when collaborating with sport survivors

### 03 Principles for engagement

- ◆ Establish and co-design **safe and inclusive research processes** :
  - ◆ Assume strength and competence.
  - ◆ Choice-> Transparency (project goals no promise; roles and scope for influence; organisations we work with/ for, why and how)
  - ◆ Accommodation so people can have a voice.
  - ◆ How is power shared in practice ?
  - ◆ Understanding of trauma/ neurodiversity affirming practice (we're not broken or disordered, though some may identify as such, which is their right).
  - ◆ Be ready for potential conflict, resistance, tension.
  - ◆ As people in power we have the responsibility to make our engagement safe without being patronizing.
  - ◆ Be accountable.

#### Neurodiversity affirming lens :

A paradigm recognizing that differences in people's emotional, intellectual and cognitive capacity to interact with the world around them is part of human diversity, and that these differences do not mean people are disordered and less valuable. This lens requires us to reflect on social norms around how people are expected to 'function' or 'express themselves' in certain 'acceptable' ways. These norms form 'neuronormativity' which are oppressive to neurodivergent people. Neurodivergence is a socio-political term not a medical diagnosis and therefore it applies to all psychological conditions/ differences including [complex] -PTSD. Being neurodiversity affirming means ensuring we value and accommodate people who are neurodivergent.

(See Walker 2021; Asasumasu 2019)

Also **pay/ financially compensate** people with lived experience when they engage with you.



In chronological order of appearance in my life:

- ◆ Gloria Viseras
- ◆ Karen Leach
- ◆ Ian Ackley
- ◆ Mike Hartill
- ◆ Mathilde Grenet
- ◆ Julie Ann Rivers Chochran
- ◆ Mhairi MacLennan
- ◆ Joanna Maranhão
- ◆ Ali Quigley
- ◆ Nikky Dryden
- ◆ Kim Shore
- ◆ Lucas Machado
- ◆ Paoline Ekambi

And peer-survivors who want to keep anonymity.

### Alison Quigley, Lived Experience Advocate (BA, LLB, Mphil, Law PhD Candidate)

We come to this collective work with our vulnerabilities exposed, anxieties laid bare, and with a sense of charged optimism. We rally with our voices so that the script that was written in a more shadowy past is raised towards the light. Beyond any appreciated expressions of sorrow for our loss and sympathy for what we have endured, we seek to be included in the conversations that take place in the corridors of change. We ask to be included in these critical conversations about change not because our egos require it, but because logic does. Who else knows better how to fix a broken system than survivors who were choked down by it? Together, let's unpack the cultural resistances to survivor input, and then the challenges of placing children's needs first in all that we do. Herein lies the power of truly collective work.



Reflection shared by Ali when I asked if she wanted me to share some of her thoughts on a presentation I was invited to give to the Western Australian sport industry on lived experience (Quigley, 2024)



Pankowiak, A. 2025 (June 12). *The inclusion of lived experience knowledge in research on the prevention of child abuse* [Prepared presentation]. The 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress for Safe Sport Research (ICSSR 2025)-Progress for the scientific community. Québec City Convention Centre, Canada.

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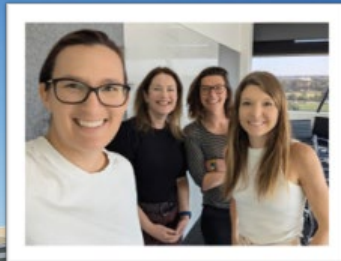
## Thank you Questions?

Do not hesitate to get in touch  
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Substack: @aureliepankowiak

My safety net without which  
none of this would be possible:

Dr Mary Woessner  
Prof Alex Parker  
A/Prof Fiona McLachlan



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