

SURVIVORS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WHEN WE LISTEN WITH EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING.

Preventing further harm by effectively applying survivor-centred and trauma-informed interviewing.

PROBLEM!

Inaction or inadequate responses to safeguarding cases due to lack of professionalism, expertise, contextual awareness, and a lack of genuine understanding of survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches, continue to foster a culture of fear and silence.

WHY DO WE ONLY SCRATCH THE SURFACE?

METHODOLOGY

OSACO Group brings decades of global experience in conducting highly sensitive investigations into allegations of SEAH and other forms of harm. By leveraging the expertise of its international team, OSACO draws valuable insights from extensive survivor interviews conducted worldwide. These first-hand perspectives offer profound and meaningful contributions to the sector.



KEY FINDINGS ON INVESTIGATIONS

1 Re-victimization and Re-traumatization

Investigations often conducted by inexperienced personnel, without a survivor-centred or trauma-informed approach, frequently lead to re-victimization, re-traumatization, stigma, and victim-blaming.

2 Prolonged and Unsafe Procedures

A lack of clear organizational procedures results in survivors being subjected to lengthy and unsafe processes, further deterring them from reporting incidents.

3 Organizational Inaction and Mistrust

Inaction by organizational leadership and the absence of reliable and safe referral mechanisms for survivor assistance foster injustice and deep mistrust among survivors.

4 Insufficient Engagement with Faith and Spiritual Leaders

Failing to engage faith and spiritual leaders in investigative processes limits opportunities to address SEAH cases in culturally sensitive ways and to build trust within communities, especially in areas where such leaders hold significant influence.

5 Barriers to report are not addressed

Stigmatisation
Shame
Lack of trust
Safety concerns
Normalisation
Retaliation
Fear of losing services

6 Lack of trauma-informed and survivor-centred interviewing and consequences

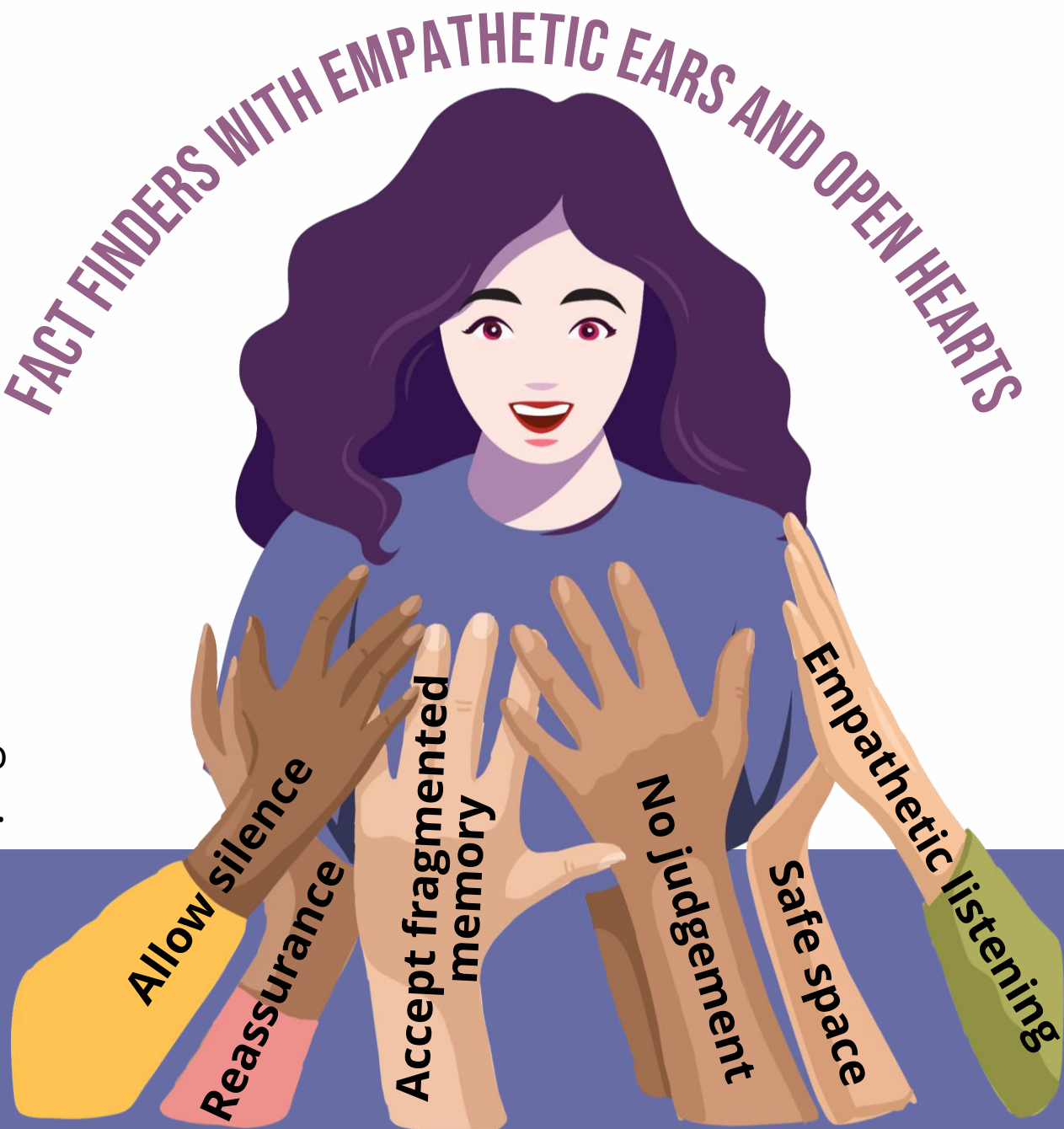
- Inward and outward responses in interviews are unaddressed or inadequately addressed.
- Lack of knowledge on trauma-informed interviewing and questioning.
- Lack of understanding how traumatic events can impact memory and the ability to recall and describe traumatic events.
- Lack of ability to respond to emotional distress during interviews and to reassure and put interviewees.
- Lack of contextualised understanding and biases.

Consequences: Blame → Stigma → Secondary Victimisation → Re-traumatisation

ANSWERS: HOW CAN WE IMPROVE INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWS?

KEY ENABLING FACTORS

- Maintain professionalism while showing compassion.
- Assess risks + mitigate effectively
- Understand the effects of traumatic events on memory.
- Apply trauma-informed interview techniques.
- Include & engage faith and spiritual leaders in investigation trainings.
- Train field staff in investigations to ensure context-specific processes.



- Small changes in how interviews are conducted and how questions are worded can go a long way toward obtaining more accurate and useful information.
- This interplay between memory and trauma response can provide directions on how to effectively interview victims/ survivors of traumatic experiences.

