



SAFE HOUSE  
PROJECT

## Ethical Survivor Storytelling

Stories are more effective at changing hearts and minds than statistics. They break through ideological and partisan barriers, but you must avoid re-exploitation through ethical storytelling.

Here are 5 tips for ethically sharing survivor stories:

1. Work with the survivor to establish goals for the event or engagement where they are sharing their story (ex. identification training, fundraising, direct care, awareness, policy, etc.)
2. Understand what else the survivor wants to highlight beyond their story, and increase the opportunity for them to inform more aspects of your training or event.
3. Determine compensation up front and make sure that you are not only compensating them for their time, but also travel and expenses.
4. Establish what support will be provided to the survivor before, during, and after the event. Understand what procedures you can put in place to help them feel safe and valued for their lived experience.
5. Use existing stories to articulate a survivor story, and then allow the survivor to speak as a lived experience expert verses having to share their story. For example, utilize the free OnWatch videos to share survivor stories, and then allow the survivor to train the room based on the signs and indicators articulated in the video.



### ALIA DEWEES

Director of Aftercare Development - Safe House Project  
California CSEC Advisory Board  
Lived Experience Expert  
[Alia@SafeHouseProject.org](mailto:Alia@SafeHouseProject.org)