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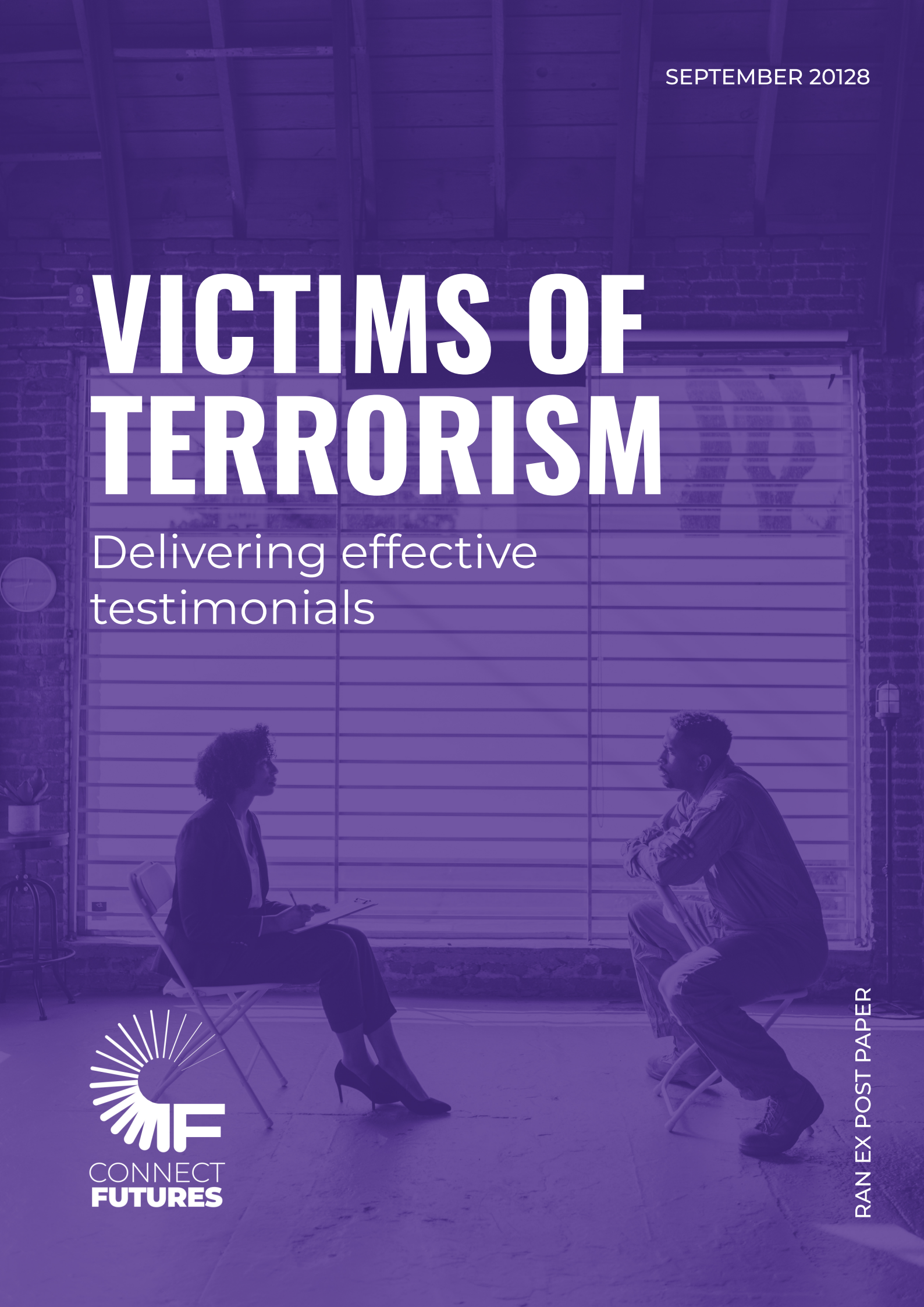
VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Delivering effective testimonials



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Introduction

Terrorist attacks are increasing across the world, in many different contexts and with different impacts. Those who have been victims of terrorist attacks sometimes wish to tell their stories and provide a testimonial in order to increase awareness of the senselessness of the violence and at the same time show positive resilience and ways forward. As with Holocaust survivors, the aim is for non-repetition, that this should not happen again. In terrorist atrocities, victims can be relatives or friends of those who died and survivors who witnessed an attack. Giving a testimonial at schools or in communities aims to convince people to reject violence and to prevent further radicalisation.

However, giving a testimonial is far from easy. Following previous RAN initiatives and handbooks ([i]), it became clear that practical guidelines were needed for those delivering testimonials in a variety of situations, whether with regard to a credible narrative (the content) or how to deliver it (the presentation). These guidelines aim to help increase impact while addressing difficult issues such as dealing with emotions. A structure or a safety net can be appreciated, to find a clear voice and share it with others.

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1. You are the expert: the confidence to speak

Some victims of terrorism are keen to tell their story, others need to be persuaded or lack confidence. The first thing to remember is that the victim is the expert. Victims are the only people who have the right to speak as victims and tell it how it is. Their version is the truth. They ARE the counter-narrative. One victim recounts: '*you do not have to apologise for taking up peoples' space… we are permanent reminders, we are still suffering. If you give me consideration, I will find my space again. My voice matters.'*

Hence, there is no hierarchy of victims, no hierarchy of suffering. One survivor tells of how he saw an attack close by – and saw the face of the attacker. He helped victims and saw people die. He did not lose a relative or loved one, but now has PTSD and feels it is important to be recognised like victims. '*I don't know who I am any more. I feel alone with my trauma.* 'There can be 'survivor's guilt', and widely different sorts of trauma after an atrocity.

Every testimony has significance, even if the effects of giving it can be unplanned as well as planned, and even if the impact on building resilience to extremism is difficult to prove. Different sorts of survivor histories may have diverse effects. The theory is that if they are a survivor who has stood up to or escaped persecution, students will be more likely to stand up to persecution and hatred in their own lives. If they are someone who has found a way to comprehend something from the perspective of the perpetrators and not take a polarised view of good and evil, nor of the cultural/ethnic/religious group that perpetrators come from, then this feeds into the multi-perspectivity that is the bedrock of resistance to extremist views. The baseline is not wanting revenge. If the testimony-giver is someone who has experienced losing a child to violent extremism (VE), either as a victim of an attack or as their child becoming a foreign fighter, then the empathy that is aroused on learning of their death and the impact on the parent makes a listener starkly realise the senselessness and arbitrariness of extremist violence and its ideology. The *Sisters Against Violent Extremism* organisation finds that the personal stories of victims whose experience of grief and loss has made them stronger and able to take a positive stance help blur the lines between 'black and white' thinking. They plant a seed of doubt in the minds of those who might consider supporting violence, or who lack alternatives ([ii]).

Summary: Remember you are the expert and no one else has your memories. Your testimony will have a unique impact in fostering empathy and challenging violence.

2. Deciding the story

Content and presentation become integrally mixed when deciding how to 'deliver' a testimony. There is universal agreement that the key is authenticity and honesty. What elements to select from a story may depend on the aims and goals discussed in the next section, but the testimonial must be truthful. The starting point is the presenter's relationship to the victim(s) – mother, father, sibling, son, daughter, husband/wife or friend (although the last are not officially recognised as victims from a judicial point of view). A survivor can be someone who witnessed an attack and went to help, what is described in the literature as 'first responder' – although professionals (fire, police, medics) who deliver assistance are not generally seen as victims. To demonstrate impact, stories often retrace life before and life after an attack, for the presenter and their families. The message is consistent: '*I am not the same', 'Our lives changed forever'*. Many presenters will tell and show pictures of their family before the attack,

and then perhaps tell of how ordinary the day was, children playing, going to an event, what people were planning for the next day or the future.

For maximum impact, listeners need someone they can identify with – whether the victim themselves, or family members and friends left behind. One who lost her husband tells of how she had to tell the children, and how the impact '*is not just me, but my daughter who has lost her future, as her dad was murdered*'. Another who lost her son in a bombing says: '*I tell of A., what he was like, his personality, things he liked to do and how life was before and after the bomb.'*

With regard to the attack itself, there is agreement that a testimonial should not give the bloody details, how they looked, but should keep the dignity of the victim(s). The story moves on to how the survivors coped with the loss/death of a loved one, and the issues that had to be dealt with. A presenter may point out that they are not the only one, that in a mass terrorist attack whole swathes of people are affected – for one victim, the story included telling of '*the struggles we have had as a community rebuilding our lives'*. An important insight is how a random and senseless attack means '*you lose something of what kept you together, you lose your sense of agency'*. Was any sense of power an illusion? The story may be of the struggle to regain that sense of the ability to control events, however small.

Whatever the choice of start and end points, there is agreement that the story is not about the terrorists themselves, their motivations or backgrounds, even if these are known. To have intensity, a testimony is about personal and deep feelings, not theories or abstractions. If someone says 'I forgive', this is not saying everyone should practise forgiveness, but that this was a personal way of responding and coping – so that neither the presenter nor their family are consumed with anger – '*otherwise they [the terrorists] have won'*. There is debate similarly about whether a testimony should aim at increasing understanding – or whether 'understanding' a terrorist can function to give them equal humanity. Understanding how a perpetrator had been brainwashed might be part of the story, in order to warn the listeners. Yet, some testimony-givers do not want to evoke understanding, but to attain justice for those affected. For them, there should be no justification. Nonetheless, there is consensus that the story should not be about revenge, but how people dealt with anger and loss – and, importantly, '*got out of the victimised position'*.

Summary: Authenticity and truthfulness are key. Listeners need someone they can identify with, but the story should not give morbid detail, nor tell of the terrorists themselves. Your personal reactions, feelings and how you coped are central.

3. Aims and goals of delivering a testimonial

Aims will clearly vary according to the nature of the terrorism, its context and the time elapsed since an event. Aims also vary according to the audience – whether school/college students, parents, politicians, community groups or other victims. It is agreed though that those giving a testimonial should avoid preaching and heavy moral exhortations, although a common message to be underlined across all contexts is that violence is wrong, counterproductive and never justified. The aim is to avoid repetition.

This avoidance of repetition of violence is fostered through different routes. While not wanting to enhance a culture of fear, some presenters would want listeners to think about how they could be drawn into violence, and that they have choices not to be violent. Through their stories of how they coped, presenters show that anger and vengeance are

not the way forward. This entails challenging prejudice and intolerance: one survivor tells of how her daughter, who was killed in a massacre by a racist, had 'LOVE' tattooed on her arm and had a multitude of friends of different religions and ethnicities. There is a debate about whether generalised messages of love and tolerance actually work, in that people cannot be asked to love a perpetrator or respect a murderer. But one powerful message is to remember to *show* love for those around you before it is too late and something unforeseen occurs.

Other presenters are using testimonials to continue the fight for justice, including campaigns for victims' rights – whether in the form of support, compensation, insurance or just recognition. For terrorism that happened a long time ago, these may include reminders and histories of the struggle for justice, and the organisations involved. Here, a more politicised role does become significant.
One aim may be digital literacy, that young people use critical thinking to interrogate the messages they receive online or through social media and can avoid being drawn into movements or indirectly supporting them. This includes a critical perspective on everything from fake news, Holocaust denial, jihadi videos and far right tirades about immigration.

Overall, there is the aim of listeners not just attending passively, but being **inspired to act**. This may be small, unconnected activities such as a random act of kindness a day, or activities linked to extremism, for example around campaigns for non-violence or questioning Islamophobia or anti-Semitism. While all grief and loss are tragic, the message from those who have experienced the effects of terrorism is that in life there are elements that we cannot control, but murders we can. And a testimony may be a living example of resilience, the ability to bounce back after adversity, which can be an inspiration for any listener in a difficult situation. A presentation may intend to remain at increasing empathy; but this empathy should then mean treating others in a different way. Ideally, a testimonial should not leave listeners unmoved.

> *I say, you're young people, why am I telling you this sad story, but how can we as a society stop this sort of thing happening? You CAN make a difference, by going back to basics, by being part of the community. Which one of you has made a cup of tea without being asked? By doing acts you are positively contributing to the family and community. It needs to start from the family, then all community, making things better, more inclusive, more caring. What initiatives can you set up? Perhaps with older people, going into old peoples' homes? …* (a mother whose son was killed in the Manchester attack)

In tandem with a message of non-violence (which could come from any source), the purpose of a personal testimonial is that a victim should not be forgotten – and that they did not die in vain. Many survivors will have started or be part of networks of other survivors, giving support and collectively challenging the ideologies or hatreds which inspired the terrorist acts. A testimonial may be able to recount these more positive outcomes.

> *In the documentary 'A Mother's Story', Wendy says "I hope people realise what families go through by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. That they will realise that whereas everyone else goes back to their everyday life, this is what the affected families go through after a terrorist attack.*
> *"I also hope they think that something good has come out of it. We've supported thousands of people and are still working very hard at what we do. We didn't want Tim to be forgotten. We didn't want him to be just another number on the list of victims of the Troubles. This is our way of keeping him alive."* ([iii])

Summary: While all testimonials contain the challenge to violence, specific aims and goals vary. Non-repetition of violence can be achieved through showing love for others, the search for justice, improving digital literacy or inspiring listeners to take action.

4. Groundwork

While the story may be immediate and well known for the presenter, clearly some preparation will help in achieving maximum impact. It is advised that a presentation is discussed with someone else beforehand, perhaps someone who has already given one. They may advise on length, and on technicalities such as whether there is permission to use the story, or to record it, so that there are no surprises or sudden decisions to be made on the day. Timing may be important, that is, not too soon after an event when things are still raw – either for the presenter or the listeners.

4.1 Style and image

While everyone agrees on authenticity, there is a debate about whether this can be enhanced by techniques and 'tips' about telling a story – or whether this risks artificiality. Professional storytellers give advice such as:

- Structure with the 5 Ws – when, where, what, with whom, why
- Consider using a name and then he/she rather than I/we (at least to start with, so as not to have to relive your emotions or trauma); then come in with: 'And that person was me …'
- Appeal to imagination, ask questions
- Bring drama and dynamics into your voice, with variety of tone; your voice is your instrument, and timbre is important, so that even when you whisper it should be understood
- Think about body language, eye contact, use of gestures etc. – the performance

Some testimonial-givers are unsure about guidance such as this, and would simply prefer to use a soft voice, the opposite to violence, particularly when talking about personal emotions. '*I want the audience to feel emotions as if they know me.*' They would ask listeners to '*imagine if they were in my situation'.* The aim is not to scare them, not to make the audience feel guilty, and not to provoke fear and anger, nor pity.

4.2 Choice of language

If talking to students, presenters should talk in their language, perhaps with slang and humour, but never talking down to them. Presenters should bring respect to young people as equals. The young people need to feel safe, that is, safe to speak and give an opinion. It is agreed that '*kids are super smart.'* This means leaving lots of time for Q and A, and to address their curiosity or gaps in knowledge: they may not have been born when an atrocity happened. With adults and professionals, there may be greater focus on experiences after an attack, or on some statistics and numbers around who was affected.

In talking about people dying through terrorism, one view is that one should use the term 'murdered', not 'killed'. There was human responsibility: this is not just a traffic accident. Similarly, some argue that one should not use the term 'combatants', which relates to armies. The term 'freedom fighters' is seen as insulting to those who became victims. Perpetrators are not heroes. Yet, choices around terms such as 'terrorism', 'extremism', 'sectarianism' and 'bigotry' will depend on the target audience and the local context. There can be no one set of advice.

4.3 Using visuals

The spoken story is powerful, but additional visuals may make it even more so. The organisation *Facing History and Ourselves*

recommends at least maps so that students can locate the places named. But for deeper empathy, photographs or video clips relating to the people concerned greatly aid understanding. Nicola ([iv]) (whose son joined ISIS) uses photographs of her son from an early age, as well as screenshots of the texts he sent to her from Raqqa. The journey to becoming an extremist fascinates young people, as well as how subsequent communications happen. Photographs of people can also show how whole families are affected by a terrorist attack, down to grandchildren. However, visuals of attacks and injured victims themselves should be used rarely or with great caution; there are issues of the dignity of victims pictured and risk of revictimisation, as well as risk of glorification of horror and violence. Much more powerful are individual snapshots of people similar to the participants or in their everyday life, which can generate real empathy rather than distancing. Graphics should also be used sparingly as they are too close to the games young people play and could also lead to distancing. Music is rarely recommended.

Summary: Tips for storytelling can help some presenters. Choices of language and vocabulary are important, and age and local context need to be taken into account. Visuals help the story to be more powerful, not of the atrocity but of the personal histories and personalities of the victims.

5. Preparing for the day itself

5.1 Emotions

A testimony is an emotional event, and one that wants to arouse emotions in the listener. Emotions should not be masked. Yet, in telling the story, there is a difference between sharing emotions and being overwhelmed by emotion. The advice from seasoned presenters is that to avoid the latter, you should prepare and practice at home, think about target audiences you want to avoid/feel comfortable with, mix emotional moments with 'normal' ones, darker with lighter, have a facilitator to moderate, and know your own boundaries around content and your comfort zones. As we look at in the next section, knowing your target audience can also help to prepare you and not be overwhelmed.

There would be agreement that a presenter should ideally just tell their story without recourse to notes, learning by heart if necessary. Certainly, one should never just read out a prepared speech. You are communicating, and need to look at faces – if only to check that people are attentive and not on their mobile phones. Yet, on the day, it may be that emotions take over and one loses one's place in the narrative. Many presenters therefore have a Plan B, taking some notes with them, perhaps a set of pointers or outline cue cards, so that they can find their way again. The advice is to make sure you have a glass of water, and to try moving around to take your mind off that moment when you felt overwhelmed.

While there is disquiet by some about joint presentations that have a protagonist from each 'side', a starting point is to have perhaps 2/3 victims as a team, so that there is a 'buddy system', with 5–10 minutes each followed by Q and A. An attentive facilitator can also give support, or create time by asking the audience to be thinking about a question to ask.

5.2 Discussion with the host

Part of preparation is thinking about how you like to present your testimonial, and asking for this in advance (e.g. whether you like to stand behind a desk or a lectern and have something to lean on, or whether you want to move around and do not want to be on a stage). For some, it is important to stand, in order to show that you are still standing! If invited to do so, decide whether you want the audience in a

circle or in groups; find out what space you have and the numbers envisaged. If you are in the room before them, perhaps greet the audience personally when they are entering the room.

There is consensus that you should speak for up to 20 minutes maximum. It is important not to feel nervous just because there is an hour to fill: there will be more questions than you can ever tackle in the time allotted. But you should decide whether you want interruptions or not during the presentation. Many people feel questions are better afterwards, as you may be answering them later on.

On the day, ground rules should be set by your host or yourself about respect and listening. These are sensitive areas and it is important to prevent or forestall offensive remarks. One suggestion is to engage with people informally beforehand, as otherwise they may have a stereotyped image of what a victim is. Alternatively, you can agree to be interviewed by target audience members.

5.3 Knowledge of the audience

It is important that a presenter gains some knowledge of the audience, for example age and previous experience of work on VE or on related issues such as genocide. In schools, it is good to know where this is planned to fit in the existing curriculum, if at all, and how a school has tackled VE in the past – through rights education, moral education, religious education, history education, citizenship, etc. – and what has arisen from the discussions. If no obvious preparatory work has been done, more background history and/or geographical context may be necessary – remembering that for school students 9/11 is 'history', an event they have only heard of. In colleges or higher education, it is useful to find what students are studying (for example, justice may be studied by criminology or law students, and mental health by psychology students). This helps not necessarily the testimony itself but predicting the questions afterwards. However, adult audiences such as politicians or ex-prisoners can be far less predictable.

Knowledge of the religious/ethnic background of an audience may be useful. In countries such as the United Kingdom, with a Prevent agenda, the suspicion can arise that any work on VE is targeted at Muslims. General work on preventing violent extremism (PVE) can ensure that all forms of extremism are tackled, but when a testimony is given of a specifically Islamist atrocity, will this cause tensions in a mixed religious audience and/or feed into stigmatisation? It is critical that a testimony does not exacerbate Islamophobia. Again, discussion with the teacher beforehand is desirable to know how students react, and what teenagers want to hear.

A UCL study of Holocaust Education found in fact encouraging responses with regard to Holocaust Education, in that, contrary to some expectations (presumably of a pro-Palestinian stance?), Muslim children were not opposed to dealing with it, or that any opposition was marginal ([v]). Can one overthink responses? Reactions based on ethnicity or religion do not surface in the same way everywhere. Some victims will have been affected by attacks from independence, nationalist, or right or left-wing groups such as the Red Brigades, ETA and the IRA. It might be good to know about listeners' background if an ETA victim is delivering a testimonial in a region that is highly independence minded. '*Some people used to think (and some still do) that they deserved their death.*' In conflictual regions, it is not just the students but the background of educators as well as parents that plays a large role in response and follow-up. Students are not impartial listeners, and may themselves have been traumatised by something, may have lost a relative. They could have been near an atrocity (which is another reason to think about timing). The audience may have a perpetrator in it, or contain relatives still in a

movement. All this underscores the importance of keeping the testimony just to your personal reaction, and not getting into the politics of blame and retribution.

The advice is that, if you have control, make sure that young people and parents are not together in an audience. This is not a safe space for children to ask questions, and there is embarrassment if they ask questions in front of their parents and vice versa. Groups with opposing views and politicians can also be challenging!

Summary: Emotions should not be masked, but a presenter may need to have strategies not to be overwhelmed by them. Preparation is needed through deciding on timing and placing, talking with the host about the background of the audience and setting ground rules for discussion.

6. Where might the testimonial lead?

6.1 Reactions and questions

Even with preparation and foresight, it must be acknowledged that outcomes can be unpredictable: audiences are not neutral but have their own experiences and histories, into which they slot the testimony. The impact depends on the unique interaction between the narrator and the listener, which cannot always be foreseen. The interaction also depends on group dynamics: the narrator will trigger dynamics *between* listeners, depending on the way the groups already function. There will be a difference between a class where it is safe to express emotions and one where bullying and scapegoating are rife. A class that seems reluctant to ask questions may not be your fault, but reflects a situation where everyone keeps their heads down for fear of the response of others.

Much of the literature on the impact of giving testimony comes from Holocaust education, or memorialisation of genocides such as those in Rwanda or Bosnia. Is there a difference in response to testimony relating to ongoing phenomena such as terrorism compared to those in the past? In the historical space, for past events, listeners are powerless to do anything; but terrorism is happening now, and could happen tomorrow, and the role of implicit supporter or bystander becomes important. Contemporary events perhaps have more impact as they connect to everyday life; on the other hand, current extremist movements do refer to history on a large scale (medieval crusades, or denial of the Holocaust) and the overall goal of the testimony is to make clear what human atrocities can result in, long term, and what a personal stance on this might be.

In the geographical space, testimony may relate to incidents in an audience's own country or even immediate locality. One question is therefore whether testimony should lead into discussion of what has happened and what should happen to perpetrators, and the legal frameworks surrounding this. As well as the moral issues of revenge and forgiveness, the questions might move into political discussions of international criminal courts for war crimes and of contemporary legal provisions such as stripping returning extremists of their citizenship. In contexts such as the United States, teachers giving testimony about school attacks could lead into discussions of gun ownership and laws.

In a long and complex narrative, it is not always possible to predict what members of an audience will alight upon. What we have found in using former extremists or mothers of victims ([vi]), is that students are fascinated by 'trigger points' and 'what ifs': *if you hadn't seen this video about Muslims being killed/if you had not encountered this person when you were 15'/if your son had not gone to this*

mosque, would it have been different? Is it important to emphasise points of choice and decision-making (if appropriate) for an audience to think about the choices they themselves may make?

Part of critical thinking is always to question everything – but also to accept the arbitrariness of life sometimes.

Richard (Year 9, YH1) reflected upon the enormous significance of the physical presence of the survivor: 'It's just like, this guy's in front of me. If he hadn't made a decision when he was like eight or nine years old then he could of died in one of the most horrific ways ever.'

6.2 When the audience is upset

There can be resistance by some parents about their children being 'forced' to listen to what can be gruelling testimony (with parents preferring their children '*to live in some sort of Disney world*'). Does it matter that students become upset by hearing a testimony? Clearly, when listeners may have had experience of similar trauma themselves, and are forced to relive it, then this matters. However, the UCL study did find students feeling upset because it was 'more real', but that being upset gave some students the sense that this meant they had 'understood' – at least on a personal level. '*It became clear that many students considered being upset a meaningful personal experience, an apposite response to this history. At no point… did any students suggest that they might avoid the subject because it was upsetting, nor did they recoil from the difficult emotions evoked by survivor testimony in any other way. Rather, they appeared to really value such experiences:*

I did cry, but, because it was sad, but I think it's important to be upset about these things and if you're not upset, you're not having empathy, for the subject, and I think people should be upset about it, because then, you know what these people have experienced, and it makes you want to stop it.'

Being upset can also be positive when it opens up a good discussion among the learners, when they understand and empathise with each other and can talk about difficult themes. In contrast, it would seem that the result to avoid is when the emotions of the presenter lead to extremist reactions or even feelings of violence. This is averted when some sort of resolution or positive outcome can be related.

6.3 Light or dark?

Every victim/survivor is unique and will respond uniquely to events. Students will sometimes comment on how a survivor was also able to make jokes. One Holocaust visitor similarly commented:

> *'I could not get over how someone who had encountered the absolute worst of humanity could laugh so freely. I asked him this very question and he replied, "Otherwise, hate wins".'*

Equally, some survivors will talk of not showing anger or hatred, but rather how to make the world a better place. As discussed above, the consensus is that a narrative should contain something positive or lighter in tone – i.e. that not everything is dark (particularly for younger children), and/or that something constructive may emerge (for example, victims who have set up organisations to help others), or the unquestioning support across all religious, ethnic and class groups that is released immediately after an atrocity.

Summary: Outcomes can be unpredictable, and a presenter should be prepared to go in different directions. It is OK if an audience is upset, as they then recognise that they are experiencing empathy. It is valuable if something positive or light can be related too.

7. Pre- and post-presentation activities

In schools, youth centres and prisons (as opposed to a media presentation) where the testimony may be part of a broader and longer programme, pre- and post-testimony activities may be planned. How far should a victim suggest or influence these? They will be glad for feedback on their presentation, but should they actually advise on activities around it? The USC Shoah Foundation ([vii]) suggests an extensive range of pedagogical strategies – which may be debatable. They propose the following: *'Make explicit to students why they are going to learn about the topic of study through visual history testimony. Help students understand its value for learning across the curriculum and the topic of study'*.
Yet, is it better to let the testimony speak for itself, to surprise students? Constantly reminding them of the formal curriculum may be the kiss of death. Much depends clearly on where and why testimony is positioned in a school curriculum, for example as a result of lobbying by victim associations, where publicity is indicated. The question really is of the *type* of preparation needed. Should a school, as Shoah suggest, '*define all the terms and vocabulary to be used in advance*'? Should they engage in an activity such as '*students respond to a series of true/false statements related to the testimony, then return to consider their responses after viewing the testimony'?* So, a question is whether a range of factual information should be given in advance, or whether it is better to find out at the time what students want to know. Yet, what is agreed to be important is for a teacher to meet the victim beforehand, to discuss various questions that the students may ask and let him/her know that he/she is not obliged to answer all questions. The teacher or facilitator should also be prepared to tackle uncomfortable exchanges, for example prejudicial comments by students or even the victim themselves, as well as ensuring a relaxed debrief afterwards.

It may be interesting to keep in touch too with activities planned for students afterwards – visits to a museum, acting, making a film – which give a positive and longer-term impact.

Summary: A presenter may want to think about or be invited to contribute ideas for activities before or after the testimonial. A relaxed debrief afterwards should be requested.

8. Dealing with journalists and the media

Speaking to journalists about one's experience can be very different from giving a prepared testimony at a school or centre. Not all journalists behave ethically and will seek sensationalism immediately after an attack. There are guides for journalists on responding to tragedies ([viii]), but not all journalists will have read them. The press may not be respectful initially, creating yet another trauma. The victims become 'public persons' – they are asked fatuous questions such as *'How did you feel?'*, or *'What is going on in your head right now?'*, or they are asked for photographs. '*They will call you at 2.am!'*

Advice from journalists themselves includes:
- Stay with the personal story, not a revengeful message that could be twisted.
- Avoid unpleasant situations by checking beforehand whether the interview is recorded, shared on TV/radio/newspapers.
- Learn whether the interview will involve other people.
- Learn whether you will have a chance to read the story/hear the interview before it is released.
- Say you will call journalists back if they suddenly contact you and you are unprepared.
-

The media should be seen as both friend and enemy, so the ideal is for both sides to build trust. There should be give and take – '*we give something to them and they give something to us*'. This applies particularly when time has elapsed and the press has moved on to something else, whereas a victim or their association wants to keep it alive. Victims may be dying and justice was not achieved. The advice is therefore that if they want publicity, victims can highlight a milestone, perhaps an anniversary of the event, or an achievement of the support group, and email this to the press. This gives the press a reason to publicise it, and they might paste it in.

In relation to thinking about how to get one's story across in a short space of time, it can be useful to practice an **'Elevator pitch'**. This is imagining you have the time slot that it takes an elevator to go from the ground to the top floor to convince someone to be in touch with you or help you. (On paper this is about 100 words). In making your point on TV/media or with politicians, this often has to be done in a very short time. Here are the tips:

- Say your name slowly and clearly (we tend to rush this)
- Say who you are, and if you have a position (e.g. Chair of the Organisation of Victims)
- Select 2/3 aims or tasks of the organisation (not all 10), original/unusual ones in particular
- Repeat the name of the organisation, rather than 'We do this' or 'We are working on …'
- Involve the listener by using rhetorical questions such as 'You may wonder what/why …'
- Do not lecture
- Find a unique story – 'The biggest moment was when …'
- End on a high note, repeating the key message and stating that you would be happy to discuss further

While this is an artificial exercise, it is part of media training and helps generally in giving presentations.

Summary: Journalists are not always sensitive, and the media can be both friend and enemy. Preparation is needed so as not to allow a story to become twisted. Practicing short 'elevator pitches' can be useful in getting one's story across in a limited time.

9. Self-analysis and the aftermath

Finally comes the task of evaluating your testimony and its impact. As well as a general reflection, ask the host to tell you honestly how your presentation could be improved or done differently, what the best points were and what could be left out. Ask for this feedback in a comfortable place afterwards. You could request that the audience write and share feedback guided by the teachers in the case of students, sharing their feelings and what they got out of it. Alternatively, you could prepare a formal feedback sheet of the type that has levels of a 1–5 agreement on statements about whether it was engaging, interesting, informative, etc. A key piece of feedback is whether the hosting facility wants you back! Self-reflection is also valuable, thinking about how you dealt with emotions, whether you reached the goals that you wanted and how you tackled difficult questions.

A warning is that some feedback is unpleasant and unwarranted. When films have been made of the testimonial, and these are available online, people will use social media to engage in trolling and hate mail as well as giving support. A person who proposes forgiveness will elicit scorn and accusations of loving terrorists. If you are calm you are seen as 'cold', even 'dangerous', with the ultimate message being 'you deserve to die'. This is

unusual, but it is good to be prepared just to shake this off – and certainly not start to respond. Such mail just shows us how far we still need to go in tackling hate, and how important it is to continue with the testimonies.

Yet, in spite of tensions, limits and uncertain outcomes, Haswell ([ix]) reminds us that:

> *…it is crucial that our students study trauma testimony because the voices and images of trauma survivors are, for the most part, evidence of human-made violence. If war, slaughter, and exploitation result from the choices some people make, then their cessation will be the result of choices made by others -- our students, perhaps -- who have been roused out of their comfortable and safe lives by the kind of learning that changes lives: evidence with a face, with a voice*.

Endnotes

([i]) Denoix de Saint Marc, G., Guglielminetti, L., Netten, J., Lacombe, S., van de Donk, M., Galesloot, J, & Woltman, P., Handbook: Voices of victims of terrorism, 2016. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-rvt/docs/ran_vvt_handbook_may_2016_en.pdf

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([ii]) Denoix de Saint Marc, G., Guglielminetti, L., Netten, J., Lacombe, S., van de Donk, M., Galesloot, J, & Woltman, P., Handbook: Voices of victims of terrorism, 2016. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-rvt/docs/ran_vvt_handbook_may_2016_en.pdf

([iii]) Rampton, J., "Mother's Day is true to what happened" – Wendy and Colin Parry reflect on BBC's new Warrington bombing drama, RadioTimes, 3 September 2018. https://www.radiotimes.com/news/tv/2018-09-03/mothers-day-bbc2-drama-wendy-colin-parry-ira-warrington-bombing/

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([vi]) See: https://www.connectfutures.org

([vii]) USC Shoah Foundation, Using visual history testimony in the classroom, 28 October 2015. https://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/Data/EducatorData/Using-Testimony-in-Classroom.pdf

([viii]) Šindelářová, B., & Vymětal, S., Tragedies and journalists, Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, 2006. http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/tragedies-and-journalist-pdf.aspx

([ix]) Haswell, J. E., A cautionary approach to teaching testimony. Transformation: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy, Vol. 16, Iss. 2, Fall 2005, 13–37.