



Martin Rigby Counselling

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## MARTIN MEETS AUDIO DISCUSSIONS INFORMATION BOOKLET

Giving real people the voice to talk about real life experiences



- Are you a person with diverse life experiences to share?
- Are you a professional feeling extremely passionate about your work?
- Are you a group or organisation making a real difference to people's lives?

## MARTIN MEETS

Giving real people the voice to talk about real life experiences

Thank you for taking the time to read my information booklet about this exciting and innovative new project. For further information or simply to find out more about Martin Meets:

- Call me on 07468 790733.
- Email me at [mrigbycounselling103@gmail.com](mailto:mrigbycounselling103@gmail.com)
- Visit my website: [www.mrcounselling.co.uk](http://www.mrcounselling.co.uk)
- Follow me on Facebook and Twitter, using the hashtag #MartinMeets to share all your comments, ideas and suggestions with friends and colleagues and keep the conversation going.

### About Me

My name is Martin Rigby. I am a qualified person-centred counsellor, working in private practice in Preston, Lancashire. In addition to my therapeutic work I have created Martin Meets as a medium through which you as people, professionals, groups and organisations can

- Share your real life stories
- Discuss topical issues of public interest
- Promote your work with people, groups and the community

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This information booklet contains answers to some FAQs which should tell you all you need to know about Martin Meets, how you can get involved and what taking part means. If you would like your joining agreement, this information booklet and feedback form in another format please feel free to contact me to arrange this.

## 1. What is Martin Meets?

Martin Meets is a voluntary project launched in February 2016. It involves short audio recorded, person-centred discussions which aim to:

- Share real life stories
- Discuss topical issues of public interest
- Promote work carried out with people, groups and the community

## 2. Where did the idea for Martin Meets come from?

The idea to set up this project arose from my therapeutic work with clients over the last ten years. As a qualified and experienced counsellor, I have become increasingly aware that many of the clients I work with often feel excluded or rejected in some way by society.

I have also realized that certain social issues which may affect us all at some time in our lives, such as depression, disability and mental health, often get overlooked, deserve more attention and should be talked about more openly in public.

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### 3. What are the main objectives of Martin Meets?

These person-centred conversations are for anybody to take part in. Whatever your age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or social class you will be given an open platform to talk publicly about a wide range of real life issues, big or small, which may be affecting you or someone who you know.

For instance, as an individual you may have shown great courage and perseverance to achieve something remarkable or overcome a social barrier. This could include, for example, telling me about how you have raised money for charity, talking about caring for a loved one, recalling how you rescued someone in danger or describing what it's like to live with loss, disability or a longterm health condition.

Alternatively, if you are a professional such as a doctor, nurse, teacher, social worker, youth worker or therapist, you may wish to discuss why you chose to train in your particular profession, how your career has developed and what you consider to be the most important milestones in your working life. How have you made a difference to people's lives? Taking part in this project, for example, might also be the ideal opportunity to talk about any books you may have authored, key articles you've written or important research you've carried out.

### 4. What can I expect if I decide to take part in Martin Meets?

If you decide to take part you will find that these discussions are not meant to be therapy and not designed at all to be formal or directive interviews but are intended to be very informal and relaxed conversations where it's you who are the expert on your own life and work.

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5. Do I have to sign anything to take part in Martin Meets?

Yes. Before we record our discussion I will invite you to complete a joiner agreement form. This is not a formal contract but rather clarification of how the discussion should be conducted between us. The joiner agreement records your name, contact details, the date, location and subject of the discussion. It explains that at all times your data will be handled carefully and securely. Finally it gives you the option to express your interest in joining the Martin Meets Facebook Group, a developing online community where you will be able to continue to share your experiences with other like-minded members who have also taken part in Martin Meets.

6. How and where will the Martin Meets conversations be recorded?

I will record all Martin Meets conversations using a portable hand-held Dictaphone. This is the same kind of dictaphone I use for making counselling case notes on, meaning it is not used by anyone else and is always kept locked away in a secure place.

In terms of where we record the Martin Meets conversation this is entirely up to you. The beauty of taking part in this project is that it is so flexible! We can either agree a time to meet in the peaceful surroundings of my private therapy room, I could visit you in your own home or we could record the whole discussion online by Skype or using Facetime.

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7. How long will each Martin Meets conversation take to record?

For individuals the recording of interviews will usually take about half an hour. However if I am meeting different people in a group or from an organisation and therefore have discussions with more than one person, some recordings may last up to an hour.

8. How will the Martin Meets conversations be put online?

Once the conversations have been recorded, thoroughly checked and carefully edited they will be transferred onto my laptop and my AudioBoom app. Audio Boom is an audio social networking app which is accessible for visually impaired people. The recording of the conversation will then be published to social media.

9. Are the Martin Meets conversations confidential?

If you decide to participate you can choose to say who you are or remain anonymous. If you choose to say who you are, only your name will be shared. If you work for an organisation and intend to talk about the work you do, I recommend you get your employer's permission first prior to participating in Martin Meets.

On the other hand if you wish to remain completely anonymous no information or personal details which could identify you will be shared. However you should be aware that people who know you personally may still recognize your voice once the interview is put online.

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10. What if we've recorded the interview but I decide I don't want the discussion published online?

You are free to stop taking part in Martin Meets whenever you choose. If you decide you do not wish the discussion to be published online you can choose whether to keep a copy of it on CD or for it all to be erased. Once the discussion has been published online you are entitled to ask for it to be taken down and erased from my website and any social networking sites. However you should bear in mind that once the discussion has been published online it is likely to have been heard, shared and copied across a number of networks.

11. Are there any other ways I can continue to be involved in Martin Meets following my participation?

Yes absolutely. Once you have taken part in the project you will be sent a personal invite to join the Martin Meets Facebook Group. This is a secret group which means that all members and content of the group are completely private and cannot be viewed by anybody searching on Facebook or on the Internet. All contributions, information and posts you choose to share with the group are only visible to other group members and to myself as the group administrator.

Another way you can share your experiences is by taking part in my live fortnightly Tweet Chat. This will normally be held every other Thursday at 8pm. You can use the hashtag #MartinMeets to join in the conversation. Anyone can take part and the Tweet Chats will cover a wide variety of social issues including disability and diversity, mental health, personal development and self-employment. I normally announce details of the next live Tweet Chat on my website and via social media so please look out for the latest information there.

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Finally, as part of my Martin Meets project, I hold regular public speaking events and hold free motivational talks for local businesses, community groups, charities and organisations. These short talks, which normally last 30 minutes, are based on my personal and professional life experiences as a blind person and are designed to inspire, motivate and raise awareness.

If you would like to participate in any aspect of my Martin Meets project mentioned in this booklet please don't hesitate to contact me:

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