

WOMEN2024

Welcome to WOMEN24 - A Series of Talks! As part of our project work in 2024, we are hosting a series of online talks led by and tailored to local women and girls here in West Yorkshire. These talks delve into critical issues impacting women in our communities.

In response to the civil unrest this summer, this next talk on THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28th will focus on intercultural relationships and positive working in communities.

For over 20 years verd de gris arts' work has focused on bringing together people from many different social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds: sometimes for one-off projects, at other times to create something special, and lasting. The ONE VOICE Collective, who co-create these talks with us, have been meeting for weekly sessions for over 7 years now. Their example encourages people to come together and work out solutions to issues that impact their lives.

At ONE VOICE, local women from different backgrounds and life experiences sit around a table and talk. They share stories, ideas, creative activities and formulate collective responses. We believe, that when people come together like this, in a space filled with love, understanding and compassion, free from assumptions about *difference*, the message we send out to wider society can be huge.

ONE VOICE now shares the women's collective vision, wisdom, love and connection through public events, online conversations and creative happenings. This is more important than ever.

As well as Saalihah Rasheed and Samantha Gill, members of One Voice, we have three other wonderful guests joining us, to talk about their experience of cross-community, intercultural work, and share the positive things they are doing now, to make change.

Please join our conversation and help us celebrate what can be achieved when we work together!
Booking link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/women24-november-talk-tickets-1076492781889>

OUR GUESTS

SAMEENA HUSSAIN - Associate Director at Leeds Playhouse

Sameena Hussain is a freelance theatre director and facilitator based in West Yorkshire. Currently Associate Director at Leeds Playhouse, she's worked with Hull Truck Theatre, Opera North, Kiln Theatre, Lawrence Batley Theatre, RSC and Soho Theatre.

Sameena's work is rooted in community and connection and since she started her career she's been on a mission to remove barriers (both invisible and visible) preventing people from engaging with theatre and her projects have included everything from heritage projects, directing intergenerational performances to creating and delivering artist development programmes and co-leading anti-racist strategies in institutions.

Sameena is passionate about making theatre a safe and brave space, enabling dialogue and connection.



UTE KELLY - Associate Professor in Peace Studies and Associate Dean for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Faculty of Health Studies

Ute works at the University of Bradford, in two different but sometimes overlapping roles - she is an Associate Professor in Peace Studies and Associate Dean for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in the Faculty of Health Studies. She is passionate about finding ways for people to connect with themselves, with each other and with some of the wider issues that affect our lives. She is concerned about dynamics of polarisation that make this more difficult and interested in how we might get better at holding space for differences, disagreements and messy realities.

Outside work, she loves gardening, long walks around her home in the Calver Valley, taking photos of very small things and writing poetry.



SAALIAH RASHEED - Project Ambassador, Cloverleaf Advocacy, Community Interpreter, and part-time Small Business Entrepreneur

Saalihah first became involved with Verd de Gris in the Behind the Mask project back in 2014. She was referred by her GP after reaching out for help from a domestic abusive relationship of 20 years. Her struggles include childhood abuse, forced marriage, facing gender inequalities and race discrimination in her former job.

Saalihah is on a continuous journey of healing from mental health illness and educating herself on the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Domestic Abuse and Discrimination.

Saalihah has progressed to the OneVoice Collective and has remained a participant over the last 10 years.

She is passionate to use her lived experience positively, and work on changing her own life, help her children and disadvantage females in her family and friends, along with a vision to help women in the community.

Saalihah's Islamic faith plays a significant role in her everyday life and choices. She lives in Halifax with her children. In her spare time, she loves to cook, enjoys walking with her friends, discovering nice coffee shops and working to develop her business.



DR JENI VINE - Research & Development Manager at Belong Network

BELONG are the UK's leading membership organisation on social cohesion, offering academic research, consultancy, training, networking, thought leadership and events for members across sectors in the UK. They exist to connect, support and mobilise all those working to build stronger, more resilient, connected communities.

Jeni is responsible for all Belong's research work and leads on consultancy, evaluation, impact assessment training and resource development for our members and wider network. She also leads on Belong's Shared Ground Community of Practice. Jeni brings over 25 years' experience working in the not-for-profit sector and recently completed a PhD. Jeni co-ordinates the Sheffield Cohesion Advisory Group and also convened the Yorkshire and Humber Health Stream of Sanctuary.



SAMANTHA GILL - Project Facilitator & Communications Lead at verd de gris arts

Sam Gill, once a participant in the Behind the Mask project over six years ago, has since become a dedicated group lead at verd de gris arts. In her role, she leads group sessions and provides compassionate one-to-one support for women, using her lived experience to connect with and deeply empathise with those she supports. As a mother of three boys, Sam also finds joy in reading, walking, and attending church.

At the heart of verd de gris's work is community cohesion and bringing people together. For Sam, fostering unity and intercultural collaboration are central values, both in her role and personally. The group sessions she leads bring together people from all cultures and backgrounds, helping to break down barriers and build understanding across diverse communities. Sam sees the powerful impact of this work firsthand, as it cultivates trust, unity, and a stronger sense of community, enriching lives and promoting meaningful, lasting change.



This TALKS series is brought to you by VERD DE GRIS ARTS and is supported by THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND and WEST YORKSHIRE MAYOR'S SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND

