

St Luke's Charity for November is "Karma Nirvana"

Karma Nirvana means "Peace and Enlightenment" and it was founded 26 years ago and has been supporting victims of honour-based abuse (HBA) and forced marriage (FM).

The charity offers to help people who are:

- being pressured to get married against their will
- worrying about bring shame or dishonour on their family
- being emotionally or physically abused
- confused about what their religious scripture demands of them, and
- worrying about being disowned.

Today this service is seen as an important public service and there is a national Helpline - 0800 5999 247 - offering direct support and guidance to victims and professionals (almost 70,000 calls so far). Karma Nirvana does not discriminate between age, gender, sexuality, religious faith or no faith. In addition to direct support, it educates and trains UK statutory, voluntary and government agencies responsible for protecting UK citizens at risk of HBA and FM and being disowned by their families and communities. Other activities include public awareness and campaigning and education, and survivor ambassador program.

Try to imagine the horrors for these young people – mainly females – and the desperate straits to which they will go to escape such abhorrent practices. One hid a spoon in her underwear in order to set off metal detectors at the airport and, as a result, was escorted by security staff into a private room where she was able to inform them of what was about to happen to her. A volunteer, loving the arts, had the idea of small spoons that could be made into jewellery to sell to raise awareness and fundraise. Simple – but a loving response to a real problem in the UK today.

Karma Nirvana is a professionally managed charity which is seen in the UK as a key source of expert knowledge on Islamic cultural norms surrounding relationships between men and young girls/women. Please be generous in your support of Karma Nirvana this month and in future. Direct Donations can be made via their website.

To learn more about this excellent charity and its work and to buy your own spoon in the fight against forced marriage, please look at www.karmanirvana.org.uk or you can speak to Peter Ashwell 461087.