

Handling Disclosures and Reporting Protocols



Uniting Church in Australia
Culture of Safety WA

The Final Report and Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlights the many incidences of child sexual abuse which have happened in our churches and institutions over many years. For people who have been abused, this may help them to speak out for the first time, whether the incident occurred in the past or more recently. If a disclosure or an abuse incident happens within your congregation, school and/or agency you may find the following information helpful.

Handling Disclosures

- **Listen**...do not add anything to what the person says.
- **Reassure**... and acknowledge the large step forward they have taken in speaking to you.
- **Inform**...the person that there are people who can help them (*Refer to contact details below*).
- **Ensure**...the person is in a safe state of mind before they leave you.
- **Act**...by walking beside them when and if they decide to report the matter to the authorities.

How to Report

When adults disclose historical child sexual abuse, they should be encouraged to report the alleged abuse to the Police or a counsellor. If the alleged abuser was a minister or member of the Uniting Church, this must be reported to the General Secretary.

All disclosures from children and young people alleging harm, abuse or neglect should be reported to both Child Protection Services and local Police. Please also inform the General Secretary of the allegation and the proposed plan of support in your congregation, school and/or agency.

Reporting Contacts and Counselling/Support Services

Uniting Church Contacts

General Secretary

Rev Andrew Williams

Ph: (08) 9260 9800 or 1300 736 692

Email: general.secretary@wa.uca.org.au

Executive Officer: Culture of Safety

Cindy Gorton

Ph: (08) 9260 9800

Email: cindy.gorton@wa.uca.org.au / cultureofsafety@wa.uca.org.au

Culture of Safety Research Officer

Margaret Johnston

Ph: 08 9260 9800

Email: margaret.johnston@wa.uca.org.au

Counselling and Support Services

Relationships Australia WA

Provides services to support people affected by violence, relationship difficulties and abuse.

Ph: 6164 0100 or 1300 364 277

<https://relationshipsaustralia.org.au/services>

Department for Communities Child Protection & Family Support

The Department provides a range of child safety and family support services to Western Australian families and communities.

Disclosures: <https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/ChildDisclosingAbuse.aspx>

Reporting Concerns:

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/Ifyouareconcernedaboutachild.aspx>

SARC – Sexual Assault Resource Centre

SARC provides services to people, male or female, aged 13 years and over who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused both recently and in the past.

Ph: (08) 6458 1828 or 1800 199 888 (24-hour service)

https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Sexual-Assault-Resource-Centre-SARC