

Handling Disclosures and Reporting Protocols

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 (See below for contact details)

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 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 & Counselling and Support Services

Uniting Church Contacts

General Secretary
Rev David de Kock
Ph: (08) 9260 9800 or 1300 736 692
Email: general.secretary@wa.uca.org.au

Safe Church Officer
Cindy Gorton
Ph: (08) 9260 9800
Email: cindy.gorton@wa.uca.org.au

Deputy General Secretary
Rev Mark Illingworth
Ph: 08 9260 9800
Email: mark.illingworth@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 0190 or 1300 364 277
<https://relationshipsaustralia.org.au/services>

Department for 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