



Supporting Other Parents and Carers

The disclosure of child sexual abuse by a child or a young person can be a challenging and difficult time for families. As a result, parents/carers will often seek support from other family members or close friends that they trust and feel safe having a conversation with. Parents may feel challenged and overwhelmed in response to a disclosure and experience a range of emotions, which can include anger.

Supporting a loved one at this crucial time can take on different forms. It could be as simple as sitting with a person whilst they collect their thoughts, and at these times silence may be the most appropriate response.

Remember that if someone is confiding in you about their child's sexual abuse disclosure, it could be for any number of reasons, such as:

- They may need someone safe they can talk to, who will listen without judgment
- They may be trying to make sense of their family situation
- They may be experiencing a range of emotions and are unsure how to help their child at that moment
- They may also want some guidance on the next steps after a disclosure

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Listen and reassure them that you will help them as best you can.
- Avoid making assumptions or judgments about their situation.
- Validate their feelings (it is ok for them to feel many emotions at the same time).
- Do not try to problem solve.
- Do not provide assurances that you cannot deliver on (such as commenting that person will go to jail for what they did).
- Ask what you can do to help (do not assume they need specific help).
- Kindly remind them of their and your reporting responsibilities.
- Follow your obligation to report as soon as practically possible.
- Seek appropriate support for yourself if you are unsure as to what to do to support the child and parent/carer as to the best course of action.
- Seek appropriate support for you should you feel overwhelmed or triggered by the information shared with you.

HELPFUL SUPPORT NUMBERS

If you are unsure how to help someone at a critical time like this, that's okay.

You can contact Bravehearts' Information and Support Line between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday AEST on 1800 272 831.

You can contact the below services if you are in crisis or require after hours assistance.

- **Police Link – 131 444**
- **1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732**
- **Relationships Australia – 1300 364 277**
- **Kids Help Line – 1800 551 800**
- **Lifeline – 13 11 14**
- **13YARN – 13 92 76**

**IF A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM,
PLEASE CALL 000**