

Creating Safe Environments for Children

Participant Handbook

Life Saving Victoria 2016



The *Creating Safe Environments for Children* Training Program was developed by the Australian Childhood Foundation.



A MESSAGE FROM THE LIFE SAVING VICTORIA PRESIDENT

We believe that Safeguarding Children and Young people is everyone's business. .

Life Saving Victoria (LSV) is committed to the Safeguarding of Children and Young People (SCYP) and acknowledges a safeguarding organisation doesn't just happen; it requires conscious action to protect children from harm.

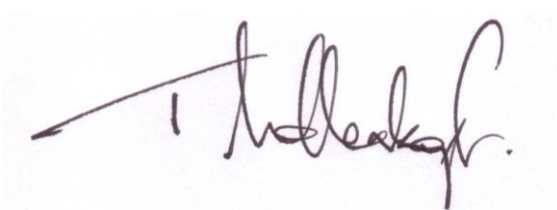
It is imperative that we provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people, that focus' on fun, education and building the confidence of our people through positive learning and development.

LSV has a legal and moral responsibility, underpinned by our mission and core values, to protect children and young people from harm. With the support of the Australian Childhood Foundation and SLSA, we are committed to creating a Child Safe Organisation. This Safeguarding Children training is one example of this commitment and exemplifies for the movement that the safety of children and young people is paramount and everyone's business.

All LSV People are bound by our commitment statement and are expected to do all they can to ensure every child and young person in our care is safe from harm. It is everyone's responsibility, from Board Directors to staff and volunteers, to understand the important role they personally have to play to ensure the safety of the children and young people in their care is at the forefront of all they do and the decisions they make.

Our current focus is to provide education, awareness and easily understandable child protection initiatives for the Lifesaving Movement in Victoria.

Thank you for your commitment and making it your business.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tom Mollenkopf', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Tom Mollenkopf
President

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access any of our activities, programs, events or services.
- We are committed to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences
- We commit to supporting families and communities to promote children and young people's healthy development and wellbeing.
- We will strive to ensure that children and young people are protected and are not exploited, abused or harmed during their involvement with any of our activities, programs, events or services.
- We will listen to children and young people and empower them by taking their view seriously and address any concerns that they raise with us.

OUR COMMITMENT TO PARENTS AND CARERS

- We are committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their children. We will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their children.
- We are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We will promote and distribute information about this Child Protection Commitment Statement to children and young people and parents/carers as part of an introduction to our services and programs.
- We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers, as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of children and young people or breach any confidentiality obligations.
- We will work to create an environment in which children and young people are safe and feel safe in any of our program, activities, and/or events

OUR COMMITMENT TO LSV PEOPLE

- We commit to a management structure that supports and develops staff in their roles
- We commit to providing all LSV people with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate development opportunities and supervision.
- We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to children and young people protection and welfare.
- We commit to regular training with regards to understanding the principles and intent of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- We commit to listen to all concerns voiced by LSV people in regards to keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We are committed to providing a robust reporting mechanism for all LSV people for any concerns around the safety or wellbeing of children and young people.
- We commit to provide opportunities for LSV people to receive the most appropriate support, which may include formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of child and young person abuse.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ENSURING A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

- We are committed to using good practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of LSV people, so as we protect from harm, abuse or exploit children and young people who are involved in our events, programs, services or activities.
- We commit to creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe in any of our programs, activities or events.

Introduction - Taking care of yourself

The abuse and exploitation of children can be a very confronting topic to consider. It can be distressing. It is often a topic we would prefer not to think about.

Child abuse and exploitation may be an issue with which you are familiar, or this may be the first time you have had to think about it.

As you work through the modules contained in this workbook, you may begin to feel overwhelmed.

Remember

- You **are not** expected to become a child protection expert.
- You **are not** expected to have all the answers to the issues you may encounter when on assignment.
- You **are** expected to have an awareness of the issues of child abuse and exploitation, understand what is expected of you with regard to your own behaviour, and to use a common sense approach in the protection of children.
- There are a number of people available within the Lifesaving Program with whom you can consult and seek support. Please make use of them. Child protection is a shared responsibility.

Be aware of how you are feeling.

Allow yourself to take breaks as you work through the material.

Workshop Overview

Module 1	Why is there a need to protect children?
Module 2	What is child abuse?
Module 3	What is the impact of child abuse?
Module 4	What are my responsibilities in protecting children from abuse?

Learning Outcomes

The following is a summary of the learning outcomes and key messages for each module.

Module 1 Why is there a need to protect children?

Participants will:

- consider their own knowledge, beliefs and ideas about child abuse; and
- develop an awareness and understanding of the size of the problem of child abuse.

Key messages

- All children have a right to grow up protected from harm.
- Child abuse is a complex problem affecting many thousands of children in Australia.
- Child abuse can occur in the community and within the context of organisations that provide services to children and families.
- The abuse of children by employees and participants of organisations has been of increasing concern in Australia.
- Children cannot stop child abuse. Adults can. The first step in stopping abuse is being aware of it.
- While there are many factors that contribute to the likelihood of abuse occurring in organisations, organisations can take steps to protect children and young people in their care.
- Child abuse is under-reported in both families and organisations.

Module 2 What is child abuse?

Participants will:

- be able to describe the various forms of child abuse; and
- be able to differentiate between community child abuse and organisational child abuse.

Key messages

- Child abuse takes many forms.
- Defining child abuse can help participants share a common understanding of what behaviour constitutes child abuse and can therefore help them act to prevent it occurring or to stop it when it occurs.
- There are four broad types of child abuse: physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Witnessing violence, bullying, sibling abuse and peer abuse are generally included within these types but are sometimes considered as distinct types.

Module 3 What is the impact of child abuse?

Participants will:

- be able to recognise common signs of abuse and exploitation; and
- be able to describe the impact of abuse on children.

Key messages

- Child abuse can have devastating long term consequences for children.
- Sometimes a child cannot tell us that they are experiencing abuse but there may be indicators or warning signs that a child or young person may be experiencing abuse.

Module 4 What are my responsibilities in protecting children from abuse?

Participants will:

- be aware of the background to and rationale for the *LSV Behaviour Guidelines*;
- develop an understanding of their obligations under the *LSV Behaviour Guidelines*;
- be familiar with understand how the *LSV Behaviour Guidelines* provide guidelines for their behaviour with children;
- be able to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to children;
- understand what constitutes a child protection concern; and
- be able to take appropriate action if they become concerned about the safety of a child.

Key messages

- You are responsible for and must be aware of your own actions and behaviour and use Life Saving Victoria's and *Behaviour Guidelines* to guide your interactions with children.
- The protection of children is everybody's responsibility. All coaches, officials and other involved persons participants may come into contact with children. As such all participants have the opportunity to contribute to the protection of children.
- The protection of children is complex and can present many dilemmas. Participants require support to address these issues.
- It is critical to believe children when they tell you about their experiences of abuse or exploitation.
- Reporting child abuse can be the first step in protecting a child from abuse. Failing to act can have devastating consequences for a child or young person.
- Proof is not required to make a report to statutory authorities about child abuse.
- It takes a lot of courage for a child or young person to disclose an incident of child abuse. Children rarely make up stories of abuse.
- Children or young people who disclose abuse need to be treated in a sensitive and respectful manner.

What do you know about the issue of child abuse and child protection?

You may have worked with children before and had previous training about the topic. You may know someone who has experienced abuse and violence. You may have read about it in the media. You may know very little about the topic at all.

Regardless of your level of experience, it is challenging to engage with the thought that children are most often abused by someone known to them - a parent or trusted adult, including people engaged in organisations to help and support children. This contradicts the popular view that families and organisations that work with children are nurturing, protective and safe places for them.

Despite the reality that child abuse, violence and exploitation is faced by millions of children around the world, it is an issue that very few Australians really comprehend.

Australian research shows that our community does not fully understand the extent of the problem of child abuse occurring in our own country. Community attitude tracking research undertaken by the Australian Childhood Foundation over a decade revealed that in Australia:

- child abuse rates thirteenth on a list of community concerns, rating below concern about the cost of petrol and perceived problems with public transport and roads;
- 43% of respondents felt so poorly informed on the issue so as to be unable to guess at the number of reported cases of child abuse, whilst those prepared to estimate, significantly underestimated the problem;
- 30% of respondents lacked the confidence to recognise the signs of child abuse;
- 25% of respondents had identified a child or young person who had been abused or neglected in the past five years;
- 77% of respondents appreciated the difficulty children would have in disclosing their abuse to someone, whilst 88% of respondents understood that children would be further traumatised if they were not believed and supported about such a disclosure; yet,
- a third of respondents believed that children make up stories about being abused and 1 in 5 respondents may not actually believe a child who disclosed abuse to them.

Test your knowledge

Myths and Realities about Child Abuse

How much do you know about the problem of child abuse? Take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Simply choose whether you think the following statements are Myth, Reality or Don't Know.

1. Children are more likely to be abused by people they know than by strangers.
Reality Myth Don't Know
2. The number of children being abused and neglected is increasing.
Reality Myth Don't Know
3. If children don't witness family violence they are not affected by it.
Reality Myth Don't Know
4. Child abuse can have long term damaging consequences for children that last into adulthood.
Reality Myth Don't Know
5. Boys are rarely victims of sexual abuse.
Reality Myth Don't Know
6. Children with a disability are more likely to become victims of abuse than non-disabled children.
Reality Myth Don't Know
7. Children are sometimes to blame for their abuse.
Reality Myth Don't Know
8. Children make up stories about abuse.
Reality Myth Don't Know
9. Children who disclose about their abuse and later retract their story were lying about the abuse.
Reality Myth Don't Know
10. It is not always obvious that a child is being abused.
Reality Myth Don't Know
11. If abuse happened once it is likely to happen again.
Reality Myth Don't Know
12. It's not my responsibility to interfere in how children are treated by others.
Reality Myth Don't Know

When you have finished the questionnaire, turn the page and check your answers.

Check your answers - Myths and Realities about Child Abuse

1. Children are more likely to be abused by people they know than by strangers.

Answer - Reality

Across the world, children are more commonly abused by people they know, such as family members, relatives, neighbours and other trusted adults such as professionals that work with them or community leaders. Incidents of physical violence are most likely to happen at home. Violence by strangers is rare. Most sexual abuse is perpetrated by people known to children rather than by strangers. It is not helpful for children to be told that they are in most danger from strangers because they can be left without adequate skills to protect themselves from trusted adults.

2. The number of children being abused and neglected is increasing.

Answer - Reality

Collecting reliable data on issues related to child protection is difficult. Child abuse and exploitation are most often hidden from the public eye and shrouded in secrecy. Much of it is never disclosed. As such, official data underestimates the true scale and extent of the problem. However, researchers and workers in the child protection field agree that whilst improved community awareness is leading to more children being reported in recent years, it remains extremely likely that the real numbers of children being abused globally is increasing.

3. If children don't witness family violence they are not affected by it.

Answer - Myth

Children do not need to see violence between adults in their family to know that it is happening and be affected by it. Children see the aftermath of violence in their home. They see the impact of the violence on victim of the assaults. Relationships between children and their parents are significantly affected by the violence that occurs between the adults.

4. Child abuse can have long term damaging consequences for children that last into adulthood.

Answer – Reality

Child abuse is very serious. Many children suffer long term harm, both physical and emotional. Some children die. The effect on children can vary depending on factors like the type of abuse, the duration and frequency of abuse and the relationship they have with the person who abused them. Research is consistently showing that the majority of adults who experience problems like depression, drug abuse, unemployment, relationship difficulties, homelessness and crime have been abused as children.

5. Boys are rarely victims of sexual abuse.

Answer - Myth

Most, but not all, victims of child sexual abuse are girls. In approximately one quarter of all child sexual abuse cases reported the victim is a boy. There is evidence to suggest that sexual abuse of boys is not reported as readily, and in some cultures not even understood, so the proportion of sexual abuse happening to boys may be much higher.

6. Children with a disability are more likely to become victims of abuse than non-disabled children.

Answer - Reality

Evidence suggests that disabled children are more likely to be abused than their non-disabled peers. Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to physical violence and sexual, emotional and verbal abuse, and in some instances, the disability is itself caused by maltreatment. Children with disabilities are less likely than other children to be in school. They may also have trouble using the

health services they need, whether because those services are inaccessible, or due to discrimination or exclusion. In the developing world, where disability is poorly understood and support is under-resourced, children with a disability are at extraordinary risk of neglect and ostracism by the family as a result of issues such as the perceived shame caused to the family by the disability, or the inability of the child to feed or care for himself.

7. Children are sometimes blame for their abuse.

Answer – Myth

Children are never to blame for the abuse they suffer from adults. Adults are always responsible for their own behaviour to children. No matter how children behave, an adult never has any right to abuse a child.

8. Children make up stories about abuse.

Answer - Myth

Children rarely lie about abuse. Children's disclosures of abuse may vary in their content because of their reluctance and fear to tell what has happened.

9. Children who disclose about their abuse and later retract their story were lying about the abuse.

Answer – Myth

Children who disclose experiences of abuse can subsequently become aware of very worried and fearful about the consequences of them talking about what is happening. For example, their parents may be very upset or in conflict with each other, or with the friend or relative the allegation is about. Children may fear the parent they have disclosed about will be removed from the family or that they, themselves, may be removed from the family. Adults may pressure children to retract using threats and other forms of pressure. The shocked and angry reactions of some adults when they hear about abuse can make it very difficult for children to continue to speak out.

10. It is not always obvious that a child is being abused.

Answer – Reality

In fact, the effects of child abuse are rarely easy to identify, and people who abuse can go to great lengths to conceal it. Many of the common signs and symptoms of abuse can be confused with normal, everyday happenings. Children are often forced not to tell by threats, or led to believe that they will not be believed or will be blamed and punished. Adults need to be aware of the possibility that changes in a child's behaviour may be caused by child abuse.

11. If abuse happened once it is likely to happen again.

Answer – Reality

Abuse is seldom a one off incident. It is usually repeated over periods of months and years. The person being abusive may move on to abuse other children.

1. It's not my responsibility to interfere in how children are treated by others.

Answer – Myth

Children cannot stop child abuse. Adults can. All children have the right to be protected from violence, exploitation and abuse, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, race, ethnic origin, religion or culture. Child protection is the collective responsibility of individuals, families, organisations, communities and governments. It is not your responsibility alone.

Children cannot stop child abuse. Adults can.

“Everyone in contact with children has a role to play in their protection. They can only do so confidently and effectively if they are aware and have the necessary understanding and skills.”
(Tearfund and NSPCC, 2003)

As a result of their developmental infancy and reliance on adults to meet their basic needs, children are among the world’s most vulnerable citizens. In developing countries additional risks are faced by children as a result of their gender, socio-economic circumstances and some cultural and religious practices.

The abuse and exploitation of children happens at the hands of adults and others who are more powerful. The protection of children is also in the hands of adults and those with power to make a difference. We can uphold the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and protect children by:

- ✓ Asking what is in the best interests of a child?
- ✓ Creating child safe and friendly environments where children can thrive.
- ✓ Speaking respectfully with children.
- ✓ Listening to the views of children.
- ✓ Being role models for safe and respectful interactions with children.
- ✓ Providing opportunities for children to participate and contribute.
- ✓ Encouraging children to speak up if they have a problem.
- ✓ Responding to concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child.
- ✓ Working with others to share knowledge and experience in child protection.

Impact of abuse, violence and exploitation on children

“...You can't forget something like that. I'll still be dealing with things later down the track. It's always going to be in the back of your mind. I don't think it will ever go away...”

(16 year old Belinda)

In order to achieve good health and social and emotional well-being, children need supportive and nurturing environments. Child exploitation and abuse traumatises children and adversely affects their development and well-being. At its core, child exploitation and abuse undermines a child’s right to grow up safely.

Research clearly indicates that children who have been abused or neglected often have poorer outcomes on many indicators of health and well-being including social, emotional, physical, and psychological functioning (Lamont, 2010). These can include:

- Permanent physical damage
- Developmental trauma
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Developmental problems such as delayed emotional and social development and learning difficulties
- Low academic achievement
- Self harming and suicidal behaviour
- Aggression and acting out behaviour
- Difficulties making and maintaining positive relationships

Without support, these consequences can last a lifetime. With support and assistance children can recover from the devastating consequences of abuse and neglect.

Term	Definition
Child Abuse	Child Abuse is the mistreatment by an adult of a Child or Young Person that has harmed, is harming or is likely to harm or endanger that Child or Young Person's physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to Emotional or Psychological Abuse, Bullying, Grooming, Sexual Exploitation, Neglect and Child Harassment.
Child / Young Person	A Child or Young Person is a person under the age of eighteen years.
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	Emotional or Psychological Abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. Specific to swimming, overtraining can constitute Emotional or Psychological Abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the Child or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
Family Violence	Family Violence occurs when Children or Young People are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to Children and Young People. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family Violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a Child or Young Person's life. Exposure to Family Violence places Children and Young People at increased risk of physical injury and Harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate failure or denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such Neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Physical Abuse	Physical Abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful overtraining, and kicking. It also includes giving Children or Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of Harm.
Sexual Abuse	Sexual Abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a Child or Young Person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the Child or Young Person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging Children and Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging Children and Young People in sexual conversations on the internet is also considered Sexual Abuse.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

<p>Indicators of emotional abuse</p> <p>Emotional abuse/psychological abuse may cause delays in physical, emotional or cognitive development. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in physical development • Failure to thrive • Speech disorders 	<p>Behavioural indicators of emotional abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing food • Staying at school or other activities outside hours and not wanting to go home • Lacks trust in other people • Reluctance to attend an activity at a particular club or organisation • Tired, lethargic, falling asleep at inappropriate times • Abuse of alcohol or drugs • Aggressive behaviour • Poor peer relationships • Indiscriminate with affection • Lack of social skills • Distress, e.g. frequent crying or apathy • Demonstrating fear, of parent, caregiver or other adult • Attention or risk taking behaviour
<p>Indicators of neglect</p> <p>When a child has been neglected, you may notice that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffer from frequent hunger or malnutrition • Have poor hygiene • Wear inappropriate clothing • Remain unsupervised for long periods of time • Lack proper medical attention • Experience abandonment by parents/carers • Fail to thrive. 	<p>Behavioural indicators of neglect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing food or clothing • Spending time at school or other external activities beyond the usual hours • Reluctance to attend an activity at a particular club or organisation • Tired or falling asleep at inappropriate times • Abuse of alcohol or drugs • Aggressive behaviour • Poor peer relationships • Indiscriminate with affection • Desire for adult affection • Poor emotional response / lack of expression or enthusiasm • Anxiety about being left • Frequent rocking and sucking behaviour

<p>Indicators of physical abuse</p> <p>Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bite marks, cuts, welts, scratches Fractured bones Poisoning Internal injuries Shaking injuries Strangulation marks Ingestion of alcohol and drugs Dislocations Head injuries</p>	<p>Behavioural indicators of physical abuse</p> <p>Expressing little or no emotion when hurt Offering unlikely explanations for injuries Wearing long-sleeved clothes on hot days (possibly to hide bruising or other injuries marking the body) Demonstrating fear of particular care givers, other adults or children Demonstrating a fear of their parents or a fear of going home Being fearful when other children cry or shout Being excessively friendly to strangers Being passive and compliant Being nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive Telling someone that physical harm has occurred.</p>
<p>Indicators of sexual abuse</p> <p>Many of the physical indicators of sexual abuse are only identifiable via a medical examination. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually transmitted diseases • Semen in the vagina • Vaginal or anal injury or scarring • Injury to the penis or scrotum • Abrasions tears and • Bruises to the vagina or anus • Chronic urinary tract infections or difficulty urinating • Bleeding from the anus or vagina <p>Often the first indication the child gives is when they tell a person whom they trust that they have been sexually abused.</p>	<p>Behavioural indicators of sexual abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity • Sexual aggression towards younger or more naive children • Sexual invitations or gestures to older people • Sexual interaction involving animals or toys • Sexual promiscuity or prostitution • Regressive behaviour, such as bedwetting and speech loss • Challenging and aggressive behaviour • Fear of people of a particular type or gender • Suicidal and self-harm behaviour including self-mutilation, drug or alcohol abuse • Risk taking behaviour such as lighting fires • Cruelty to animals • Criminal activity • Frequent rocking, sucking and biting behaviour

Australia-wide Support Services

Source: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/pubs/factsheets>

Service	Description	Contact
1800 RESPECT	A national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced-or are at risk of-physical or sexual violence. This service is designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, young people, and callers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week 1800 RESPECT
Lifeline	A generalist and crisis telephone counselling, information and referral service, provided by trained volunteers who are supported by professional staff.	13 11 14 Lifeline
MensLine Australia	An Australian Government initiative providing telephone counselling and a referral service for men. It is operated by Care Ring (Personal Emergency Services Inc), and is a resource for men who need advice on a large range of issues (e.g., relationship support, parenting skills) and for those at risk of committing suicide.	1300 78 99 78 MensLine Australia
Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS)	Workers offer information, referral and ongoing support to those affected by child abuse, concerned about the welfare of a child, or needing family or parenting support.	1800 688 009 Child Abuse Prevention Service
Domestic Violence Helpline	Telephone counselling for victims of domestic violence and their concerned friends. Also provides information about services for those affected by domestic violence or who are troubled by their own behaviour.	1800 800 098
Child Wise-National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline	Support service for individuals, organisations, professionals and parents requiring assistance on child protection. A compassionate and professional team of trained counsellors can assist with any enquiry or report relating to child sexual abuse.	1800 99 10 99 Mon-Fri: 9am - 5pm Child Wise Helpline

Grooming behaviours include:

- gaining the child's trust by making promises and giving gifts
- lavishing a child or young person with attention and praise so they enjoy spending time with the perpetrator
- engaging with the child in various forms of close physical contact so that they become comfortable with close physical contact e.g. by roughhousing, tickling, patting
- gaining the trust of the child's carers/parents
- assisting and ingratiating themselves with the family and the child e.g. offering to babysit, financial assistance, tutoring.
- trying to isolate the child or young person from their parent/s or carer, creating a situation where the child or young person wants to spend time with the perpetrator
- spending time exclusively with the child
- providing cigarettes, drugs or alcohol to a child or young person
- making sexual comments or jokes
- using pornography to open sexual discussions with children and young people

Other manipulative behaviour that is often used in addition to grooming behaviour:

- using their role, position of authority or uniform to encourage or force the child to comply with the adult's wishes
- using threats and fear to force the child to comply
- using guilt and shame tactics to stop the child from telling
- using physical force to overpower the child

Listen to and believe children

"...I did, but I didn't want to tell. I wanted to but I didn't want to....I was thinking, if I told and he found out, I would be in trouble..."

Sam (8 years)

Children must often overcome many hurdles in order to disclose their abuse – fear of being further abused, fear of being blamed, fear that they will be in trouble. Many children have been threatened if they tell anyone about their abuse. Others are repeatedly told that they will not be believed if they tell. As a result many children never disclose to anyone about the abuse they are experiencing. They remain frightened, alone and unprotected.

The reactions of adults make a major difference to the short and long term effects of abuse on children.

It is critical to believe children when they tell you about their experiences of abuse or exploitation.

Believing starts with listening and keeping an open mind to what children tell you. Children rarely lie about abuse and neglect. Speaking out is rarely easy for them.

Here are a few simple ways that you can make a difference to a child who tells you about his/her abuse:

Do

- Believe the child
- Be calm, supportive and reassuring
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault
- Concentrate on the child's feelings rather than on questions and answers
- Explain what you are going to do now that you have been told

Don't

- Make promises that you cannot keep
- Promise secrecy
- Push the child to give details of the abuse

After a child has disclosed to you, it is often useful to write down what the child said to you, in the child's words. This type of information is extremely helpful when the circumstances for the child are investigated. Record this information, including the date and time, as soon as possible after you have attended to the child's need for support and protection.

Reporting a Child Protection Concern

Child Protection Concerns include:

- Disclosures of actual harm, abuse or exploitation of a child;
- The potential risk of harm, abuse or exploitation of a child;
- Breaches of the protection policies or Code of Conduct by staff or volunteers.

A reasonable belief

You do not have to prove that the abuse/breach of code of conduct is happening.

It is not your job to investigate child abuse.

You must report a child protection concern if you form a reasonable belief that it is occurring or is at risk of occurring. A reasonable belief is defined as an inclination to believe something rather than not believe something.

Trust your judgement.

Don't ignore your concerns.

Who do I report my concerns to?

You **must** notify your Child Protection Officer of your child protection concerns. Depending on your Core Partner, there may be others to whom you must also report.

Legislation

Mandatory Reporting

Contact the government department in your state or territory to find out about relevant mandatory reporting legislation in your jurisdiction.

Tasmania:

Department of Health & Human Services

http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services

Victoria:

Department of Human Services

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection>

Western Australia:

Department for Child Protection

<http://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>

South Australia:

Department for Families and Communities

<http://www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/protectingchildren/ReportingChildAbuse>

Australian Capital Territory:

Office for Children, Youth and Families

http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/services/care_and_protection

New South Wales:

Department of Family and Community Services

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docs_menu/preventing_child_abuse_and_neglect/reporting_suspected_abuse_or_neglect.html

Northern Territory:

Office of Children and Families

http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/Child_Protection/

Queensland:

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse>