

# Appendix E

## SUPPORT SERVICES

**If you believe that a child is in imminent danger or in need of medical assistance, call Police or Ambulance services on 000.**

If you are feeling distressed, are worried about someone or would like someone to talk to, you can contact:

- Kids Helpline on **1800 55 1800** or [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)
- Headspace on **1800 650 890** or [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)
- Lifeline Australia on **13 11 14** or [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- Bravehearts counselling and support for survivors of child sexual abuse on **1800 272 831** or [www.bravehearts.org.au](http://www.bravehearts.org.au)
- Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) on **1800 008 774** or [www.clan.org.au](http://www.clan.org.au)
- PartnerSPEAK (peer support for non-offending partners and families of perpetrators of child sexual abuse) on **03 9018 7872** or [www.partnerspeak.org.au](http://www.partnerspeak.org.au)
- 1800 RESPECT national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service on **1800 737 732** or [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)
- MensLine Australia on **1300 78 99 78** or [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)
- Men's Referral Service on **1300 766 491** or [www.ntv.org.au](http://www.ntv.org.au)
- Relationships Australia on **1300 364 277** or [www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au)

For information about relevant support services and other resources, you can contact:

- Healing Foundation on **02 6272 7500** or [www.healingfoundation.org.au](http://www.healingfoundation.org.au)
- People With Disability Australia on **1800 422 015** or [www.pwd.org.au](http://www.pwd.org.au)
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia on **1800 222 660** or [www.cyda.org.au](http://www.cyda.org.au)

For additional helplines and counselling services for children, young people and parents, Australia-wide and by state and territory, see the online resource sheet developed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

For additional counselling and support services for parents, see the online Parentline counselling services in each state and territory.

- Fear of getting perpetrator into trouble
- Promise to offender they will not tell
- Self-blame and shame about what has happened
- Wanting to protect a family member
- Not wanting to upset equilibrium of the family
- Mistrust of adults and professionals

## Some barriers for adults recognising and responding to disclosures

- Misguided loyalty amongst adults in an institution
- A high degree of trust including religious affiliation amongst adults leading to disbelief of disclosure
- An unwillingness to take a child's word seriously; refusal to listen
- A culture that prioritises institutional reputation over care and safety of children
- The status afforded religious leaders who are considered not capable of such an offence
- A lack of formal avenues for children to disclose; no one the child can approach
- A bias that children make up stories and can be overly dramatic about things
- Children dismissed, blamed and not believed, and sometimes punished for attempting to disclose; made to feel responsible themselves
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children not feeling culturally safe; distrust of non-Aboriginal authority

# Appendix F

## OVERCOMING BARRIERS

### TO DISCLOSURE

## Some barriers to children making disclosures

- Fear of not being believed; anticipate being dismissed
- Afraid that they will get into trouble
- Lack of opportunity which never seemed to present itself
- Relationship with the perpetrator – considered a friend
- Revere of perpetrator as an instrument of God

## How to reduce these barriers

### For children

- Develop a culture in which children participate in decision-making
- A culture where children have the right to give their views and opinions and be listened to
- A culture where children feel their views are valued and listened to
- Children will be more likely to make disclosures if they feel safe and empowered
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Is children connected to other ATSI people they trust, their culture and language

### For Adults

- Not to talk down to children and young people, but to treat them with respect
- Not to make assumptions about what children and young people are capable of
- Give children and young people time and space to express themselves
- Engage children and young people in dialogue about the ten standards
- Not to dismiss any disclosure even when it may seem to threaten adult relationships, or the fabric of a community, or family loyalty
- Be aware of cultural safety in a linguistically or culturally diverse situation. Try to engage a trusted person from the same culture of the child or has experience of the child's culture e.g. elder, family

member, interpreter or support person

- Willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and openness to children indicating what they find comfortable and safe

## Appendix G

### HANDLING DISCLOSURE

#### The following are some helpful steps when handling disclosure.

A disclosure happens when you have reasonable grounds to suspect harm:

- If a child tells you directly that they have been harmed
- If a child tells you indirectly (for example, writing about abuse)
- In journal, drawing pictures of inappropriate touching or playacting abuse scenarios)
- If someone else tells you (for example, another child, parent or colleague) that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- If a child tells you they know someone who has been harmed
- If you are concerned at significant changes in behaviours of a child, or the presence of new, unexplained and suspicious injuries
- If you see harm happening.

#### If a child discloses or complains to you about abuse by someone else:

- Ask another adult to be with you
- Listen to the child and let the child speak freely
- Do not ask questions other than to clarify your understanding. If you must ask a question, make sure it is open-ended (for example, what, when, who, where)
- Explain that you cannot keep it a secret
- Let the child know what you are going to do next, including who you will need to share the information with
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you

#### Some helpful responses:

- Thank you for telling me.
- You were brave to tell.
- Do you want to tell me anything else?
- I will talk to [name] who will know what to do next.

Adapted from *Tarrawarra Abbey Child Safety Policy* November 2019

*MGL Policy for Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults* Commitment 5 (December 2019)