

## **Guide for Handling Responses to the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care Report (July, 2024)**

1. Stay Calm and Compassionate, Non-judgmental and Non-protective of the Church:
  - Greet individuals with kindness and understanding.
  - Maintain a calm, composed, and compassionate demeanour throughout the interaction.
2. Ensure Privacy and Safety:
  - Invite the person to a private, comfortable space where they can speak freely.
  - Ensure they feel safe and secure.
3. Listen Actively and Respectfully:
  - Allow the person to express their feelings and concerns without interrupting.
  - Show empathy and understanding through nodding and verbal acknowledgments like "I'm deeply sorry to hear that" or "That sounds very difficult."
4. Acknowledge the Pain:
  - Validate their feelings and experiences by acknowledging their pain and anger.
  - Use phrases like "Thank you for sharing this with me" or "I appreciate your bravery in coming forward."
5. Apologise Sincerely:
  - Offer a sincere and heartfelt apology for the harm they have experienced.
  - Use phrases like "I'm truly sorry for what you've been through" or "I deeply regret that this happened to you."
6. Provide Immediate Support:
  - Ask if they would like to have someone else present for support, such as a friend, family member, or counsellor.
  - Offer resources for immediate support, such as contact information for counselling services or support groups (see 'Abuse in Care Report Support' sheet).
7. Explain the Church's Position:
  - If appropriate, explain that the Church is taking the findings of the Royal Commission seriously and is committed to addressing past abuses and preventing future ones.
  - Share any actions the Church is taking in response to the report, such as implementing new safeguarding measures or offering support to survivors.
8. Gather Information Respectfully:
  - If they are comfortable, ask for details about their specific concerns or experiences to understand the situation better.

- Take notes with their permission, including their name, contact information, and specifics about their concerns.

#### 9. Explain the Next Steps:

- Clearly explain the procedures and actions that will be taken to address their complaint or concerns.
- Assure them that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care and confidentiality.

#### 10. Follow Church Protocols:

- We are aware that church protocols have protected perpetrators of abuse and the institution while maligning survivors of abuse. Therefore, we can expect distrust.
- We are relying on the support of survivors to have good protocols.
- Follow the church's specific procedures for handling complaints and concerns related to abuse (See '[Responding to Disclosed Abuse](#)' sheet)
- Inform the appropriate authorities within the church, such as vicar, diocese, or safeguarding officer.

#### 11. Provide a Resolution Timeline and Give Regular Updates:

- If possible, give an estimated timeline for when they can expect a follow-up or resolution.
- Ensure that you follow up with regular updates, even if progress/ the schedule is running behind.

#### 12. Thank the Person:

- Thank the person for their courage and for bringing their concerns to your attention.
- Use phrases like "Thank you for trusting us with this" or "We are committed to addressing these concerns."

#### 13. Document the Complaint or Concern:

- Ensure that all details of the complaint or concern and the steps taken are documented accurately.
- Submit the documentation to the appropriate authorities within the church.

#### 14. Follow Up:

- Follow up with the person after the issue has been addressed to ensure they are supported and informed about any actions taken.
- Offer ongoing support and resources as needed.

#### 15. Stay Positive and Supportive:

- Keep a positive attitude focused on healing and resolution.
- Emphasise that there are people within the church committed to justice, healing, and preventing future abuse and who care.

Remember, handling responses to the Royal Commission's report with sensitivity and care is crucial for the healing process of individuals and for maintaining the integrity and trust within the parish community.

## Abuse in Care Report - Support

Listed below are many organisations and groups that offer support to those effected by abuse. If you are worried about your or someone else's mental health, the best place to get help is from your GP or local mental health provider. *However, if you or someone else is in danger, or a person is endangering others, call the **police** immediately on **111**.*

- [Alcohol and Drug Helpline](#) 0800 787 797 or online chat for people dealing with an alcohol or other drug problem; 10am-10pm
- [Anxiety phone line](#) 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)
- [AVIVA](#) 0800 28482 669 Christchurch based support for those wanting to live free from violence; 24/7.
- [Depression Helpline](#) 0800 111 757 or free text 4202 (to talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions)
- [Family Services 211 Helpline](#) 0800 211 211 for help finding (and direct transfer to) community based health and social support services in your area.
- [Family Drug Support Aotearoa New Zealand](#) 0800 377 877 Support for family and friends impacted by alcohol or other drug use by family or friends including counselling support.
- [HELP](#) 0800 623 1700 preventing sexual abuse and supporting survivors; 24/7.
- [Lifeline](#) 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)
- [Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Aotearoa New Zealand](#) Support services for male survivors of sexual abuse. Refer to website for the support organisation nearest to you.
- [Need to talk?](#) Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.
- [OUTline NZ](#) 0800 688 5463 (OUTLINE) provides confidential telephone support for sexuality or gender identity issues; 9am-9pm weekdays, and 6pm-8pm weekends).
- [Rape Crisis](#) 0800 883 300 (for support after rape or sexual assault)
- [Safe to talk](#) (Available 24/7) 0800 044 334, free txt 4334, email [support@safetotalk.nz](mailto:support@safetotalk.nz), live webchat on [www.safetotalk.nz](http://www.safetotalk.nz).

Free and confidential information and support from trained counsellors for people affected by sexual harm in any way.

- [Samaritans](#) 0800 726 666.  
Skylight, 0800 299 100 for trauma, loss and grief; 9am–5pm weekdays
- [Shine](#) 0508 744 633, free to call from any phone in NZ, and taking calls 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Call for confidential support, information, advice and referrals.
- [Skylight](#), 0800 299 100 for trauma, loss and grief; 9am–5pm weekdays.
- [SNAP - Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests](#) Providing peer support for women and men wounded by religious and institutional authorities.
- [START](#) Christchurch based for early intervention, counselling and support for children, youth and adults and their families who have experienced sexual violence or other trauma.
- [Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO).
- [Supporting Families in Mental Illness](#) For families and whānau supporting a loved one who has a mental illness. Auckland 0800 732 825.
- [Victim Support](#) This free service provides emotional and practical support, information, financial assistance, referral to other support services and advocacy for the rights of victims.
- [Wellington HELP](#) 0800 FOR HELP supports anyone and everyone who has been impacted by sexual violence. Call anytime.
- [Youthline](#) 0800 376 633, free text 234 or email [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz) or online chat.

Other support services are listed on the [Abuse in Care: The Royal Commission of Inquiry website](#). They include links for support with legal representation, historic claims of abuse, requesting personal information, and various government agencies.