

How to Respond to a Disclosure

Unsafe secrets should never be kept.

Learn to Be Safe with Emmy and Friends helps children recognise unsafe behaviour and report abuse to a safe adult.



WHAT IS A DISCLOSURE?

We use the word disclosure when we talk about children and young people telling someone about their experience of abuse.

The abuse might be physical, sexual or emotional harm, or might be from neglect or exposure to domestic and family violence. All types of abuse are harmful.

The way a child or young person discloses abuse is not always straightforward. It might be a sentence, a conversation, a drawing, a hint, a change in behaviour or a vague question.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The way you react is important. You might feel shocked, angry, disgusted or sad however the most important thing is for the child or young person to feel safe and be safe.

- Give them your full attention.
- Look calm, stay calm.
- Listen.
- Let them use their own words.
- Be patient.
- Believe them.
- Reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Understand that kids are never to blame for adults' unsafe behaviour.

WHY DIDN'T THEY TELL ME SOONER?

It can take days, months or years for someone to talk about their abuse. They might:

Be afraid

Feel scared, angry, ashamed or sad

Think it was their fault

Think they won't be believed

Want to protect their family

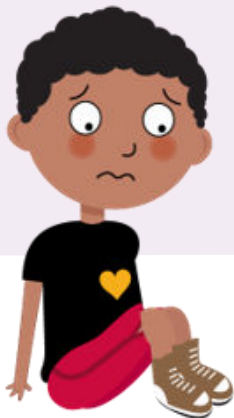
Not have the right words

Think they will get into trouble

Not know the abuse is wrong

Have been threatened

Or other reasons we don't know



Learn to Be Safe with
Emmy & Friends

How to Respond to a Disclosure (cont...)



WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

When a child or young person discloses abuse:

- Provide them with support.
- Ensure they are safe in that moment.
- Report the abuse to the police or child protection services as soon as possible.

If the child or young person is in immediate danger, contact the police on 000.

If the child is not in immediate danger, contact Police Link on 131444.

If you are concerned about a child's welfare, contact your state child protection services.

The rules around mandatory reporting are different for each state and territory. See www.aifs.gov.au for information regarding mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Supporting a child or young person to make a disclosure can be emotional, particularly if you are a close relative or friend. There are services available to support the child or young person, as well as family and friends of the victim/survivor.

For 24-hour crisis and counselling support contact (toll free):



1800 55 1800



13 11 14

Other contact numbers:



1800 RESPECT
1800 737 732

www.1800respect.org.au



Bravehearts
1800 272 831

www.bravehearts.org.au



Parentline
1300 301 300



Act for Kids
(07) 4847 0550
www.actforkids.com.au

Learn to Be Safe with
Emmy & Friends