

Guide for engaging sensitively with abuse survivors now available

4 May 2020



Engaging sensitively with survivors – a guide for faith organisations has been released by the Office of the Children's Guardian. The booklet was written after extensive consultation with survivors of abuse.

As many survivors suffered their abuse in faith organisations, re-engagement can be potentially traumatic.

The intention of the guide is to:

- increase understanding of how faith organisations can support survivors of abuse in NSW

- increase understanding of how faith organisations can use the knowledge and experience of survivors to improve their current child safe practices
- understand the importance of using a trauma-informed approach
- improve the experience of survivors when engaging, or re-engaging, with faith organisations
- help faith organisations understand the importance of taking responsibility for past wrongs.

Its message is clear:

- when engaging with survivors organisations and individuals should use a trauma-informed approach
- faith organisations should take responsibility for the abuse that occurred historically in their organisations
- faith organisations should work with survivors and use their wisdom and experience to help create child safe organisations
- survivors of abuse need to be supported appropriately to help their healing journey – and they may not wish to re-engage with a particular faith due to the harm they experienced historically when part of it.

As NSW Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer, writes in her foreword: 'The underlying principle of this guide is to recognise that survivors are individuals and their requirements should be central in all dealings and considerations related to them. It offers practical advice, using a trauma-informed approach to respond to their experiences in a sensitive, effective way. This allows for a tailored response to each survivor's individual reactions.'

The guide is available free to download (3MB)