

Responding to Children and Young People’s Disclosure of Abuse

Listen

- Move to a suitable environment, free of distractions.
- Be calm and patient—allow for the Child or Young Person to be heard.
- Let the Child or Young Person use their own words—avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid ‘quizzing’ the Child or Young Person about details of the abuse.
- Don’t be afraid of saying the ‘wrong’ thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.

Reassure

- Reassure the Child or Young Person that it is okay that they have told you what’s been happening.
- Address any concerns about the Child or Young Person’s safety.
- Reassure the Child or Young Person that he or she is not at fault, and not the cause of any distress they may feel.

Respect

- Respect that the Child or Young Person may reveal only some details.
- Acknowledge the Child or Young Person’s bravery and strength.
- Avoid making promises you can’t keep—manage the Child or Young Person’s expectations.
- Explain to the Child or Young Person that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to someone else.