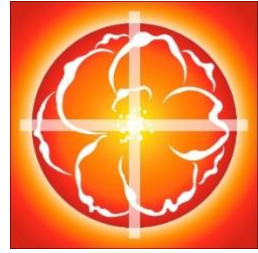


Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas Handling Disclosures of Abuse

Responding to abuse of children, young people or elders Aotearoa New Zealand



Only a minority of children and young people directly disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed indirectly or through observation by an adult of a child or young person's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child or young person discloses abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child or young person, and also to ensure your actions do not jeopardise any legal action.

There are a number of basic guidelines that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child or young person:

- Remain calm;
- Remember that the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person comes before the interests of any other person;
- Listen to the child or young person and accept what they say;
- Look at them directly, if this is not uncomfortable for them, and do your best not to appear shocked;
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone;
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help;
- Let them know you need to tell someone else and explain why this is necessary;
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens;
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened with harm;
- Write down what they say in their own words – record what you have seen and heard;
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child or young person has actually said and any inferences you may have made. Accuracy is important;
- Speak with your community leader (if they are not the subject of the notification) and then make contact with the Ethics and Safety Committee if the subject of the notification is a member of Rosa Veritas.

Important notes:

- The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or has access to the person.
- Dealing with an allegation of abuse of a child, young person is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.

DO NOT

- Attempt to deal with the situation yourself;
- Formally interview the child or young person;
 - Never ask leading questions;
 - Never push for information or make assumptions.
 - Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained;
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents;
- Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality;
- Take any action that might undermine future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers;
- Permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation.

Handling Disclosures of Abuse of children or young people when the child, young person or accused person IS NOT associated with Rosa Veritas:

- Follow the above guidelines;
- Tell the relevant authorities as soon as possible; and
- Refer to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children: Phone 0508 326 459 or email contact@ot.govt.nz and/or
- Call the Police on 105 for non-emergencies and 111 for emergencies.
- After making the referral to Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children, or the Police, look after yourself.

Handling Disclosures of Abuse of children or young people when any one of the child, young person or accused person IS associated with Rosa Veritas:

- If you are aware of abuse or risk of abuse, of any kind, by a member of Rosa Veritas towards any person, in any country, you are required to report that to the Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas as soon as possible.
- Where there is immediate risk to the safety of a child or young person contact the Police on 111.
- Follow the other guidelines above, in consultation with the Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas via email ethics@rosaveritas.org

Handling disclosures or observations of elder abuse

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse can involve many different types of behaviour, it's not just violence or assault. It could also be:

- being threatened, humiliated or harassed;

- someone misusing or stealing money;
- someone applying pressure to sign legal documents;
- any non-consensual sexual activity.

Getting Help

The Elder Abuse Response Service is a free, confidential 24-hour helpline in Aotearoa NZ. If you have concerns about how you or another person is being treated or you or they feel frightened or at risk, help is available. It's free, and available 24 hours a day.

Freephone: 0800 32 668 65

Text: 5032

Email: support@elderabuse.nz

If you or another person is in immediate danger, call 111 and ask for the Police.

If you, another person or the accused person in this situation, is a member of Rosa Veritas, you must report your concern to the Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas. You can email to ethics@rosaveritas.org

Prepared by the Ethics and Safety Committee
October 2023.