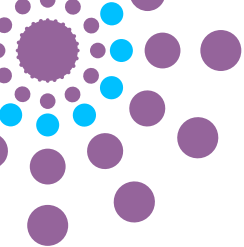


Abuse and Harmful Behaviour

A Practical Guide to Seeking Support





Have you or someone you know experienced abuse or harm within an organisation or institution?

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 000

Abuse and harmful behaviour can take many forms and may not always be easy to recognise. Understanding different forms of abuse, workplace bullying and forms of harassment may help you recognise concerning behaviour and consider what to do next.

About this guide

This practical guide is for employees, students, volunteers, parishioners and members of community or sporting groups who experience abuse or harmful behaviour within an organisation or institution. It outlines steps you may consider and where you may be able to seek information and support.

The information is general and does not replace emergency assistance or professional advice based on your circumstances. Available services, reporting requirements and complaint pathways may vary depending on the organisation, location and circumstances. Contact the relevant service directly for current information about the assistance it provides.

Support through Kooyoora

If you work, volunteer or participate in an organisation that uses Kooyoora's services, you can contact Kooyoora directly.

Our team can listen to your concerns, provide information and help you understand the options available to you.

If you are an organisational leader dealing with harmful behaviour, Kooyoora can provide advice and services to help you manage the matter and determine appropriate next steps.

Kooyoora also provides brief to medium-term counselling services to **anyone over the age of 18**.

[Explore Kooyoora's Safeguarding Services](#)

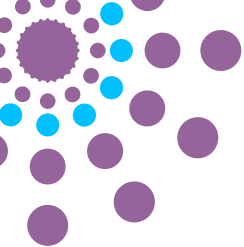
Contact Kooyoora

Office: [1800 135 246](tel:1800135246)

New Zealand: 0800 769 004

Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

Enquires: enquiries@kooyoora.org.au



Steps You May Consider

Every situation is different. Consider your immediate safety and choose the options that are appropriate for your circumstances.

Prioritise your safety

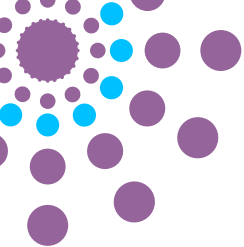
If you are in immediate danger or feel unsafe, move to a safer place if you can and seek assistance.

If the situation is not an emergency, consider whether you need support to remain safe while deciding what to do next.

Speak with someone you trust

You may find it helpful to speak with a trusted person. This could be a friend, family member, colleague, supervisor, support person or another appropriate person within the organisation.

A trusted person may be able to provide support, help you understand your options or assist you when raising a concern.



Record what happened

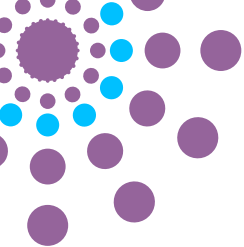
If it is safe to do so, make a record of what occurred. You could include:

- what happened
- when and where it happened
- who was involved
- whether anyone else witnessed it
- anything that was said or done
- how you responded
- any action already taken

Keep relevant documents, emails, messages, photographs or other information in a secure place.

Recording an incident does not mean you must make a formal report. It may help you remember important details if you decide to seek information or raise the concern later.





Consider asking the person to stop

If you feel safe and comfortable doing so, you may choose to tell the person that the behaviour is unwelcome, inappropriate or must stop.

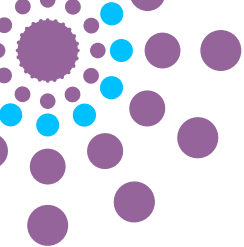
You could say:

- “I am not comfortable with that behaviour. Please stop.”
- “That comment was inappropriate.”
- “Please do not speak to me that way.”
- “I do not consent to being treated like this.”
- “I have asked you to stop. If the behaviour continues, I will raise the concern.”

You may choose to speak to the person directly or communicate in writing. If appropriate, you could ask a trusted person to support you or be present.

You do not have to approach the person directly, and doing so may not be appropriate in every situation.

If you feel unsafe, are concerned about the person’s response or there is a difference in authority or power, you may prefer to seek support or raise the concern through another pathway.



Raise the concern within the organisation

You may be able to raise the concern with an appropriate person within the organisation, such as:

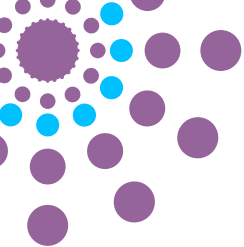
- a manager or supervisor
- a human resources representative
- a safeguarding or complaints contact
- a senior leader
- a counsellor, wellbeing officer or social welfare officer
- another person identified in the organisation's policies or procedures

The organisation may have a **complaints, incident reporting or safeguarding procedure** that explains **how to raise a concern** or complaint and what may happen after a report is made.

Concerns you may have about reporting

You may feel uncertain or concerned about raising what happened. People may hesitate to report because they:

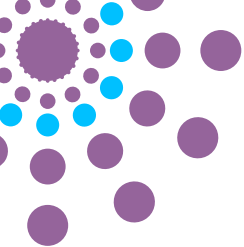
- are unsure whether the behaviour is serious enough to report



- fear they will not be believed or taken seriously
- are concerned about retaliation or being treated differently
- worry about the effect on their employment, role or participation
- do not know who to contact or what the reporting process involves
- are concerned that their information will not remain confidential
- feel embarrassed, uncomfortable or worried about discussing what happened
- are concerned about the effect on other people
- have had a previous reporting experience that was not handled well
- are not ready to decide whether to make a report

These concerns may make it difficult to know what to do. You can seek information or support before deciding whether to make a formal report. You may also ask about confidentiality, the reporting process, available support and what may happen after a concern is raised.

If the organisation uses Kooyoora's services, you can contact Kooyoora directly for information and support.



Seek external information or support



Depending on the circumstances, you may wish to contact an independent support service, regulator, complaints body, legal service or relevant authority, depending on what happened, where it occurred and the kind of assistance you are seeking.

You may consider contacting:

- a specialist support or counselling service for confidential emotional and practical support
- a workplace regulator or complaints body for information about workplace bullying, harassment or employment concerns
- an anti-discrimination or human rights body for information about discrimination, harassment and available complaint pathways
- a community legal service for information or advice about your circumstances
- a professional or industry regulator if the concern relates to the conduct of a registered professional
- an independent complaints body or ombudsman if the concern relates to a particular service or sector
- the police if you believe a criminal offence may have occurred

Call 000 if there is an immediate danger.



Finding further support

Before contacting a service you may wish to check:

- what assistance is available
- whether time limits apply
- how your information will be handled
- whether you can have a support person

Immediate danger and police assistance

Emergency services

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call Triple Zero 000.

Victoria Police assistance

For non-urgent police assistance in Victoria, call 131 444 or make an online report. You can contact Victoria Police if you believe a crime may have occurred.

Counselling and support

Lifeline

Lifeline provides confidential crisis support to people throughout Australia. Call 13 11 14, text 0477 13 11 14 or access online chat. These services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Finding further support

Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue provides mental health information and support. Call 1300 22 4636 or access online support.

You may also wish to speak with a doctor, counsellor or an employee assistance program if one is available through your organisation.

Workplace concerns

Fair Work Ombudsman

The Fair Work Ombudsman provides information about workplace rights and obligations, including information about workplace bullying and where workers can seek help.

Fair Work Commission

The Fair Work Commission may be able to assist eligible workers who are experiencing ongoing workplace bullying. Asking the Commission to help stop workplace bullying begins a legal process.

Workplace Advice Service

The Fair Work Commission's Workplace Advice Service arranges free legal help for eligible employees and employers dealing with particular employment matters. Eligibility requirements apply, and appointments depend on availability



Finding further support

Discrimination and human rights

Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission provides information about discrimination and breaches of human rights. It can inquire into and help resolve complaints within its jurisdiction.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission provides information and assistance relating to discrimination, victimisation, vilification and human rights in Victoria. The Commission can also provide information about making a complaint.

Before making a complaint, you may wish to seek information about which organisation can consider your circumstances. Different complaint pathways may apply, and time limits may affect some options.

Legal information and advice

Community Legal Centres Australia

Community Legal Centres Australia provides links to community legal services in each state and territory. These independent, not-for-profit services provide mostly free legal advice and assistance, although eligibility and service availability vary.



Finding further support

Victoria Legal Aid

Victoria Legal Aid provides legal information and may assist eligible people with certain legal concerns. Its Equality Law Program provides specialist assistance relating to discrimination and other relevant conduct.

It may be helpful to obtain legal advice before starting a formal complaint, particularly if more than one complaint pathway may be available.

Support through Kooyoora

Contact Kooyoora

If you work, volunteer or participate in an organisation that uses Kooyoora's services, you can contact Kooyoora directly. Our team can listen to your concerns, provide information and help you understand the options available to you.

Report misconduct or abuse to Kooyoora

You can also use Kooyoora's reporting page to raise a concern. Kooyoora recognises that reporting can be difficult and provides information about the reporting process and available options.