

# THURSDAYS IN BLACK

DISCLOSURES  
GUIDE

**\*THURSDAYS  
IN BLACK**  
Towards a world  
without rape  
and violence

**\*RĀPARE**  
KĀKAHU PANGO  
Tēnei te huri ki te ao tūkinokore,  
ki te ao pāwhera kore.



Thursdays in Black Aotearoa wants to acknowledge the resources, design and mahi of Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation (especially Mel Calvesbert for their four principles for Dealing with Disclosures), RespectEd Aotearoa (Previously the Sexual Abuse Prevention Network) and Wellington Rape Crisis. This disclosures guide is based off the mahi of these agencies and their resources which we have adapted for Thursdays in Black Aotearoa.



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# WHO ARE WE?

Thursdays in Black Aotearoa is the New Zealand chapter of international movement, Thursdays in Black. We are a national campaign run by, and for, students, aimed at preventing and responding to sexual violence in tertiary spaces.

Our kaupapa is to:

- To raise awareness of the prevalence of sexually harmful behaviours within the tertiary community
- To educate on the issue of sexual violence, particularly as it effects students
- To set a zero-tolerance culture for sexual harm in tertiary settings
- To promote and encourage sexual harm prevention
- To create and promote a culture of healthy sexual behaviours
- To create a community of individuals working to prevent, and respond to, sexual harm

# DISCLOSURES

Taking Thursdays in Black (TiB) to campuses is great for raising awareness of sexual violence within student communities. However, it is important to be aware that this kind of visibility can often trigger a diverse range of reactions. In both your role with TiB, as well as in social situations, a student may disclose an experience of sexual violence to you. This document will give you some important DOs and DON'Ts for handling this. If someone does disclose to you it is vital that you believe them and respond with empathy. However, your role is not a counsellor, psychologist, or therapist – so you should not be counselling them. If an untrained person attempts to counsel in these situations, it can be unsafe and harmful for both parties.

Your job is to ask the victim-survivor what they need and direct them to the appropriate support services nationally, locally, and/or on your campus. If you are working a stall this information should be readily available, by having print outs of services that can be given to students.

You can find region specific services on our website:  
[www.thursdaysinblack.org.nz/supportservices](http://www.thursdaysinblack.org.nz/supportservices)

# DISCLOSURES

If you receive a disclosure there are four great guiding principles to follow:

**TRUST  
CONTROL  
SAFETY  
SELF-ESTEEM**

These principles are all elements that are taken away, or reduced by sexual violence. Therefore, when you respond to a disclosure ensure that your response increases their sense of these feelings rather than diminishing them further.

Please familiarise yourself with these and figure out which ways of response work best for you and your own wellbeing. Imagine how you might respond in such a situation.

If someone does disclose to you, appreciate their trust in you, and respond with these principles in mind.

# TRUST

Receive their disclosure with empathy, open-mindedness and trust. Some phrasing that show trust are:

“I’m glad you told me/were able to tell me”

“It’s not your fault” (if the person is blaming themselves).

“Their behaviour is the problem/issue here, not yours”

“I believe you”

“You didn’t deserve that”

“I’m so sorry this happened to you/that this was your experience”

## **Avoid:**

Do not ask ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘why’ questions, or ask for a recount or for more details. This may seem interrogatory, could be harmful for them or for you, and implies that you need more information to believe them. Think of yourself like a go-between – if someone discloses you are there to receive that information safely and then direct the person to a support service.

# TRUST

Remember, you do not have all the answers, it's okay to say that. For example, you could say:

“I don't know how best to give you the support you need, but I have some ideas on who might be”

Then you can direct the individual to the support services print out at your stall and talk to them about the different services available.

Remember at Thursdays in Black **we believe victim-survivors**. As one of our volunteers you **MUST** subscribe to this philosophy and express it in your attitude and behaviour to everyone you encounter. This philosophy is never more important than if you are listening to a disclosure – **trust them and believe them**.

# CONTROL

Sexual violence is about one person asserting their control over another. Therefore, a victim-survivor is someone who has had their control taken away. This means that in receiving their disclosure, you need to be giving them back their control over themselves, and their healing process. Remembering that you are not there to counsel, but to help them take control over finding their chosen support avenues.

In the moment, try to consider why this person is telling you – is it for support? Options? Empathy? Do they just want to normalize their experience?

You might want to ask:

“Would you like a number for a place who can answer your questions, provide information and resources?”

“Would you like me to talk about your different options?”

“Would you like me to provide some options or would you just like me to listen?”



# CONTROL

Respect their confidentiality. Debrief with someone you trust about your own feelings afterwards, but remember their story is taonga and should be treated with respect and care. Don't share with anyone the information that the victim/survivor shared with you.

Referral to support services (if they would like it, remember this is their choice) is the only course of action we recommend you suggest. Pushing or recommending they go to the Police or make a formal complaint can be harmful. If they are interested in this recommend they contact a support service (e.g. Rape Crisis or HELP) for support and more information about those processes.

Remember, people haven't had control over the violence they have experienced, and **they need to have control over their healing.**

# SAFETY

Understanding and prioritising the safety of the victim-survivor is paramount. But remember, safety not just something physical. Emotional, spiritual, psychological and cultural safety, are equally important.

You could ask:

“Are you safe now?”

“Do you feel unsafe?”

## **Important**

You are not a counsellor, and it is not your job to manage situations of immediate danger. If someone indicates that are in immediate danger, your local club should have a plan. Thursdays in Black recommends that you should have the contact details of your local president/director, the National Coordinator, Campus Safety, Student Health, and/or other services on campus who have a mandate for student safety and wellbeing. This information should be known and accessible to all TiB Members/Volunteers, and you should be forming ongoing relationships with these parties. If you are holding an event that is likely to result in increased disclosures (i.e., What I Was Wearing Exhibition), make sure you contact these people/services in advance to let the know.

# SAFETY

A person can feel unsafe long after harm has occurred. There may be practical things that your institution can help with to ease this sense of unsafety (trigger warnings on content, support leaving late at night etc).

Talk to our National Coordinator if people mention any concrete support they need from their institutions.

Something you could say to the victim-survivor:

"There are free services that could help resource and support you to manage ... (flashbacks, anxiety, making a safety plan ... would you like their details?"

# SELF-ESTEEM

Sexual violence can often impact a person's self esteem. In receiving a disclosure, you can help empower the victim-survivor by saying this such as:

"You deserve support"

"You are entitled to support"

"You are brave for speaking up"

"However you are feeling is valid"

"There is no one right way to feel, it's okay to feel X"

"There is no shame in reaching out for help"

And you can do thing such as:

- Ensuring you give the person your full attention (i.e., pass of managing the stall to someone else)
- When setting up ensure there is a private area nearby to have these conversations if needed

# SELF-ESTEEM

The student community is small, and remember that you may either know the person disclosing to you, or have a high chance of bumping into them again on campus. In these cases remember to ensure you are responding to the victim-survivor as a whole person rather than just their experience. One of the most common thing victim-survivors say is that people change how they treat them once they know.

Additionally, if you know the student and see them often, you may want to say:

“Next time I see you (lecture, around campus, at the meeting etc), I will not raise what you have told me”

“Thank you for sharing, I will not talk about this in (lecture, on campus, at the meeting etc)”

# HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Receiving a disclosure of sexually harmful behaviour is rare, but still may happen, and therefore this information is important to know. The most important thing is that, **your safety comes first**. If you do not feel safe in receiving this type of disclosure, **you do not have to**, and you can leave or shut down the conversation immediately.

For example, you can say:

“I can’t talk with you about this, but I will see if someone else can” (and see if another TiB volunteer is open to having the conversation)

“I can’t talk with you about this, but I can give you the information for a support service that may be able to help”

# HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

If you are open and comfortable with receiving a disclosure of harmful behaviour, here are some things to know and say.

- We respect and acknowledge that this is uncomfortable but try to remain calm until they have said what they need to say.
- Acknowledge and affirm their choice to do something about this problem.
- Remember to try and think of it as bad behaviour, not a bad person.
- Remember you are not a counsellor, but can provide options on some support or actions they can take.

Receiving a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour is highly sensitive, and can be difficult. If you choose to receive it, by responding calmly, acknowledging them for coming forward and pointing them in the direction of support services, you are doing a huge service to victim-survivors, and potentially helping prevent further harm. However, again, you do not have to receive this disclosure – **your safety comes first.**

# SELF CARE

**Remember, your safety comes first.**

Your club should help its volunteers come up with a support plan, on what to do if someone discloses and how to look after yourself in the process. Part of this, is having someone to debrief with. This may be your president/leader, the National Coordinator, a professional counsellor or supervisor, or a specialist agency like HELP/Rape Crisis. Think about who would work best for you in this role.

In receiving a disclosure, you can use the same four principles, increasing control, trust, safety and self esteem for yourself.

**Remember: there is no experience that is too small to ask for help with.**



# SELF CARE

It is very important that as a TIB volunteer you check in with the rest of your team to make sure that they are okay during the day, especially if someone has disclosed to them. Check to see how they're feeling about it and if there is anything they need if this happens. Try and make sure there is time when the stall/event finishes for everyone to sit down and debrief.

Anyone can contact the National Coordinator or SafeToTalk to discuss their experience if they need a listening ear. If you wish to talk to the National Coordinator, but want it to be anonymous, that is okay, you can explain the situation without giving your name.

The wellbeing of the team, and yourself, is Thursdays in Black's top priority. Please always reach out for support if you feel you need it, and let the National Coordinator know if they can provide additional advice, resources, or support for you or your team.

# SELF CARE

After receiving a disclosure your action plan may look something like this:

1. Check in with how you are feeling
2. Check in with any other TiB Member involved in the disclosure
3. Debrief with your designated person
4. Consider what follow up is needed for the victim-survivor
5. Consider if there is any feedback for TiB on how to make their spaces safer and/or more inclusive.

# NATIONAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE NETWORKS

**Te Ohaaki a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST):** the national body of sexual violence specialist agency. Offers sector knowledge, trainings, specialist sexual violence content knowledge, and networking across the sexual violence sector.

- <http://www.toah-nnest.org.nz>
- [office@toah-nnest.org.nz](mailto:office@toah-nnest.org.nz)

**Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Trust (MSSAT):** the national network of support services for male survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

- <https://malesurvivor.nz/>

# NATIONAL HELPLINES

**SafeToTalk:** offer free confidential contact with a trained sexual violence specialist to those who have experienced any form of sexual harm and/or those who believe someone close to them has been harmed.

- Live chat online: [www.safetotalk.nz](http://www.safetotalk.nz)
- Free call: 0200 044 334
- Free text: 4334
- [support@safetotalk.nz](mailto:support@safetotalk.nz)

**1737, need to talk?:** a national mental health & addictions helpline number. When someone texts or calls 1737 a trained counsellor will work with the person to develop a care plan. This could include referral to another service, additional counselling or provision of information and support.

- Free call: 1737
- Free text 1737

**Youthline:** established to ensure young people, their families and supporters know where to get help and can access support when they need it.

- Free call: 0800 376 633
- Free text: 234
- [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz)
- Chat online: [www.wellington.youthline.co.nz](http://www.wellington.youthline.co.nz)

# SPECIALIST CRISIS SERVICES

TE WHANGANUI A TARA | WELLINGTON

**Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation:** works with survivors of sexual abuse and their whānau – of any age, gender or ethnicity. They provide a 24 hour crisis line. They also provide support and counselling services for anyone who is concerned about a friend or family member.

- 24/7 Crisis support 04 801 6655
- [www.wellingtonhelp.org.nz](http://www.wellingtonhelp.org.nz)

**Wellington Rape Crisis:** a registered charity who provide support to women and gender diverse survivors of rape and sexual violence.

- [support@wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz](mailto:support@wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz)
- Drop in (no appointment necessary) Level 4, 220 Willis St, Te Aro, Wellington

**MOSAIC:** A Wellington-based registered charity and support agency for male survivors of trauma and sexual abuse.

- Confidential call or text: 022 419 3416
- [enquiries@mosaic-wgtn.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@mosaic-wgtn.org.nz)
- [www.mosaic-wgtn.org.nz](http://www.mosaic-wgtn.org.nz)

# SPECIALIST CRISIS SERVICES

## TĀMAKI MAKAURAU | AUCKLAND

**Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation:** works with survivors of sexual abuse and their whānau. They provide a 24 hour crisis line. They also provide support and counselling services for anyone who is concerned about a friend or family member.

- [www.helpauckland.org.nz](http://www.helpauckland.org.nz)
- 09 623 1700 – 24 hour crisis line
- [info@helpauckland.org.nz](mailto:info@helpauckland.org.nz)

**Tu Wahine:** Kaupapa Maori counselling, therapy and support for survivors of sexual harm (mahi tukino) and violence within whanau.

- [admin@tuwahine.org.nz](mailto:admin@tuwahine.org.nz)
- (09) 838 8700
- Drop in 247 Edmounton Road, Te Atatu, Auckland

**Better Blokes:** Free online and in person peer support for men who have experienced sexual harm and abuse.

- Phone 09 378 8812
- Text 021 174 9252
- <https://betterblokes.org.nz/>

# SPECIALIST CRISIS SERVICES

ELSEWHERE

## **Abuse and Rape Crisis Support Manawatu**

- [www.arcsmanawatu.org.nz](http://www.arcsmanawatu.org.nz)
- 06 356 5868
- [admin@arcsmanawatu.org.nz](mailto:admin@arcsmanawatu.org.nz)

## **Tautoko Mai Sexual Harm Support (Bay of Plenty)**

- 0800 227 233 (24/7)
- [refer@tautokomai.co.nz](mailto:refer@tautokomai.co.nz)
- [www.tautokomai.co.nz](http://www.tautokomai.co.nz)

## **Rape and Sexual Abuse Support (West Coast)**

- National 24 Hour Helpline 0800 883300
- [w.coast.r.c@xtra.co.nz](mailto:w.coast.r.c@xtra.co.nz)

## **Sexual Assault Support Services Canterbury**

- [SASSCadmin@avivafamilies.org.nz](mailto:SASSCadmin@avivafamilies.org.nz)
- 03 377 5402 (24/7)

## **Southland HELP - Rape and Abuse Support Centre**

- [www.southlandhelp.nz](http://www.southlandhelp.nz)
- 03 216 2079
- [contact@southlandhelp.nz](mailto:contact@southlandhelp.nz)

## **Whangarei Rape Crisis**

- National 24 hour Helpline 0800 883300
- [general@whangareirapecrisis.org.nz](mailto:general@whangareirapecrisis.org.nz)

# SPECIALIST HSB\* SERVICES NORTH ISLAND

**WellStop:** WellStop is a community-based organisation that focuses on the prevention of sexual abuse and sexual harm in our communities across the lower North Island.

- [www.wellstop.org.nz](http://www.wellstop.org.nz)
- 04 566 4745
- [enquiries@wellstop.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wellstop.org.nz)

**Korowai Tumanako:** a kaupapa Māori service offering sexual violence prevention education and support to whanau, survivor support, and clinical treatment for young people and adults who have participated in harmful sexual behaviour across Auckland and Northland.

- [www.korowaitumanako.org](http://www.korowaitumanako.org)
- [korowai@korowaitumanako.org](mailto:korowai@korowaitumanako.org)

**Safe Network:** community-based specialist organisation providing clinical assessment, intervention, therapeutic, education, and prevention services to the upper North Island

- [www.safenetwork.org.nz](http://www.safenetwork.org.nz)
- 09 377 989
- [info@safenetwork.org.nz](mailto:info@safenetwork.org.nz)

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# SPECIALIST HSB\* SERVICES SOUTH ISLAND

**Stop Trust:** provides community-based assessment and intervention services for adolescents and adults who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviour. Based in Christchurch, Nelson, West Coast, Dunedin and Invercargill.

- [www.stop.org.nz](http://www.stop.org.nz)
- 03 374 5010
- [info@stop.org.nz](mailto:info@stop.org.nz)

**Te Puna Oranga :** A kaupapa Māori for both survivors of sexual harm and those exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours. Serving across Te Wai Pounamu (South Island).

- 24 hr crisis support via 0800 222 042
- [info@tepunaoranga.co.nz](mailto:info@tepunaoranga.co.nz)

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