

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a landscape at sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted mountains. In the middle ground, a city with many buildings is visible, partially obscured by a layer of mist or low clouds. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues, with some wispy clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF ADULT ABUSE

“The *Lord* is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.”

Psalm 9:9

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NBBC Governance Paper

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Updated: 27 September 2026

INTRODUCTION

A Refuge for the Oppressed

Our God is a refuge for the oppressed (Psalm 9:9). He hates abuse because it is the opposite of His loving nature and design for us.

At NBBC, we want to represent God's love to all people, especially the vulnerable and hurting. **We want our church community to be a place where people feel safe to share their experiences of abuse, knowing they will be met with compassion and wisdom. We hope this booklet helps you know how to help someone when they share their story of abuse with you.**

Our long-term hope is that by adopting these procedures, our church will become a place where abusers cannot hide from God's call for justice and repentance, and where people who have experienced abuse will experience the healing, hope and freedom of Jesus.

Aim

This booklet aims to help the NBBC community respond appropriately when they become aware that an adult (aged 18 or over) has experienced or is experiencing abuse.

- **Part One: Supporting Someone Who Discloses Abuse** is for anyone who regularly attends NBBC. It seeks to provide clear guidance on how to receive disclosures of abuse with sensitivity and wisdom
- **Part Two: Reporting Abuse** is for key volunteers, leaders and staff of NBBC. It establishes a clear and accountable process for reporting abuse, including what to do when an alleged abuser poses risk of harm to others at NBBC.

(NB. This booklet does not cover child abuse or cases of historic abuse. In these cases, the NBBC Safe Church policy and Reportable Conduct Scheme policy should be followed.)

Biblical Position

Abuse in any form is not tolerated at North Beach Baptist Church. Every person has the right to live free from abuse and neglect because they are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

The Bible clearly teaches that any form of abuse is wrong. Love, other-person-centredness and gentle care are the hallmarks of the believer (Galatians 5:19-26), each being in direct contrast to abuse.

Furthermore, Jesus' life & words teach that those in positions of power are to humbly serve others (Mark 10:42-45). Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth, embodied and exemplified this teaching by becoming a servant who suffered and died in the place of sinful humanity (Philippians 2:1-11).

Guiding Principles

- **Safety First:** Protecting the safety of the individual and others is our top priority.
- **Agency & Confidentiality with Limits:** A core principle in responding to adult disclosures of abuse is the protection of the individual's dignity, agency and confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Adults must be allowed to make their own decisions about who they disclose information to and what kind of support they receive, sometimes even in cases that involve ongoing risk of harm to that adult person experiencing abuse.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

Where there is immediate risk to life or immediate risk of serious harm	Call Emergency Services on 000
Where risk of harm to children is present	Call Department of Communities 1800 273 889
Where an alleged perpetrator of abuse currently attends NBBC or is otherwise closely associated to NBBC, presenting an ongoing risk of harm to others. *Do not report intimate partner violence without explicit consent of the person who disclosed	Contact NBBC Safe Team using the website form. If there is a conflict of interest or any uncomfortability with contacting the Safe Team, contact the Baptist Churches WA Safe Church Liaison Officer: 08 6313 6300
Where self-care requires debriefing with a trusted person	Ideally, talk with the person who disclosed to you about who they would prefer you to debrief with (e.g., a pastor, supervisor, anonymous helpline like 1800Respect)

Definitions

There are many kinds of abuse, and these are normally defined by the type of harm and the type of victim.

- **Domestic Abuse**

An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in most cases by a partner or ex-partner (this is referred to as **Intimate Partner Violence**), but also by a family member or carer. Domestic abuse can involve behaviour that makes a person feel scared, involves threats to the person/children/pets, or denies choice. Domestic abuse often involves coercive control but can involve many forms of abuse.

**** Exposure to family and domestic abuse is considered child abuse** and should be reported to the Department of Communities on 1800 708 704. NBBC Safe Church Policy and Procedures should also be followed.

- **Coercive Control**

Coercive control is a pattern of controlling and manipulative behaviors used to dominate, isolate, intimidate, or exploit another person, often within an intimate or domestic relationship. It is designed to strip away the victim's sense of autonomy, dignity, and safety. Coercive control is ongoing and cumulative, often more subtle (but no less harmful) than other forms of abuse. Examples include monitoring or restricting a person's movements, communications or social interaction, using displays of emotion (both "affection" and aggression), rewards & punishments and/or gaslighting to manipulate and subjugate.

- **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse involves intentionally or recklessly using physical force or aggression in a way that *may* result in bodily injury or physical pain. It can also include the threat of physical harm, even if the person never does what they say they will do. It includes actions that lead to harm – such as refusing someone sleep or medical care.

- **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse, which can also be categorised as mental, verbal, or psychological abuse, is a pattern of behaviour that promotes a destructive sense of fear, obligation, shame, worthlessness or guilt in a victim. It can include regularly embarrassing a person in front of others, calling a person names, threatening to harm them, ignoring them, intentionally making a person question their own memory or sanity (i.e., gaslighting). Emotionally oppressive people seek to dominate, and they do so by employing a variety of tactics. They may emotionally neglect (*neglect has also been defined as a form of abuse in its own right*), frighten, isolate, belittle, exploit, criticize, play mind games, lie, blame, shame, or threaten.

- **Sexual abuse**

Also referred to as molestation, sexual abuse is normally considered to be undesired sexual behaviour from one person toward another. Usually this involves force or taking advantage of a position of power to coerce, bribe, threat or exploit the other person. Survivors of sexual abuse can suffer physical and psychological damage. Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to unwanted sexual comments or touch, taking or distributing sexual images without consent (if this involves a minor it is a criminal offence even if underage "consent" was offered), engaging in oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration without voluntary and explicit consent, and undesired sexual behaviour (without consent) within marriage.

- **Spiritual abuse**

This form of abuse occurs when one person misuses spiritual or religious beliefs to intentionally hurt, scare or control another. Spiritual abuse often involves an oppressor establishing a relationship of control and domination by using Scripture, church tradition, doctrine or their "leadership role" as a weapon. This form of abuse can be subtle because it can be masked as religious practice. Signs of potential spiritual abuse include a husband exhibiting control-oriented leadership over their wife (e.g.,

demanding submission, which is not biblical), misusing Scripture to shame or punish others or to force/coerce a person to stay in a damaging relationship/environment or to excuse violence or abuse.

(This definition does not extend to how someone might feel in response to traditional biblical doctrines being taught by the church (e.g., teachings on same-sex activity))

- **Institutional abuse**

Institutional abuse is the maltreatment of people who receive care within a system of power. Examples of institutional abuse settings include children within state care, a school environment, home care environment (such as a foster home), or aged persons within a nursing and/or aged care environment. This type of abuse can include neglect, sexual abuse, or physical abuse such as using harsh methods to modify or control behaviour.

- **Elder abuse**

Elder abuse includes both the lack of appropriate action, as well as a single or repeated harmful action that occurs within a relationship between a younger and older person, where there is an expectation of trust – whether that action is physical, chemical, emotional, sexual, or financial. It can also include intentional or unintentional behaviour. The idea of someone being an older person is a relative concept without a precise definition, with age, relationship status and cultural heritage all potentially being relevant. An older person is usually but not always someone aged 65 or over.

- **Financial abuse**

This form of abuse occurs when one person has control over the economic resources of another person which then forces that person to rely on the abuser for support. Financial abuse includes the illegal use of a person's money, property, and possessions. Changing someone's will to include the abuser as a beneficiary and/or evicting the victim from their own home are also forms of financial abuse. Financial abuse often occurs between spouses/partners, or between a guardian and a dependent. This form of abuse is often accompanied by emotional abuse and domestic violence. Financial abuse of older adults is often referred to as Elder Abuse.

- **Technological Abuse**

Technological abuse involves the misuse of technology to control, monitor, harass, threaten, or intimidate another person. It is often used as part of broader patterns of coercive control or domestic abuse and can occur through digital, online, or electronic means. Examples include monitoring someone's location or activity through GPS, apps, or spyware, accessing or controlling someone's devices, emails, or social media accounts without consent, using technology to stalk, impersonate or isolate, publicly sharing or threatening to share private information or images.

- **Grooming**

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship of trust and emotional connection with someone with the intent to manipulate, exploit or abuse them. Grooming can include manipulation of a wider circle of people to turn them against or to disbelieve the victim of their abuse, deterring them from accessing resources to stop the abuse.

PROCEDURES

PART ONE: Supporting Someone Who Discloses Abuse

Applies to all attendees of NBBC

This section is a vital part of cultivating a safe and accountable culture at NBBC. We want all attendees to be equipped to respond appropriately and compassionately to disclosures of abuse. By preparing more people to respond well, we prioritise safety and increase the likelihood that those experiencing abuse will be heard and supported. It also broadens the pathways for safe disclosure beyond just the Safe Team or pastoral staff.

Abuse can happen in any community. Perpetrators may appear socially acceptable and trustworthy, making it difficult to identify them based on appearance alone. We should be mindful that it is statistically probable for abuse to be occurring in our church.

This section outlines a compassionate pathway for supporting someone who discloses abuse. For reporting requirements and processes, see Part Two.

1. Receiving Disclosures

DO:

- Move to a private space away from others
- Explain confidentiality and its limits (e.g., risk to life or others). If someone begins sharing concerning information, gently interrupt to let them know the limits of your confidentiality.
- Then listen patiently without interrupting; their disclosure may not be complete or coherent
- Let them know you accept them; respond with concern and sympathy, but not alarm – remain even-tempered
- Assure them the abuse is not their fault
- Ascertain if there is risk to life or serious risk of harm. If so, call 000 regardless of consent.
- Let them lead; don't pressure them to speak
- It's not your job to investigate, however, if appropriate, gently ask about:
 - Involvement of children
 - Whether the abuse is a pattern
- Remind them of God's love for them and offer prayer if appropriate.
- Assure them it is good that they have shared, and that you will follow up with them in the near future.

DON'T:

- Share your own or others' stories
- Excuse, explain or minimise the alleged abuser's behaviour (e.g., "he was stressed / he has trauma in his background" or "at least he didn't ____").
- Promise unconditional confidentiality
- Tell them what to do. We must help restore their agency (their ability to make and trust their own decisions) and honour the complexity of their situation.
 - Do not say "leave" or "stay" in a domestic abuse situation
 - Do not recommend couples counselling in abusive contexts
 - Do not spiritualise by claiming to know what God wants them to do

2. Warm Referral

A warm referral means actively helping someone connect with support, not just giving information. This reduces barriers and increases trust.

1. Outline supports using the NBBC Services Referral Guide found in this booklet on pages 13-14. You may also suggest ongoing pastoral support / one-to-one discipleship relationship

Do not pressure action; support their autonomy

2. Help access support:
 - Call a helpline or GP together
 - Book a counselling appointment together
 - Attend first appointments with them if helpful
 - Personally connect them with appropriate church staff or care teams

3. Record

Record the disclosure promptly and confidentially (within 24 hours):

- If you need to report this disclosure (see Part Two), use the NBBC Safe Report form to record what you heard. It can be found on pages 18-19 of this booklet or use NBBC's online form (www.nbbc.org.au/safereports)
- If you do not need to report the disclosure, use any safe and confidential means of recording (e.g., emailing yourself, 'Notes' app on your phone).
- Use the person's words as much as possible
- Note safety concerns, plans discussed, and actions taken
- Include the date
- Store securely (e.g., email to yourself)

4. Follow Up

- Check in soon after the conversation (if safe to do so)
 - E.g., "Hi ____, just checking in after our conversation yesterday. How are you doing?"
- Pastoral Care Forms have been developed which can be completed with the client (see Appendix A)
- Offer reassurance and ask about next steps
 - E.g., "How are you feeling about your appointment?"
- Clarify expectations for your ongoing involvement
 - Be honest about your capacity and help connect them with someone for regular support if you are unable to do that for them
- Continue walking with them in a supportive way according to your capacity
- Encourage them, over time, to widen their circle of support by sharing with more trustworthy people.

5. Self-care

Supporting disclosures is emotionally weighty. Create sustainable rhythms of care:

- Schedule space after difficult meetings to process, record, and pray
- Debrief with someone safe and capable
 - Seek consent first and decide together who that should be (e.g., pastor, supervisor, anonymous helpline like 1800 RESPECT)
- Don't neglect what fills your cup: time with God, exercise, friendships, massage, etc.

PART TWO: Reporting Abuse

Applies to key volunteers, leaders and staff of NBBC

A flowchart for NBBC reporting pathways can be found on page 12.

Duty of Care Responsibility

We take on a duty of care whenever a key volunteer, leader, or staff member becomes aware of someone in our community who may pose a risk of harm to others.

The responsibility to report disclosures of abuse rests especially with senior leaders—such as pastors, elders, deacons, and paid staff. But it also extends to ministry leaders, team leaders, and key volunteers who serve in people-focused ministries. All people serving in these capacities are required to report disclosures of abuse as outlined below.

If you're not a key volunteer, leader, or staff member, you're not required to follow this reporting process. But for the safety of our community, we warmly invite you to do so if you ever become aware of abuse.

Required Reporting

If you're a key volunteer, leader, or staff member at NBBC and you hear a disclosure of adult abuse, you are required to report this to the NBBC Safe Team if ...

1. the accused person is part of NBBC or has a close connection to NBBC; **and**
2. poses a risk of harm to others

Key Considerations & Exceptions

- **Intimate Partner Violence**

When it comes to intimate partner violence, the situation is different. The person who shared their experience may still be at risk, but the risk of harm to others is usually very low. Making a report—even if names are removed—can sometimes increase the danger for the person who disclosed.

Because of this, no report should be made without their clear consent, unless it's assessed that others could be at serious risk of harm. The person who disclosed must always have the freedom to decide when, how, and with whom their information is shared.

- **Allegations Involving Senior Church Leadership**

If the disclosure involves a Pastor, Elder, or Deacon of NBBC, the report must go to BCWA (08 6313 6300) —either directly or through the Safe Team, who will then notify BCWA.

- **Conflict of Interest**

If the disclosure involves a Safe Team member, someone close to them, or if there's any other conflict of interest, the matter must be reported directly to BCWA.

Reporting Responsibilities After a Disclosure

If you are a key volunteer, leader, or staff member and you receive a disclosure where the alleged perpetrator is connected to NBBC and poses risk of harm to others, you should:

1. **Support the person who has shared their experience**, following the steps in Part One; and
2. **Report the disclosure to the Safe Team** as soon as possible, and always within 24 hours, using the NBBC Safe Report Form.

Whenever possible, we want these reports to be made with the consent of the person who shared their experience. But even if that consent can't be given, we still need you to make the report so that we can help keep everyone safe.

NBBC Safe Team

Grant Hendry | 0468 361 777 (Senior Pastor)

Suzanne Mitchelson | 0412 328 414 (Women's Ministry Community & Care Leader)

The Safe Report Form can be found on our website (www.nbbc.org.au/safereports) and goes directly to the Safe Team. Or, if you prefer, you can use the paper copy at the back of this booklet (pages 19–20) and hand it to a Safe Team member in person.

When completing the form:

- Use the individual's own words as much as possible.
- Focus on factual details rather than personal opinions or interpretations.
- Avoid including emotional responses or assumptions.

Remember, assess the risk of making a report and do not proceed if this would endanger the person who has disclosed. You may always call a support line like 1800Respect for professional advice.

Supporting Someone through the Reporting Process

The following steps are designed to balance the need to protect others with the need to care for the person who has disclosed.

1. Be Transparent About the Need to Report

When someone shares an experience of abuse, always be clear that—due to safety and duty of care obligations—it needs to be reported (except in cases of Intimate Partner Violence). You might say something like:

"Thank you so much for trusting me with this. I can see how hard it was to share. Because the person you've mentioned may pose further risk of harm to yourself/others, I need to share this with the church's Safe Team. I won't do this behind your back—I want to walk with you through whatever comes next."

2. Involve them in the process

Where appropriate, offer options that allow them to participate in the process, upholding safety and accountability in a way that respects their dignity and choice. For example:

- *"Would you like me to support you in speaking directly with someone from the Safe Team?"*
- *"There's a report form for situations like this—would you like to sit with me while I fill it out?"*

3. Clarify Disclosure Preference

Ask the person who has experienced abuse whether they would like their identity to remain anonymous in the report, or if they are comfortable with their situation being shared. Make sure they are informed about what will happen to the report. Head to Part Three of the 'Responding to Disclosures of Adult Abuse Governance Paper' found on the church website (<https://www.nbbc.org.au/safereports>).

4. Respect their choice

If they wish to remain anonymous, de-identify the report before submitting it. If they give consent for their disclosure to be shared, ask whether they are open to being contacted by the Safe Team. Assure them this is entirely their choice, and they are not obligated to be contacted or involved further.

5. Follow through accordingly

If they agree to engage with the Safe Team, proceed with organizing a phone call, arranging a meeting and/or writing the report.

If they do not want to be contacted or involved further, make a note of this in the report.

REPORTING PATHWAYS FOR DISCLOSURES OF ADULT ABUSE

At any time in this process and if in any doubt, you may seek advice from 1800RESPECT or the BCWA Safe Church Liaison Officer (08 6313 6300.) Within 48 hours of a disclosure, we advise debriefing with such a professional, informing the church Board, and church insurance company.

DISCLOSURE RECEIVED

NBBC Safe Team (Jun 2026)

- Grant Hendry: 0468 361 777
- Suzanne Mitchelson: 0412 328 414

Discuss with victim but call the police on 000.

→ **IS THERE IMMEDIATE RISK OF DEATH OR SEVERE HARM TO ANYONE?**
Includes danger of suicide or self-harm

Yes

No

Support the victim. Listen, believe, validate. Reassure them of confidentiality but explain limits. Involve and/or inform regarding any reporting steps. Outline support using NBBC service guide. Help them access desired support.

ARE CHILDREN AT RISK?

No

Yes

IS THE DISCLOSURE ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE?

Yes

No

Call Department of Communities Central Intake Team (WA): 1800 273 889. Remember, witnessing domestic abuse harms children & may be reportable. When in doubt, seek advice.

IS THE ACCUSED SOMEONE IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP?

E.g., Pastor, elder, deacon, staff member, ministry leader or leader within a ministry

Yes

No

IS THE ACCUSED SOMEONE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH NBBC WHO POSES A RISK TO OTHERS IN THE CHURCH?

Yes

No

All key volunteers & leaders are required to notify the NBBC Safe Team via the online Safe Report form. Anyone else is encouraged to do so.

You may also contact the BCWA Safe Church Liaison directly: (08) 6313 6300. Do this if there is a conflict of interest in notifying Safe Team.

Obtain consent from victim regarding whether they be identified or not.

All key volunteers & leaders are

required to notify the Safe Team via the online Safe Report form. If unsure, call BCWA: (08) 6313 6300

Obtain consent from victim regarding whether they be identified or not.

Keep a personal record of the disclosure and continue supporting the victim.

Contact the Church Safe Team confidentially for advice if needed.

NBBC (WA Related) Services Referral Guide 2026

Crisis Services		
Service	Number	Description
Police / Fire / Ambulance	000	Is someone seriously injured or in urgent need of medical assistance? Is life or property under threat? Have you witnessed a serious accident or crime?
Non-English speaking First Call Interpreting Service (TIS)	13 14 50	Interpreting service
Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)	1300 555 788 (Perth) 1800 676 822 (Peel)	24/7 telephone referral and response line for people experiencing a mental health crisis The service aims to keep people safe during the crisis and connect them to appropriate services
Lifeline	Call 131 114 Text: 0477 13 11 14	24/7 crisis counselling line for people experiencing emotional distress Suicide prevention
13 YARN	13 92 76	24/7 crisis support run by Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander peoples
Crisis Care	1800 199 008	Concern for a child's wellbeing 24/7 Information and referrals for people experiencing a crisis
National Debt Helpline	1800 007 007	The National Debt Helpline is a not-for-profit service that helps people tackle their debt problems. We're not a lender and we don't 'sell' anything or make money from you. Our professional financial counsellors offer a free, independent and confidential service. https://ndh.org.au/
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467	Provides 24/7 counselling to people affected by suicide. suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Counselling		
Service	Number	Description
Crossway Counselling Centre	0435 032 077	Crossway provides quality Biblical counselling for adults struggling with a wide range of areas including (but not limited to) marriage conflict and intimate partner abuse, understanding and handling anger, sexual brokenness, infidelity and betrayal, resolving conflict. hello@crosswaycounselling.org.au www.crosswaycounselling.org.au
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800	Free telephone counselling and support for 5 – 25 year olds. https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/
MensLine Australia	1300 78 99 78	MensLine Australia is a free telephone and online counselling service offering support for Australian men anywhere, anytime. https://mensline.org.au/
No to Violence (men)	1300 766 491	24/7 counselling services for men. Specialises in working with men to change their violent behaviour to keep women, children and communities safer. Ntv.org.au
Elder Abuse helpline	1300 724 679	Assists older people to understand their rights and provides free confidential information and support to older people who are at risk of or experiencing elder abuse 8:30am – 4:30pm (M-F)
1800 Respect	1800 737 732	Telephone counselling support line for people impacted by domestic, family, or sexual violence. Note the free Daisy app that connects women who are experiencing of who have experience family violence to services in their state and local area
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277	Relationship support Counselling

Domestic Abuse		
Service	Number / Link	Description
WA Women's Domestic Violence 24 Hour help line	1800 007 339	Support for women with or without children and referrals to refuges
WA Men's Domestic Violence Helpline	1800 000 599	For men concerned about their own abusive or violent behaviour and for male victims of FDV Referrals to support services
Centre for Women's Safety & Wellbeing	https://csws.org.au/	Support for WA women re. family violence, sexual violence, women's health & equality
Family Relationships		
Service	Number / Link	Description
Family Relationship Advice Line	1800 050 321 https://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/talk-someone/advice-line	Helping families build better relationships • Strengthening family relationships • Helping families stay together • Assisting families through separation Hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm local time Saturday 10am to 4pm local time Closed Sundays and national public holidays
Homelessness		
Service	Number / Link	Description
EntryPoint Perth	1800 124 684 (08) 6496 0001	Free and voluntary assessment and referral service assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in WA Access to accommodation and support services
Uniting WA Tranby Engagement HUB	1300 663 298	Food, showers, 1:1 support for transitional/ crisis accommodation

Quitting Narcotics/Alcohol		
Service	Number / Link	Description
Alcoholics Anonymous Australia	1300 222 222	An informal society of more than two million people recovering from alcohol addiction. Members provide each other with strength and hope to solve their common problem and recover together. aa.org.au
Quitline	13 7848	A warm, welcoming, confidential and free counselling service. Quitline counsellors can support you throughout your quit journey.
National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline	1800 250 015	Free and confidential support around alcohol and other drugs. health.gov.au/contacts/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-hotline
National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre Helpline	1800 30 40 50	A DIY guide, free online program and helpline service to help cannabis users reduce and quit use. https://ncpic.org.au/cannabis-you/tools-for-quitting/ https://ncpic.org.au/
Holyoake	+61 8 9416 4444	Everyone's alcohol, drug or mental health recovery journey is different. But wherever you are on yours, whatever your goals, we're here for you. Our support is free and confidential • One-on-one counselling • Peer-group support • Face-to-face, phone or video • Available across WA https://holyoake.org.au/get-support-for-individuals/
Cannabis Information & Support	https://cannabissupport.com.au/staying-quit/	Making the decision to quit or cut-down weed use isn't always easy. Once you've made the decision, it's important you have the tools and support you need to avoid relapse. Stay Quit compliments our online quit programs by looking at the biggest challenges you may encounter when quitting, from sleep and boredom, through to withdrawals and saving cash.

FAQ

What is NBBC's Stance on Separation and Divorce in Situations of Domestic Abuse?

NBBC leadership believe that God designed marriage as the lifelong union of a man and woman - "what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:6). We want to honour the God-ordained covenant of marriage by helping people to seek and find marital healing and restoration wherever possible. However, we also acknowledge the reality of enduring sin and brokenness in our marriages that could lead to separation and divorce.

We believe that abuse within marriage is against God's good design for a safe and loving union where husband & wife mutually build one another up towards God's glory and one another's good (Eph 5:22-33). The cruelty and injustice of abuse grieves God's heart. There is no biblical justification for any form of abuse. Where someone is endangered, we would urge them to seek safety and help through separation and the involvement of governing authorities where appropriate. We desire for all perpetrators of abuse to be held to account for their sin and called to repentance. As a minimum, this should be demonstrated through humble acknowledgement of sin, failure and harm, acceptance of consequences and long-term evidence of changed behaviour and attitudes. The safety and agency of the victim is paramount.

We also acknowledge that God permitted divorce in certain cases. The New Testament provides grounds for divorce in sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9) and allows for a peaceful separation when an unbelieving spouse seeks to divorce (1 Corinthians 7:15). Divorce is not the only pathway in these instances, but it is a permitted pathway.

By conviction, as church leaders, we do not feel it is our role to sanction divorce, however, we are committed to loving and supporting the abused as they seek safety, healing, and discernment of God's will. While some legal and logistical protections may require speedy action, when considering divorce, we encourage victims to patiently process their situation with God, seeking to obey the Holy Spirit through earnest prayerfulness, faithful engagement with scripture and trusted godly counsel. God is a refuge for the oppressed (Psalm 9:9) and we hope to reflect His great love, compassion, and justice as we journey alongside the abused.

APPENDIX A: Forms for Reporting and Pastoral Care

TEAR HERE

NBBC SAFE REPORT FORM

This form is intended for attendees of NBBC to document and report information, having witnessed abuse or received a disclosure of abuse concerning one adult against another (persons over 18) where the alleged abuser poses risk of (possible) harm to others at NBBC.

- This form should be submitted directly to the NBBC Safe Team, either handed in person to Grant Hendry (0468 361 777), or Suzanne Mitchelson (0412 328 414) or emailed to SafeReports@nbbc.org.au.
- Alternatively, an online form is available on the NBBC website (www.nbbc.org.au/safereports) that sends directly to the Safe Team.

Date of report lodgement: _____

Name of person making this report: _____

Contact details of person making this report:

- **Mobile:** _____
- **Email:** _____

Relationship to person who experienced abuse: _____

Date of disclosure/observation: _____

Has the person who experienced abuse given consent for their identity and situation to be shared with the Safe Team? Yes / No

Record any notes or concerns:

If yes

- **Name of person who experienced abuse:** _____
- **Email:** _____
- **Mobile:** _____
- **Are they willing to be contacted by the NBBC Safe Team?** Yes / No

Record any notes or concerns:

Type of incident being reported (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Disclosure of (potential) abuse.
- ☐ Witness of (potential) abuse.
- ☐ Personal experience of (potential) abuse
- ☐ The alleged perpetrator is in an NBBC position of leadership (including staff, deacons, elders, ministry leaders and growth group leaders).
- ☐ Police were called

APPENDIX A: Forms for Reporting and Pastoral Care

NBBC SAFE REPORT FORM, continued

Details of incident:

(Please describe the incident including the alleged perpetrator name(s), behaviour, sighted injury or other indicators of abuse. Use the person's own words as much as possible.)

Alleged perpetrator's name: _____

Action undertaken (if any):

(E.g., What was discussed? Did you outline support services? Did you call a helpline together?)

Did anyone else see it happen or does anyone else know about it? If so, supply details:

For Safe Team

Report received by	Date	Signature

Pastoral Care Form 01: Care Plan¹

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Isaiah 41:10

This form is a simple tool to journey with someone who needs some pastoral support. The responses help us understand what matters most. Complete with the pastoral care client, to ensure they are seen, valued, and not alone.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Pastoral Care Team Member: _____

Client email: _____

Mobile: _____

Preferred contact: ☐ Text ☐ Call ☐ Email

Best day/time of day: _____

Address: _____

Names/ages of children (if applicable):

How often I'd like to hear from someone

☐ A few times a week ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Less often

What type of care might be most helpful right now (check all that apply)?

Emotional/Relational Support

- ☐ Regular check-ins with me (circle preferences: text / call / in-person and frequency: weekly / monthly / less often)
- ☐ Encouragement
- ☐ Someone to listen
- ☐ Talk to me about Crossway Counselling

Practical Help

- ☐ Meals (fresh or frozen). Dietary requirements: _____
- ☐ Groceries or errands
- ☐ Housework, gardening, computer help – describe _____
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Budgeting or paperwork
- ☐ Resume or job help
- ☐ Gift cards for food or petrol
- ☐ Ride to court, church, school (for kids) or appointments
- ☐ Other _____

¹ Adapted from "This Was Never the Plan: Walking with God Through the Heartache of Divorce" by Vaneetha Rendall Risner and "Is it Abuse?" by Darby Strickland

Support for my Kids

- ☐ Ride to/from activities
- ☐ Mentoring or regular time with them
- ☐ Invitations to family dinners or outings
- ☐ Help preparing for milestones (jobs, birthdays, etc)
- ☐ Help nurturing their faith

Spiritual Encouragement

- ☐ Read the Bible or a devotional with me
- ☐ Invite me to church or Bible study
- ☐ Help me navigate spiritual questions
- ☐ Pray regularly for me and with me
- ☐ Other, _____

Social Support

- ☐ Regular meals or coffee with someone
- ☐ Invitations for holidays or church events
- ☐ Someone for our family to sit with at church
- ☐ Help finding community at church

What's Not Helpful Right Now (this helps us avoid doing things which add stress instead of relieving it)

If I had to name just 2 – 3 things that would be most helpful right now, I'd choose ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are there any specific needs or circumstances you'd like us to know about?

Anything else you'd like to share?

Would a future follow up meeting be helpful?

- ☐ Yes. When would be suitable? _____
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe. Can I call you in a week/month? _____

Pastoral Care Form 02: Asking Friends²

Hi friend

Thank you for being someone I can trust. I know it can be hard to know how to help, so I put together a few things that would be especially meaningful or helpful right now. I'm not expecting you to do everything – just sharing this in case it gives you a clearer idea of where I could use support. I'm so grateful you're walking with me in this.

Name: _____ Mobile: _____

Preferred way to contact: ☐ Text ☐ Call ☐ Email

Best time of day: _____

Email: _____

How often I'd like to hear from someone

☐ A few times a week ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Less often

What might help

Emotional Support

- ☐ Check in with me
- ☐ Listen and help me process decisions
- ☐ Send encouraging verses or notes

Practical Help

- ☐ Meals
- ☐ Groceries or errands
- ☐ Household jobs, gardening or computer help. Describe _____
- ☐ Job search or resume help
- ☐ Financial or budgeting advice
- ☐ Gift cards for food or petrol
- ☐ Drive to court, church or appointments

Support for Children

- ☐ Regularly spend time with one child/mentor
- ☐ Occasionally spend time with one or more children
- ☐ Help with schoolwork
- ☐ Attend games or activities

Spiritual Encouragement

- ☐ Pray with you and share encouragement
- ☐ Read Scripture or a devotional together
- ☐ Pray. Send me a list of prayer requests weekly
- ☐ Be a sounding board to listen and process faith questions

Social Support

- ☐ Invite me for coffee or dinner
- ☐ Include me in a weekend or holidays plans with your family
- ☐ Save me a seat at church

² Adapted from "This Was Never the Plan: Walking with God Through the Heartache of Divorce" by Vaneetha Rendall Risner and "Is it Abuse?" by Darby Strickland

If I had to name just 2 – 3 things that would be helpful right now, I'd choose:

1.

2.

3.

There wasn't a place in which to mention this earlier, but I'd like you to know ...

Pastoral Care Form 03 : Friends Offer³

Hi friend

I care about you and want to walk with you in this season – but I also know I can't do everything. To make things a little easier on both of us, these are specific things I'm able to offer right now. My hope is that this helps you know what you can count on, and that it brings even a little relief along the way.

Name: _____ Mobile: _____

Preferred way to contact: ☐ Text ☐ Call ☐ Email

Best time of day: _____

Email: _____

How often I'd able to check in or help

☐ A few times a week ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Less often ☐ As needed

How I can help

Time-based Help

- ☐ Drive to appointments or church
- ☐ Babysit or give rides to children
- ☐ Help with errands
- ☐ Drop off meals (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Regular check-ins (text or call)
- ☐ Have you over for a meal or coffee

Skill-based Help

- ☐ Laundry or housework
- ☐ Gardening or small repairs
- ☐ Job search or resume help
- ☐ Financial or budgeting advice
- ☐ Tech or computer help
- ☐ Pastoral support

Support for Children

- ☐ Regularly spend time with one child/mentor
- ☐ Occasionally spend time with one or more children
- ☐ Help with schoolwork
- ☐ Attend games or activities
- ☐ Take children for outings or weekends
- ☐ Buy clothes or other necessities for school or sports

Spiritual Encouragement

- ☐ Pray with you and share encouragement
- ☐ Read Scripture or a devotional together
- ☐ Pray. Send me a list of prayer requests weekly
- ☐ Be a sounding board to listen and process faith questions

Other

- ☐ Contribute financially to needs (or help pool resources with others)
- ☐ Be a point person to organise others (meals, rides, care)
- ☐ I'm open to being asked about other needs

³ Adapted from "This Was Never the Plan: Walking with God Through the Heartache of Divorce" by Vaneetha Rendall Risner and "Is it Abuse?" by Darby Strickland

How I Prefer to Help

- ☐ Behind-the-scenes help (errands, research, organising)
- ☐ In-person support
- ☐ I do better with flexible tasks I can do on my own time
- ☐ Respond as needs arise
- ☐ Regular rhythm (weekly/monthly check-ins, coffee dates, etc)

These are the 2 – 3 areas of support that feel most doable or natural for me to offer right now:

1.

2.

3.

Boundaries and constraints I need to be honest about:

Some Thoughts About Your Support

“Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed” Proverbs 11:25

One of the greatest gifts we can offer someone going through divorce or recovering from abuse is our presence; our words, actions and willingness to show up have powerful impacts. The acronym SHOW UP can help us remember how to meaningfully care:

- S** **Show up:** Be present, and consistent, whether in person or from afar
- H** **How is Today?** Ask specific, thoughtful questions that invite honesty
- O** **Offer specific help:** Don’t just offer in general – name what you’re able to do
- W** **Words of encouragement:** Speak truth that builds up without minimizing their pain
- U** **Use active listening:** Pay attention in a way that helps them feel truly seen
- P** **Pray, asking God for wisdom:** Keep lifting your friend up to Him as you walk together

For further thoughts on these points, see “This was Never the Plan” pages 157 – 171 (by Vaneetha Rendall Risner).