

Resources for Survivors

Disclosure: Making the decision to talk about what happened



Making the decision to talk about sexual violence done to you is not going to be easy. How easy it is, will depend on what is happening in your life and what support you have.

People commonly do not talk about the sexual violence they experienced as a child or as an adult, until decades later.

What are the barriers to making the decision to talk?

- Concern for your own safety;
- Fear and threats that you will be in trouble;
- Protecting your parents, family;
- Sense of guilt, shame and embarrassment; or
- Mistrust of others.



Men also struggle with additional barriers

- Thoughts you should have been able to stop the abuse from happening;
- You have been taught men don't show emotions;
- If you say anything people might think you will become a perpetrator;
- People might think you are gay; or
- If you were abused by a woman, you might be worried you won't be taken seriously.

What can lead to you talking about the past sexual violence?

Certain things happening in a man's life might get them talking about what happened to them:

- Discussions about redress schemes;
- Criminal trials of perpetrators;
- Disclosures by a friend;
- Becoming a parent; or
- When a relationship breaks down.

Do not underestimate the pressure on a man to keep things secret.

Safety can often be tied up with secrecy, for example saying something could cause more trouble.

What happens if you keep something as serious as sexual violence, a secret?

- The stress of keeping the secret can make you physically and mentally unwell.
- Secrecy can make you more isolated.
- Secrecy can allow voices of self-doubt and self-blame.
- Secrecy can become a prison.

If you decide to tell you must keep yourself safe.

There is no right or wrong way of telling someone about what happened to you. Take it slowly. This will give time to those listening to think about what you have said.

Being believed and being helped to find good supports, will help a man to improve his physical and mental health.

