

Good Practice Guidance: Responding to Peoples Stories & Lived Experience

It can be very hard for children and young people to speak out about abuse. Often they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what's happening to them.

Some may delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to.

It's vital that children and young people are able to speak out and that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they've been told.

Even if a child doesn't tell someone verbally about what's happened to them, there may be other indicators that something is wrong. People who work with children need to be able to recognise the signs and know how to respond appropriately.

[Recognising and responding to child abuse and neglect | NSPCC Learning](#)



[Responding to a Child's Disclosure of Abuse | NSPCC Learning \(youtube.com\)](#)

Let them know you're listening:

Show you care, help them open up.

Give your full attention to the child or young person, or adult and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.

Take your time, slow down

Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.

Show you understand, reflect back

Make it clear you're interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

[Let children know you're listening | NSPCC Learning](#)

The 5 'R's:

Receive: Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse is denial. However, if you display denial to a child, or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down. Accept what is being said without judgement. Take it seriously.

Reassure: Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now". Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong and that you take what is said seriously. Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns. Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to protect children. Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse.

React: Listen quietly, carefully and patiently. Do not assume anything – don't speculate or jump to conclusions. Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child is telling the truth. Remember that an allegation of child abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation. Let the child explain to you in his or her own words what happened, but don't ask leading questions. Do ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?" Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. This is especially important for children with disabilities and for children whose preferred language is not English. Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to.

Refer directly to the named child protection officer or designated person in your organisation (as set out in the organisation's child protection policy). Do not discuss the case with anyone outside the child protection team. **Record:** Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by Court.

Record the date, time, place, words used by the child and how the child appeared to you – be specific. Record the actual words used; including any swear words or slang. Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual.

[handling disclosure from a child 0.pdf \(britishcouncil.org\)](#)

Look after yourself:

When we are told others stories, it can be impactful on us. Your self care is crucial and we would advice you reflect on your own wellbeing.

Please see BJA Wellbeing Resources on our website. Including:

[annex-h.pdf \(mind.org.uk\)](#)

[Search Results - Mind](#)

[Self Care - Mind](#)



Resource to display in your club:



[Let children know you're listening poster \(English version\) \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://nspcc.org.uk)

Active Listening:

What is the LIVES approach?

There are five simple tasks involved in supporting victims and survivors.

Listen

Actively listen and to show empathy. Depending on your role in the workplace, you may be eager to establish the facts and, however, this first step is about providing space for victims or survivors to share without judgment or blame.

Dos	Don'ts
Find a quiet and private place to talk so the victim or survivor can speak confidentially	Speak about your or other people's experiences of violence or harassment
Be patient and calm	Ask many questions to get the details of the situation
Assure that what is shared will not be repeated without their consent	Do not rush them
Show that you are listening by nodding and encourage them to speak	Do not interrupt them
Listen to their feelings (and not what they are saying)	Avoid judgmental statements such as "you should not feel this way" or "you are lucky it is not worse"
Pay attention to both your body languages (eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture)	Avoid assigning blame to the victim or survivor through statements such as "you are only experiencing ... because you are or you did ..."
Allow for silences	Judge or criticize the decisions and choices made by the victim or survivor or suggest that they could have acted in different ways to protect themselves
If the victim or survivor cries, allow time to recover and offer pauses and breaks	Express frustration or anger at the victim or survivor
Believe their account of their experiences	Condemn or talk badly about the perpetrator
Show empathy and non-judgment	Provide counselling
Condemn the use of violence or harassment by the alleged perpetrator	

[Note 6 - Responding to Disclosures Guidance Note \(care.org\)](#)

REMEMBER, same good practice principles for adults and children. But you cannot keep it a secret. Our duty is to keep everyone safe.

For further information & support. Contact safeguarding@britishjudo.org.uk

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