# Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence

written by SRFL Team | 14 November 2023



*Trigger warning: This article includes content about child sexual exploitation, abuse and violence which some readers may find disturbing. If you are triggered by any of the following content, please reach out to one of the Support Services listed at the end of this article.*

Protecting children from harm is the overarching purpose of the family law system in Australia.  Children have rights, and parents have responsibilities.  Family law matters that involve issues relating to children's safety can be challenging for everyone involved. Protecting children and ensuring they are safe is at the heart of everything we do at SR Family Law.

That is why the 18th of November '**World Day for the Prevention of and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence'** is an important day for us to acknowledge.

We strongly support and stand behind the position that all children have the right to live a life free from sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, actions which can have long lasting effects on a child.

> "Child sexual abuse and exploitation is any act of inappropriately exposing or subjecting a child (under the age of 18) to sexual activity, contact or behaviour by an adult for the purposes of gratification (sexual or otherwise). Child sexual abuse is a global problem that knows no physical, financial, socioeconomic, geographic, cultural or gender boundaries."
> – Bravehearts

There are several ways to actively work towards preventing and responding to child sexual exploitation, abuse, and violence and promoting the healing of those who have been the victim of this abuse.

**Education and Awareness:** Education is the first step in prevention. By raising awareness about child abuse and its consequences, you can help people recognise the signs and understand the importance of taking action. Encourage parents and caregivers to create safe, nurturing environments for their children. Parenting support and education can help achieve this and reduce the risk of abuse. Workplaces can commit to raising staff awareness through implementing continuous professional development on the subject, especially for employers of young people and people who work with children and young people, such as teachers, coaches, or volunteers.

> "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
>
> – Nelson Mandela

**Mental Health Support:** Promote access to mental health services for survivors of child abuse. Psychological healing is crucial for those who have experienced trauma.

**Online Safety:** Given the digital age we live in, it's important to educate everyone, including children and parents about online safety, including awareness of online predators and cyberbullying.

**Listening and Reporting:** For those who have experienced abuse, provide a listening ear, support, and understanding. Healing often begins with validation and a non-judgmental environment. Encourage people to report any suspected cases of child abuse or exploitation. Ensure that they are aware of the proper channels and understand the importance of speaking up.

**Legal Protection:** Explore legal options like protection orders, which can provide a legal barrier between the child and the abuser.

**Preventing Re-victimisation:** Help survivors access support systems and resources to reduce the risk of re-victimisation. These services support survivors in a way that empowers them to rebuild their lives.

**Promote Positive Role Models:** Highlight individuals and organisations that champion child protection, creating positive examples

for others to follow. Be a role model yourself, listen to the children around you, be aware of what is happening in their lives and treat them with respect and dignity.

Remember that making a difference in child protection requires an ongoing effort. By following these steps, you can contribute to creating a safer and more supportive environment for all children.

- **Kids Helpline** https://kidshelpline.com.au/ 1800 55 1800 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Resources for children, young people, parents and teachers
- **Lifeline** https://www.lifeline.org.au/ 13 11 14 – 24/7 Crisis Support
- **ReachOut** https://au.reachout.com/ online, anonymous and confidential, ReachOut lets young people connect on their terms. A safe place to chat anonymously, get support, and feel better.
- A list of **Queensland Local Services** that offer help for victims of sexual assault can be found here. https://www.health.qld.gov.au/sexualassault/html/contact
- If your child is in immediate danger call **Police** on 000

Specialist support is also available for child victims of sexual abuse:

- **Child and Youth Mental Health Service** https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/services/mental-health
- **Act for Kids** https://www.actforkids.com.au/
- **Bravehearts** https://bravehearts.org.au/
- **Laurel Place** https://laurelplace.com.au/

You don’t have to face this on your own. Help and support are available, reach out for help.

*Free initial consultation: Contact us to discuss your personal situation.*

*We hope you have found this information to be of use in giving you an understanding of our firm and the work we do specifically in relation to Family Law and matters related to Family Law. We know that every family law matter is unique, and your personal circumstances require you to receive personalised legal advice that considers your specific needs, objectives, and circumstances. We strongly encourage you to contact our office to talk to us about your personal circumstances and how this information specifically applies to your situation. We welcome you to get in touch with us to book a free initial consultation with our team.*

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*Wherever you are in the separation process, our team can assist you. Book your free initial consultation with one of our family lawyers today, phone during office hours on 07 56 466 466 or book online via our meeting calendar here.*

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