

# DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

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### Children cannot stop child abuse. Adults can.

We all have a responsibility to care for and protect the children within our communities who participate in tennis activities.

## Reporting a child protection concern

Child Protection Concerns include:

- Disclosures of actual harm, abuse or exploitation of a child;
- The potential risk of harm, abuse or exploitation of a child;
- Breaches of the protection policies or Code of Conduct by staff or volunteers.

You do not have to prove that abuse or a breach of the code of conduct is happening and it is not your job to investigate.

However, if you are concerned a child is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of that occurring, you **must** contact the relevant authorities in your state.

You are also bound by the Tennis Australia Member Protection Policy to inform your Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) of your concerns.

## Handling disclosures of abuse

Children must often overcome many hurdles in order to disclose their abuse. As a result many children never disclose to anyone about the abuse they are experiencing.

The reactions of adults make a major difference to the short and long term effects of abuse on children.

Do

- Believe the child
- Be calm, supportive and reassuring
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault
- Concentrate on the child's feelings rather than on questions and answers
- Explain what you are going to do now that you have been told.

Don't

- Make promises that you cannot keep
- Promise secrecy
- Push the child to give details of the abuse.