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MAKING A SUBMISSION TO THE DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION

If you are a young person with a disability the Disability Royal Commission wants to hear from you about any experiences you have of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

THIS FACT SHEET CAN HELP IF...

1. You are interesting in learning more about why the Disability Royal Commission exists
2. You would like to learn more about what sorts of stories the Disability Royal Commission is interested in hearing and what happens to the information give after your story is submitted
3. You are interested in making a submission but don't know how

THIS FACT SHEET IS HELPFUL FOR...

Young people with disability who want to learn more about making a submission to the Disability Royal Commission



WHY DOES THE DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION EXIST?

The Disability Royal Commission exists to collect stories from people with disability about experiences they have had involving violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation.



From reading or viewing all of the stories submitted, the people working for the Disability Royal Commission hope to:

- Better understand **how often** people with disability are experiencing these things
- Better understand **how serious and damaging** these things are when they occur
- Better understand **what sorts of environments** can be most dangerous for people with disability



By gaining a better understanding of all of these things, the people working for the Disability Royal Commission aim to recommend changes to the Government that address the issues that people with disability have shared in their stories.

Experiences of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation are not easy things to share or talk about. Especially because as a young person you may still be in the environment where these things happened to you or have not long left. However, if you are comfortable sharing your story you will be helping the Disability Royal Commission to better understand how and why these bad things occur and how to best help young people with disability in the future.



It is very important to understand: The Disability Royal Commission cannot directly help you fix any of the problems you share in your story even if they are still happening when you make your submission. They also cannot directly help you fix problems and things that happened a long time ago. They can refer you to other services and people that may be able to help you based on the story you share.

WHAT SORTS OF STORIES AND EXPERIENCES DOES THE DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION WANT TO HEAR ABOUT?

The Disability Royal Commission wants you to share stories that you have about times where you have experienced violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Below are some examples of how each of these things could happen.

- 1. Violence and abuse:** You have experienced violence or abuse if somebody has physically harmed you. They might have kicked, punched, hit, pushed, choked, burned or overpowered you. They might have restrained you in a way that hurt you, either by restricting your body or giving you medicine that you did not want. They might have forced you to engage in sexual activity or humiliated and harassed you in another way like saying mean things to you or making fun of you. They also may have not given you privacy when they should have.





2. Neglect: You have experienced neglect if somebody who is supposed to be looking after you doesn't make sure you are comfortable and have everything you need. For example, they may not be giving you enough food or water, making sure that your home is safe and clean, making sure that you are clean and dressed and have everything you need to start your day (like your wheelchair, crutches and hearing aids). Or they may be failing to take you to school or to your medical appointments.

3. Exploitation: You have experienced exploitation if somebody has taken advantage of you. They may have tricked you into giving them money or tricked you into doing something you didn't want to do. They could not be paying you correctly for work that you do or taking advantage of you because you don't understand something very well.



THESE THINGS COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT PLACES, INCLUDING:

- At school or work
- In your family home
- In a jail or detention centre
- In a disability or mental health facility
- In a group home or boarding house
- At hospital or the doctors
- At a social event
- Or during a day program

These are not the only ways or places that violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur. If somebody has done something to you that has made you feel hurt, embarrassed, sad or really bad about yourself it is very likely that they have mistreated you.

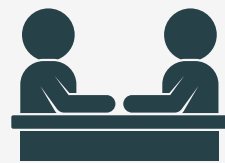
If you are still unsure whether something you have experienced falls into any of these groups, it is a good idea to talk to somebody you trust about what happened. This person could be a youth worker, support worker, teacher, family member or doctor.



WHAT IS A SUBMISSION TO THE DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION?

There are many different ways you can make a submission to the Royal Commission, such as:

- A written account, where you write down your story either on paper or on a computer
- Sharing your story by talking to someone over the phone
- Making an audio or video recording of you telling your story
- By sharing your story one on one with a commissioner in a private setting
- There are translators available so you can share your story in whatever language is most comfortable for you, including Auslan



The people working for the Disability Royal Commission understand that people with disability (and especially young people with disability), might have lots of different ways that they want to tell their stories and they want to help you to tell your story in whatever way is most comfortable to you. They want to hear your story on your terms.

QUESTIONS TO HELP FRAME YOUR SUBMISSION

On the following page there are some questions to think about when you are putting together your submission. They might help you to start thinking about what you want to say and how you want to say it.

1. What happened, when did it happen and where were you?
2. Have you told other people about your experience? If you have, who did you tell, what did you tell them and when did you tell them?
3. If you did tell someone about what happened to you, what happened after you told them? Were they able to help you fix the problem, did the person or people involved get in trouble for what they did to you? Did you feel supported by the person or people that you told?
4. Are there any recommendations you have for how the situation could have been handled better or is there anything else you want to add?



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION I GIVE?

- Your submission will not be published unless you want it to be
- It can be published without naming you if you prefer
- Based on your story you could be asked to tell your story in a public hearing, but you don't have to do this if you don't want to



At the moment, the Disability Royal Commission protect your information and identity until 2022. However, the Government has agreed to change this law next year so that your information will be protected forever.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION:

<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/brochure-sharing-your-experience-disability-royal-commission>

It will lead you to a webpage which provides multiple links to a very useful brochure put together by the Disability Royal Commission about sharing your experience. You have the option to choose from multiple languages and writing styles.

IF READING THIS INFORMATION HAS BROUGHT UP ANY CHALLENGING EMOTIONS FOR YOU:

The Blue Knot Foundation offers free counselling and support for anyone affected by the Disability Royal Commission.

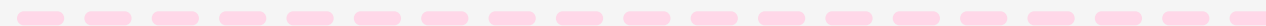


General National Hotline: **1800 421 468**

Or call the National Relay Service on **133 677** and give **02 6146 1468** as the number you want to call



Or you can access Blue Knot's online chat through:
helpline@blueknot.org.au



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES:

For more information about the Disability Royal Commission, exactly what violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation can consist of and how to take the first steps of putting together a submission, head to <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>.

To read more about your confidentiality of your submission follow this link:<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story/make-your-submission#:~:text=This%20means%20that%2C%20if%20you,information%20will%20be%20protected%20indefinitely.>

DISCLAIMER:

For the most current information about the Disability Royal Commission please go to the website <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>. This information is correct as of 11/12/2020.