



TELLING SOMEONE

Telling someone about the abuse is very important because the person hurting you wants to stop you from telling. Silence is what keeps the abuse going. If you are still in a situation where you have contact with the abuser, telling can seem really scary but it can help you keep safe. Even if you don't have contact anymore, telling is what can help you learn that you are NOT to blame and helps manage some of the feelings that you have. We want you to tell someone because you don't deserve to be hurt and abuse is not o.k.

Who can I tell?

If you can't tell someone in your family, then you might be able to tell a friend or a teacher. If you're still being hurt, you can call the Police- 000. You can also call Family and Community Services on the **Child Protection Helpline on 132 111** (TTY 1800 212 936).

Why haven't I told?

Not being able to tell shows how clever the abuser is, not how 'dumb' or 'stupid' you are (which is what they make you think). Some of the tricks an abuser uses so that a child won't tell include:

- ❑ convincing the child that the abuse is their fault and they will get into trouble (i.e. you will go to gaol, be taken away from your family etc)
- ❑ threatening the child or their family or their pets if they tell
- ❑ hurting the child more if they threaten to tell
- ❑ making sure the child is seen as a liar or fantasiser so if they do try and tell they will not be believed
- ❑ bribing the child with gifts, money, being allowed to do things they shouldn't do- this often leads to feeling more guilty and less likely to tell
- ❑ teaching the child to believe that the abuse is a 'special secret' - because children need and like to feel special
- ❑ telling the child that if they tell, they (the abuser) will go to gaol, be in trouble, have to leave - when the abuser is a close family member that the child loves this can be really scary and stops them from telling
- ❑ convincing the child that their mother/other family members know about the abuse/let it keep happening
- ❑ threatening to sexually abuse younger children if the child does not co-operate
- ❑ involving the child in abuse of other children or in illegal activities - i.e. drugs - so that the child is afraid of consequences to themselves if they tell

Whether you tell someone today or not, remember **It's not your fault.**