

REPORTING PREPARATION GUIDE/FORM

Reporting to The Royal Commission.

Survivors, or a member of their whanau, family or a close friend, can report abuse in a Private Hearing to the Royal Commission. **Reports to the private sessions of the Royal Commission are confidential.** They provide information the Commissioners need to know about what happened to survivors, where the abuse happened and how it was allowed to happen. This information will tell them what they need to investigate when they demand answers from the institutions where the abuse took place, what redress is needed and what they need to change.

If you are a survivor or member of a survivor's whanau or family, recalling what happened and putting a report together can be potentially traumatic and overwhelming. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you arrange to have a trusted support person with you when you put your information together. Occasionally, individuals feel triggered while in the process of recounting their trauma. Having your peer supporter, therapist or counsellor accessible near the time you are planning to prepare your report can be highly beneficial. If you do not happen to have such supports in place, and you wish to do so, we encourage you to contact us so we can help find an appropriate person for you.

Some survivors will choose to just talk on the day about what you remember. Others will want to read a statement. However you choose to do it, we recommend you have your own written record of what you want to report and give a copy to the Commissioner as your formal statement. How much detail you report must be your choice.

The form on the following pages can be used as a guide or tick list to help you organise your own account of events in a logical sequence. It also ensures that you do not forget to mention any critical points of your case, which can easily happen in this kind of situation. We trust that the following guide will help you to organise your thoughts to make a written report that you can either read or use as reference notes when you are talking to the Commissioner. It will be your own personal, written record of what you report.

Important: Be sure to attach copies of any documents, photos or other information that you believe supports your evidence, which the Commission can take into consideration in the course of their deliberations.

REPORTING GUIDE

Remember, this is simply a guide for your report, not a questionnaire. The questions are just prompts to jog your memory about the incident/s and there is no obligation to answer any of them. You may also have other significant information that does not fit with any particular question. Please do not leave out this important information and provide as much detail as you can. (Add extra pages as necessary.)

N.B: Please be assured that you will not be judged for what you say here. The effects that childhood and adolescent abuse have on survivors' lives and the lives of their whanau and families is now well understood and documented. The ways that individual survivors navigate their lives after suffering abuse are many and varied. Your being willing and able to talk about your experience at the Inquiry is a key that will enable the Commissioners to understand more about the impact of your abuse and what needs to be done to provide appropriate redress and compensation.

If you were unfortunate enough to suffer abuse by more than one perpetrator, please complete a separate report.

PART 1

1. a) When did the abuse happen?

(The year/s it occurred)

b) What age were you at the time?

c) Where did it happen?

If you do not know the name of the place where the abuse took place, then describe it from memory as best you can.

d) What is the name of your abuser/s and what was his/her role in the organisation?

If you do not know the name of the person/s who abused you, give any details you can remember about the person, such as: their location, occupation, where they worked, and what status did they have in the Jehovah's Witnesses' congregation/organisation?

2. What happened?

State only as much detail as you are comfortable with. It will be helpful for the Commission to know the type of abuse you experienced (sexual, physical, emotional, psychological or even if there were multiple kinds of abuse.)

Was it a one-off situation or did it continue over weeks, months or years?

Where possible, include information about the duration of the abuse.

3. How did you meet the person who abused you?

4. If you can, list and describe the many ways it affected you, your whanau and family and what effect being abused has had on your life. (i.e. mentally, physically, psychologically, school/work commitments and performance, your family dynamics during and after the event/s)

5. If you can, detail how you managed the effects the abuse had on you.

People manage in various different ways. Some medicate the pain with drugs or alcohol. Others cannot manage the anger they feel and end up in prison having committed violent crimes. Some suffer from ongoing health issues. Others never speak about it and try to ignore that it ever happened, which can be quite harmful to the individual's well-being.

6. If you did NOT tell anyone at the time you were being abused, can you remember the reasons?

If this question makes you feel uncomfortable, please do not answer it. It is already understood that for a variety of reasons, most survivors of abuse cannot report it at the time and do not report it for many years. Your response to this question will be very helpful to the Commission in looking at ways that can make a safe environment for survivors to report their abuse earlier.

7. If you have told anyone about the abuse, either at the time or even years later, can you describe how they reacted and what happened as a result of you telling them?

8. Did you think justice was achieved in your case? Include reasons for your answer.

PART 2

The Commission needs as much information as possible about the institutions where the abuse took place and what survivors had to deal with as a result of such abuse. This information is very important because it is necessary in order to seek justice, redress and to make much needed changes. It would also help the Commission if you could tell them if others in the congregation / location where you were abused, knew about it and whether or not they were able to do anything to stop it from happening.

9. If you told anyone at your congregation, school or at the abuser’s place of work, can you list their name/s.

14. During the inquiry period, what were the outcomes of any pertinent meeting/s with the Elders/Judicial Committee on this matter?

If you have any relevant documents you can attach them to this report. Please make your corresponding comments about them here:

15. Did you get the impression at any time during the process that your testimony was not believed by the person/committee interviewing you?

And if so, how was their doubt made apparent?

16. What outcome were you expecting when you reported the abuse to the Elders/Judicial Committee?

17. Do you believe you had a fair and unbiased hearing by the Judicial Committee/the Elders? If not, please outline your reason/s for that conclusion?

18. If you used the Jehovah's Witnesses' complaint process (Judicial Committee) to seek justice, what was the outcome and how were you affected? (Emotionally? Physically? Mentally?)

Did you experience any difference in the way you were being treated by the congregation or your family/friends?

Did these after-effects require you to seek the advice of a doctor, counsellor, therapist or a social service.

What obstacles, if any, did you experience getting the help you needed?
 If you have any relevant documents, you can attach them to this report and make your corresponding comments about them here:

22. What was your experience of being a witness in the legal system?

23. What do you believe was the effect on you of going through the police and court processes?

24. If your abuser went to prison and has since been released, how do you feel about that?

25. If you reported your abuse to MSD (Ministry of Social Development), Orangi Tamariki, Department of Social Welfare, CFS, ACC or other Government Departments, describe how it was handled and what happened as a result.
