

## Module - Protecting People

### Introduction

Hillsong is committed to providing physical, emotional, and spiritual environments that are safe and secure for all Hillsong-Related People.

As a church we want to do all that we can to reduce the risk of harm occurring to Hillsong-Related People and provide a caring and appropriate response, should any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or complaint of misconduct or abuse occur.

### This training module will:

- Provide you with an understanding of respectful relationships and boundaries, in particular with those who are vulnerable.
- Equip you to recognise and act on concerns raised regarding people's wellbeing.
- Inform you on how together we can foster and protect a culture of wellbeing and wholeness for all Hillsong-Related People.

If you are participating in this course you have, or are planning to have, some active involvement in the operations of Hillsong Church. In our Church, you may commonly be referred to as a 'Pastor', 'Staff', 'Leader' or 'Volunteer'. In WHS legislation and the Hillsong Work Health and Safety Policy you and those you serve alongside are collectively referred to as 'Worker'.

### Sections covered in this module includes:

- Section 1 - Respectful Relationships
- Section 2 - Principles for Safe Ministry
- Section 3 - Vulnerable People and Concerns About People
- Section 4 - Responding and Reporting

### Course requirements

Prior to completing this module, you should have already completed the Hillsong Safe Church WHS Induction Module. To complete this Protecting People Module you will need to review the content provided and answer a series of short questionnaires. Each question must be answered correctly before proceeding.

This module should take **20-25 minutes** to complete. During this time, you may require a short break. You can resume training at any point. The system will remember the slide you have last completed. It is recommended that you plan to complete the course in an environment that is free from distraction and provides reliable internet access.



## Before you begin

The topics covered in this training module can be confronting and may be upsetting or bring up personal issues for some individuals.

Before you begin, make sure you're in a good headspace and not in an isolated or vulnerable state.

If you find this content distressing please seek support from your oversight, Pastoral Care, Safe Church, or any other suggested support services, using the contact numbers listed below:

- 1300 53 53 53 - Hillsong Pastoral Care
- 1800 557 264 - Hillsong Safe Church
- 13 11 14 - Lifeline crisis support and suicide prevention (chat online [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au))
- 1300 22 4636 - Beyond Blue (chat online [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au))
- 1800 Respect – National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling service
- 1800 272 831 – Bravehearts information or support relating to child sexual assault



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## **Section 1 - Respectful Relationships**

**The topics covered in this section include:**

- Duty of Care
- Boundary Respecting
- Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Leaders
- Reportable Conduct
- Responsibility of those in Leadership Positions

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## Duty of Care



'Duty of care' is a term used to explain our responsibility to take reasonable care to prevent or protect others from harm. Just as we have a duty of care in the physical 'work health and safety' sense, the same applies in the areas of emotional, spiritual and mental well-being. Duty of care is founded in the Biblical principle of 'Love Thy Neighbour'. ("Love your neighbour as yourself." - Mark 12:31)

While duty of care is a legal term, it is founded in God's love for people. We want to ensure that we do all that we can to provide a safe environment that doesn't hinder people from experiencing God's love, growing in their faith and flourishing in a healthy church community.

## Boundary Respecting



God created boundaries, we see this in creation – light and dark, day and night, land and sea. God created each person unique, with their own personality, likes and dislikes, gifts and talents. Respectful relationships value others, including people who are different. When you have respect for someone you treat them with kindness and respect their boundaries. We can treat others with respect, regardless of our personal feelings towards them.

As workers and members of our church community it's important for us to understand the concept of boundaries in order to develop and maintain respectful relationships.

A boundary is a personal line between two people. Each of us have boundaries that define who we are as individuals; a boundary sets where one person ends and another begins. The strength of a boundary depends on our relationship with the other person and the context of that relationship.

It's important that as church workers we recognise boundaries between one another and those we lead or care for, and maintain appropriate boundaries that respect one another.

Interactions between individuals in our everyday lives and in ministry create the potential to cross boundaries. In that sense, boundaries can be fluid and it is sometimes difficult to draw precise lines about which behaviours are appropriate.

To understand other's boundaries, it's important to consider factors such as time, location, circumstance and if the interaction respects and focuses on what is best for the other person.



### **Time**

Example: Sending a text message to team members four days prior to a service reminding them of something that they need to prepare, could be considered appropriate. Sending the text message at 1am the morning of the service, this same action at the wrong time could be considered inappropriate and crossing of others boundaries.

### **Location**

Example: Two leaders praying with someone in the foyer after the service with people around, could be considered appropriate. Praying for someone alone in the back of the carpark, the same action in the wrong location could be considered inappropriate and crossing of others boundaries.

### **Circumstance**

Example: Giving a Hillsong Kids birthday gift to each child during monthly group birthday celebrations, would be considered appropriate. Giving a personal birthday gift to an individual child after the program would be considered inappropriate and crossing boundaries.

### **Best for the other person**

Example: Inviting someone to volunteer as part of your team and respecting their choice not to serve at this time, would be respecting the individual and what is right for that person. Inviting someone to join your team and not taking 'no' for an answer, pressuring them to serve as you need more team, could be considered inappropriate and not best for the other person.

While some boundaries may change depending on time, location and circumstance, there are some boundaries that should never be crossed. There are boundaries where is it never the right time, location, circumstance to cross. They are boundaries that are never the right time, location, circumstance and are never best for the other person. There are clear boundaries of conduct that is illegal, inappropriate and cause harm to others e.g. abuse, violence, sexual misconduct.

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## Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Leaders

The Hillsong Volunteers Code of Conduct outlines expected behaviour of those that serve within Hillsong Church.

Consistent with Hillsong Work Health and Safety Policy, those who serve in Hillsong will:

- Act in the best interests of those they serve, especially those who are vulnerable.
- Be accountable within their teams and follow reasonable instructions from those in leadership.
- Not be spiritually, emotionally, physically or sexually abusive in any way toward others. Domestic and family violence is never acceptable.
- Avoid the use of offensive language (e.g. vulgar language, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).
- Exercise caution with all potentially addictive behaviours and/or harmful substances.
- Refrain from using any illicit substances.
- Use caution when initiating or receiving physical contact with those they serve, including gestures of comfort. Such gestures can be unwanted or misinterpreted.
- Treat all with whom they work, fairly and with respect.
- Communicate with integrity. This includes the use of electronic communication which will be used wisely and never inappropriately.
- Acknowledge when they do not possess the required skill set in a situation and seek help from a supervisor or church leader. This particularly applies to helping those who are victims of abuse or require professional counselling.
- Not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright).

The Hillsong Work Health and Safety Policy specifically requires that all workers, including volunteers must:

- Co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the Hillsong Executive Management, or undertaking relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to Workers.
- Effectively identify and immediately report any known or perceived instances, disclosures or allegations of harm to the Safe Church Office.
- Maintain the privacy of all Hillsong People, in particular those associated with disclosures of harm, subject to compliance with all relevant legislation.

### Financial matters

Those who serve in Hillsong are encouraged to have integrity in their financial dealings. They must not seek financial gain from their church role.

### Conflict of interest

Information gained through Hillsong must not be used for purposes other than for legitimate Hillsong purposes and any conflict of interest that impacts upon the fulfilment of this code must be disclosed.

### Code of Conduct for Leaders

Since all leaders are called to serve, the Hillsong Leaders Code of Conduct contains all of the elements of the Hillsong Volunteers Code of Conduct. However, with the privilege of leading, comes added responsibility and the Leader's code expects higher standards. In addition to the points above, those that lead will:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of those they lead.
- Treat all with whom they work, fairly and with respect. They will not show favouritism in their leadership.
- Not influence those they lead with views contrary to the culture of Hillsong.
- Act with sexual purity. Sexuality is a gift from God and must be exercised according to Biblical principles.

All volunteers and leaders of Hillsong are considered 'Workers' under Workplace Health & Safety and Child Protection legislation. Workers have a greater responsibility, at law, and their conduct may become the subject of an investigation. The following may be reportable to relevant authorities:

- Any breach of this code involving a criminal offence may lead to a report being made to the relevant authorities.
- Any breach relating to harm, or risk of harm, will be dealt with according to the Hillsong Safe Church Framework.
- Any other breach will be considered in the light of the best interests of the volunteer or leader and those they serve and may result in the volunteer or leader being stood down from their area of leadership or service.
- Volunteers and leaders need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as to not discredit the gospel.
- In the case of leaders who are also employees, breaches may become the subject of an HR investigation and be dealt with according to our HR policies and procedures.



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## Volunteer Workers Declaration

Please carefully read the following and then click the "I Agree" button to continue.

Thank you for your desire to volunteer at Hillsong. This declaration is part of our church's commitment to ensuring our duty of care to all people, and also to fulfill our insurance obligations, health and safety and other requirements.

### **Consent to Hold Information**

I consent to information being retained by our church that is received during my assessment of eligibility to operate in the capacity of volunteer. I understand that this information will be kept confidential and used only for screening and disciplinary purposes.

I understand by becoming a volunteer of Hillsong I am considered a 'Worker' under Workplace Health &

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## Reportable Conduct

In VIC, NSW, TAS and WA volunteers and staff of religious organisations are subject to what is known as a 'Reportable Conduct Scheme'. This means that if certain conduct by those volunteers or staff is observed or alleged to have taken place, Hillsong Church must report this to the relevant government body.

Please be aware that your conduct may be subject to a response under the reportable conduct scheme or if you become aware of such conduct you should report to Safe Church.



### Who does the 'Reportable Conduct Scheme' apply to?

A reportable allegation can be made about any person in Hillsong Church over 18 years of age who is:

- an employee (including a religious leader)
- a volunteer who works with children and young people
- a volunteer in any area (if in VIC or TAS)
- a contractor or office holder of Hillsong Church and its related entities.

Allegations can be made about the conduct of people even if:

- they do not have direct contact with children
- the conduct occurred outside of their work or volunteering
- This means that any reportable allegation arising in their personal life is captured by the Scheme.

### What conduct is reportable?

Each state has specific definitions of conduct that is deemed 'reportable' in general, reportable conduct includes:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child) or an assault against a child
- ill-treatment of a child
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- neglect of a child
- grooming of a child
- an offence under failure to protect or failure to report laws

Conduct may also be considered reportable if the behaviour breaches a professional code of conduct or workplace expectation (e.g. Hillsong Working With Children and Young People Guidelines), and also involves one or more types of reportable conduct (as listed above).

### How to report:

Reports can be made to Safe Church who will report to the relevant government body.

If any person has concerns around the conduct of the Head of Entity/Organisation or other person in executive leadership, they are able to make a report directly to the state government body.

VIC - Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)

NSW – New South Wales Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG)

TAS – Tasmanian Independent Regulator



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## Responsibility of those in Leadership Positions



Church workers all carry varying degrees of responsibility. From a volunteer welcoming at the doors to the preacher or worship leader on platform, all hold positions of responsibility or authority. Church attendees and members of the community view those in positions of Church leadership, and their other representatives, as holding a position of responsibility, trust and power.

An organisation, group or person may have power that varies depending on their size, role, title, responsibility, availability of resource. For example, a CEO of a company has more positional power than a person who just started work at that company. Or, a Police Officer has power that comes with the authority associated with their role. Power itself is a good thing. With power comes the capacity to lead others and make a difference. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower us – to give us power to live a Godly life.

When power is misused, harm to others occurs. Those who use their power over others to serve their own needs can cause harm to others. Instead, power should be used to serve the best interests of others, following Jesus' example of leadership.

***Matthew 20:26-28 (NIV), "Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."***

As church workers, we have a responsibility to care for those who are more vulnerable and act in the best interests of those we serve. This may be seen in common examples, such as: the relationship between a team leader and those that they lead; between a connect group leader and the members of their connect group; and, a youth or children's ministry leader and the young people they lead. Through our culture, conduct and care for one another we can provide a safe and healthy environment where people's lives can be changed through Christ.

## The Vision

# A healthy church, changing lives through Christ.

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## **Section 2 - Principles for Safe Ministry**

**The topics covered in this section include:**

- Team Ministry
- Approval for Serving
- Safe Touch
- Electronic Communication
- Safe Emotional and Spiritual Environments

## Team Ministry

To foster environments that are physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe and secure for all people, Hillsong Church outworks ministry as a team. A healthy team environment ensures accountability, support for workers, feedback and opportunities to learn from one another. Each person has a place within the structure of Hillsong volunteer teams. There should be no ministry or individual conducting ministry that sits outside of the leadership structure that is in place.

Team ministry ensures a safe environment for those who serve as well as those whom they are serving.

## Approval for serving

Individuals must be approved by campus leadership prior to being appointed to a team. This process is facilitated through Planning Centre Teams. Individuals serving in a team should be managed through Planning Centre.

Those who serve with Children and Young People or in Child-Related Roles (i.e. Hillsong Kids, Youth, City Care, Pastoral roles) must complete the Hillsong Working With Children and Young People process including a state based working with children check clearance. This must be completed prior to serving in a child related area.



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## Safe Touch

Each individual has different personal space boundaries or preferences. Some may be more comfortable with physical touch, e.g. hugs, while others may prefer more personal space. Factors such as cultural differences, past experiences and the nature of the relationship may affect the way a person expresses or receives physical touch.

Touch plays an important role in caring for people and providing a warm welcoming atmosphere. So, touch need not be avoided all together, as long as it is carried out in a safe manner. In a safe environment, people's physical touch boundaries are respected.

**Safe Touch** respects people's boundaries, is not uncomfortable and responds to verbal and non-verbal cues. Safe touch remains within neutral body zones such as the upper arm and hands e.g. brief side hugs, handshakes, high-fives.

**Confusing Touch** is touch that is uncomfortable for others, does not respond to verbal and non-verbal cues and has the potential to be misinterpreted. Confusing touch may include standing too close, staring, tickling, hugs without permission from the other person.

**Unsafe Touch** crosses boundaries, intimidates, causes pain or harm to others. This includes violence or rough conduct, touching in an intimate manner or in intimate areas.



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## Principles for Safe Touch

### Principles for Safe Touch with individuals you lead:

#### Others initiated

Respond to touch initiated by others rather than you initiating touch with those you lead or who are under your care. This principle is of particular importance when interacting with children and young people.

#### Only as long as is necessary

When comforting a person in distress touch only for as long as is necessary for what the person needs in that moment.

#### Seek permission

Simple phrases such as "Could I place my hand on your shoulder to pray for you?" Or "Would you like a hug?" allow for an individual to have their boundaries respected and say yes or no. A person may also indicate with their body language how comfortable they are with physical touch.

#### Be aware of the environment

Physical touch should take place in open environments. In some situations it may be more appropriate to leave the door open when meeting with someone or have another person present with you, particularly if the person you're supporting is likely to initiate touch that is prolonged or intense.

#### Respect the personal space of others

In general, individuals prefer an appropriate distance between themselves and others when interacting. If a person leans away when you're speaking with them, you're likely in their personal space and should take a step back. When greeting a person (particularly if you don't know them well), consider what type of touch is appropriate e.g. a handshake rather than a hug, a high five rather than a kiss on the cheek.

#### Give people an option to 'opt out' of physical interaction they are not comfortable with

Physical interaction should not be forced. Rather, individuals should be free to choose if they want to participate or not. For example, in group settings if everyone is asked to be involved in an activity, individuals may choose not to participate. If giving an instruction from the teaching platform, be mindful of personal touch interactions you are asking people to participate in and use phrases such as "if you're comfortable to...", rather than expecting everyone to participate in the interaction.





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## Electronic Communication



Electronic communication such as text messages, social networking, email and communication apps, are part of everyday life for most people. These forms of communication can have many positives, such as providing easy communication of information to large groups, encouragement, event promotions, connection between people, and even an online campus for people who otherwise can't attend church. While there are many positives, it's important to be aware that these interactions contribute to a safe environment and need to be carried out with this in mind.

Unfortunately, electronic communication may be used to cause harm to others, in particular children, youth and other vulnerable people. Just as we need to respect boundaries in our physical spaces, the same is true for online spaces.

### **Principles for safe electronic communication:**

#### **Centralised Communication**

Maintain transparency and accountability by communicating electronically in a group where all individuals can see the messages rather than one on one. This may be achieved by group messaging apps, group emails, the use of Facebook groups or group texts. If communicating with a smaller group or an individual is required, including the team leader or oversight can help to maintain transparency.

#### **Communicate at an appropriate time**

Respect others boundaries by communicating at an appropriate time of day and with reasonable notice ahead of an event or meeting. Clear, positive and timely communication allows people to respond at a suitable time and doesn't place unreasonable demands on others.

#### **Some communication is more appropriate to take place in person**

Pastoral care, deeper conversations or addressing issues within teams are best to take place face to face rather than online. Things can be mis-interpreted online or through electronic communication, so it's better to arrange to meet in a more appropriate environment, at suitable time with the right person/s.

#### **Be a good example**

Those that we lead and are under our care can observe our interactions online, such as what we post, 'like' or follow on social media. Set a good example for those you lead in all areas, including your online activity. Refrain from offensive or inappropriate language and images, be mindful of how you treat others online and keep interactions positive. Refrain from sexually explicit material, bullying or criticism of others.

#### **Keep in mind your own safety and that of others**

Do not share your own or another person's personal information such as home address, phone number, children's full names or the name of the child's school (including what is shown on school uniforms or merit certificates), or any personal details that may put your personal safety at risk. If you have children you may choose to share their images with only a close group of family and friends. Check your privacy settings and be mindful of geo-tagging and metadata. For more information visit [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au).

People in vulnerable situations such as domestic and family violence may need help with adjusting their privacy settings and passwords. Both [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au) and our Pastoral Care team can assist with this.

### **Electronic communication should be respectful and not breach laws or code of conduct guidelines**

Church workers must not knowingly transmit, retrieve or store any communication that is:

- Discriminatory or harassing
- Derogatory to any individual or group
- Obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic
- Defamatory or threatening
- In violation of any licence governing use of software
- For any purpose that is illegal or in contradiction to the Hillsong code of conduct guidelines for leaders, workers and working with children and young people.
- Church workers must not send any electronic communication that attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.

### **Be aware of data privacy**

Personal information given to the Church must only be stored in known and approved locations controlled by Hillsong IT, e.g. Planning Centre. Personal information collected by Hillsong is not permitted to be stored in personal cloud-based storage solutions or on personal devices. The acquisition or deployment of new applications that collect or store personal information must be pre-approved by Hillsong IT. Access to personal information should only be provided to those approved by Hillsong Church. Levels and segregation of access are deployed so that Hillsong workers (e.g. staff, volunteers, etc.) are only given the access they need to perform their duties.

Personal information may only be used for the purpose in which it was collected. If it is to be used for another purpose or disclosed to another organisation, the individual must receive an updated 'collection notice' and provide consent.

Immediately notify Hillsong IT of any suspected lost device, or suspicious activity, so they can assist by whatever means possible to restrict access or destroy data contained within the device before a breach occurs. This requirement includes those devices that are personally owned but have access to Hillsong information assets (e.g. Hillsong email accounts, contacts, etc.)

**If communicating with individuals who are under 18 years old, please refer to the Guidelines for Electronic Communication with Children and Young People.**

## Safe Emotional and Spiritual Environments

As a church we seek to provide environments that are not just physically safe, but emotionally and spiritually safe also. A safe emotional and spiritual environment respects and responds to the needs of the individual.

In an unsafe emotional or spiritual environment people are mistreated. Inappropriate actions may even be justified by appeal to God, faith or religion. Behaviours that could be considered spiritual abuse may include: using a position of spiritual authority to dominate or manipulate another person or group of people; using a position of spiritual authority to seek inappropriate submission from others; isolating a person from friends and family members; and, using Biblical or religious terminology to justify abuse.

### Principles for Safe emotional and spiritual environments:

- Safe Prayer - Ask a person if they would like to be prayed for before praying for them e.g. "Could I pray for you?". Also, "Could I place my hand on your shoulder and pray for you?" and respect their decision if they say no.
- Do not force a person to share personal experiences if they are not comfortable to.
- Respond to the needs of the individual, coming from a place of service to those we lead.
- Recognise the diversity within the group and develop people in their giftings.
- Ensure you create a safe environment where people feel they can speak and be heard.
- Create an inclusive environment where reasonable adjustments are made to allow everyone in the team to actively participate and contribute (e.g. disability provision).
- Handle private information with care, not sharing personal details with others who do not need to know, and following Hillsong Church data privacy procedures.
- Aim to use verbal and non-verbal communication (body language) that is welcoming and kind.



## Cultural Safety

Hillsong Church values and welcomes people from all cultures. We seek to create inclusive environments by recognising and understanding the diverse backgrounds and cultures of our community. We want to provide supportive environments that recognise each person is unique, with their own characteristics, strengths and challenges.

All people should be able to participate freely and equally, regardless of their background or characteristics. In safe environments a person's safety is not dependent on their circumstances, including their social or economic position, their cultural background or their abilities. Some individuals are more likely to be at risk of harm if their cultural safety and diverse needs are not respected and responded to.

Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than 'cultural awareness' and 'cultural sensitivity'. Cultural safety empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves. Cultural safety means people are provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture and they are supported by leaders who respect and encourage their sense of self and identity.



***We are strengthened as a community when diversity is valued and respected.***

Cultural safety is important because:

- A culturally safe environment that supports people to feel proud of their identity and culture helps them to feel safe and welcome to participate.
- It builds trusting and respectful relationships for children, young people, their families and the community.
- Discrimination has negative impacts and can cause serious emotional or psychological harm resulting in distress, depression and anxiety.
- Experiencing discrimination can increase vulnerability to abuse and harm and can also mean individuals are less likely to ask for help or speak up if they have a concern.



We can create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

- Being welcoming and showing respect.
- Getting to know and understand the diversity of individuals in our church and community.
- Celebrating and acknowledging significant occasions for different cultural groups.
- Recognising diverse needs, and tailoring responses so all people are equally safe.
- Providing information about programs, events, activities and complaints processes in a range of languages as needed.
- Ensuring people have access to information, support in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

- Ensuring racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Racism is based on a person's skin colour, ethnicity or cultural background. It can take many forms, including harassment, abuse or humiliation, or in some cases, violence. Hurtful jokes are also forms of racism, as is excluding people from groups or activities.

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## Conversion Practices

Safe emotional and spiritual environments recognise each person is unique and everyone has a right to be safe and feel safe.

In some states and territories there are laws in place to protect people from pressure to change or suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity, even if they ask for help.

These protections are described in Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibitions or Bans legislation. These laws are based on research that shows there is strong evidence that these practices are harmful and can lead to long-term and ongoing problems with mental health, relationships, sexuality and spirituality.

All change or suppression practices are prohibited. These practices could be in the form of prayer, counselling or pastoral conversation.

The definition of a change or suppression practice, includes three elements. That it is;

- directed at an individual,
- because of their sexual orientation or gender identity,
- undertaken with the intention to change or induce that person to change or suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Prayers that are directed at a person to change or suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity may cause harm and are prohibited, prayers that are prohibited include those that:

- ask for healing relating to in relation to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- ask for a person to change in relation to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- ask for a person to not act on their attractions
- talk about a person's brokenness or need to repent
- ask for long-term celibacy.

There is a broad range of prayers that would be acceptable and supportive. These include prayers:

- for guidance
- that are supporting and reassuring that the person is created by God and in His image
- that acknowledge that God loves the individual.

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## **Section 3 - Vulnerable People and Concerns About People**

**The topics covered in this section include:**

- Vulnerable People
- Safety of Children and Young People
- Protective Factors
- Empowerment and Participation
- Harmful Behaviours and Concerns About People

## Vulnerable People



As leaders and volunteers in church we should always seek to act in the best interests of those we serve, especially those who are vulnerable.

A safe environment recognises that each person is unique. Being flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals means we take these factors into consideration and provide support and adjustments.

An individual, or family, may be more vulnerable due to varying factors, such as:

- Age (i.e. a child or elderly person may be more vulnerable)
- Illness or injury
- Change in home or family circumstances
- Mental health concerns
- Crisis
- Disability
- Financial circumstances
- Culturally or linguistically diverse
- Aboriginal or Torres-strait islander
- Those who have experienced trauma

We ourselves may become vulnerable as our circumstances change. The season of vulnerability may just be for the short-term, or over a much more extended period of time. During these changing circumstances, or seasons of vulnerability, people are more at risk of harm or abuse.

## Safety of Children and Young People

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable and as such the protection of children and young people is a significant focus of Hillsong Church. As a community, we all have a part to play in the protection of minors. If you are concerned for the welfare of a child or young person or concerned about the conduct of anyone in their interaction with children, this should be reported to Safe Church. Further information on Child Safety is provided in the Child Safety Module and you can view Hillsong's Child Safety information at [hillsong.com/australia/safechurch](https://hillsong.com/australia/safechurch)

## Protective Factors

Just as there are risk factors, there are also protective factors that may reduce a person's vulnerability. These include:

- Supportive and trustworthy leaders.
- Supportive peers.
- An adequate understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and personal safety, in particular for children and young people who may have less awareness of appropriate sexual behaviour.
- An individual's ability to assert themselves and communicate their personal boundaries, or speak up when boundaries are crossed.
- Strong community or cultural connections. The culture and practices of institutions, as well as community standards, have pivotal roles in





the prevention of harm.

## **Empowerment and Participation**

As a church, we can help people to make positive connections and be empowered with behaviours that help to protect them. We can do this by encouraging people to have a say in decisions that affect them and listen to and respond to their feedback. We can encourage people to respect boundaries and trust their feelings, if they consider their boundaries are being crossed. We can connect people with appropriate support either through pastoral care, church programs or other organisations.

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## Harmful Behaviours and Concerns About People

Through your involvement in serving in the life of Hillsong Church you may come across issues relating to harmful behaviours and concerns about people. The following section is an overview to raise your awareness of these issues and then the next section will cover how to respond and report.

It's also important to recognise that your own conduct can affect others and should remain Christ-like and in line with the volunteer and leaders code of conduct covered in section 1 of this training module. Under WHS legislation and Safe Church policy and procedures, you and those you serve alongside are referred to as 'workers' and conduct such as bullying or sexual harassment is unlawful and may result in an investigation and reports to relevant authorities.

### Bullying

Bullying is when an individual, or group of individuals, repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards a worker or group of workers, and the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

Bullying behaviours have the potential to cause harm to the wellbeing of others and are not appropriate in any environment. If bullying is identified with children, young people or adults it should be addressed and responded to. In some cases bullying behaviours may result in an investigation and be reportable to relevant authorities.

Not all direct or assertive behaviour is bullying. Behaviour is not considered bullying when it is reasonable action, that is done in a reasonable way. Reasonable action may include things like responding to hazards or risks, providing constructive team direction, or revising team duties based on individual team member's strengths. These actions should be carried out in a reasonable and caring way that takes into account the individual's particular circumstances, and should only take place after consultation with your oversight.

## Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

**Sexual harassment** is any unwelcome sexual behaviour that a reasonable person could anticipate may make another person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated in that situation.

Conduct might be physical, verbal, written, displayed, direct or indirect. It is not always obvious. It can include one-off incidents or repeated behaviour. Sexual harassment does not have to be directed at a specific person. It can also affect people who are exposed to or witness it (for example, overhearing a conversation or seeing another person display sexually explicit content on a device).

The most common sexually harassing behaviours are:



Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that offend or intimidate



Intrusive questions about a person's private life or physical appearance



Inappropriate staring or leering



Inappropriate physical contact



Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing

Other examples of sexual harassment include:



Sharing or threatening to share intimate images or video without consent



Images or videos that are sexually suggestive or that constitute a sexual advance



Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates



Requests or pressure for sex or other sexual acts



Sexually explicit gifts, images, videos, cartoons, drawings, photographs or jokes



Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault



Being followed or watched inappropriately, or someone loitering inappropriately, either in person or via technology



Sexually explicit comments made in person or in writing, or indecent messages (SMS, social media), phone calls or emails—including the use of emojis with sexual connotations



Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body



Technology-facilitated unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature—including on virtual meetings



Repeated or inappropriate advances on email or other online social technologies.

Sexual harassment is against the law if it happens:

between individuals who have a particular workplace relationship, or during work, or in connection with work.

Under WHS legislation volunteers are also considered workers and a workplace includes any place where work is done and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while working. This includes being onsite, offsite in relation to your duties or for events, transport and social events especially when arranged or supported by an employer.

As a worker you should:

Treat all people with respect and fairness

Act with appropriate workplace behaviour in line with the volunteer/leader Code of Conduct

Report any incident of sexual harassment to Safe Church or Pastoral Care

Remember that even if behaviour isn't offensive, humiliating or intimidating to one person, it may be to another

Consider how your behaviour, including off-hand comments or gestures, might be perceived

Sexual violence is when a person is forced, pressured or tricked into doing sexual things they do not want to do.

Sexual violence can include anything sexual that makes a person feel scared or uncomfortable. Some other words used to describe forms of sexual violence are sexual assault, sexual abuse and rape. Behaviours may include physical acts, as well as sexual conversation or showing of sexual content.

Sexual violence is unlawful and may result in an investigation and be reportable to relevant authorities.

If you experience, observe or have concerns about conduct that may be considered sexual harassment or sexual assault follow the reporting pathways proved in section 4 of this training.

**If a person is unsafe or is in immediate danger you should call the police on 000.**

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## **Domestic and Family Violence**

Domestic and family violence happens when one person in a relationship hurts another or makes them feel unsafe. It can happen in any kind of relationship — not just with husbands and wives or boyfriends and girlfriends (i.e. intimate partners). Abuse doesn't have to involve physical violence to be domestic or family violence. It may involve behaviour that is controlling, sexually or physically violent, psychologically or emotionally abusive, financially abusive or includes stalking and intimidation.

If children or young people are exposed to domestic and family violence reporting to state child protection services may be required.

The Domestic Family Violence Response Flowchart is available for you to download along with other great resources [CLICK HERE](#)

## **Mental Health and Risk of Suicide**

Having the genuine support of loved ones and their community can assist a person in their well-being journey. With one in five Australians experiencing a mental illness in any one year, and six Australians dying from suicide each day, there is an ever-present need for people and church communities to offer support and resources to assist people towards recovery and wellbeing. By raising our own awareness and learning healthy and helpful ways to come alongside people, we can all make a difference.

As a church, we have a strong focus on, and are commitment to, people's well-being. This includes supporting and helping people while in crisis, and also by providing prevention and early intervention support in relation to mental health.

The Risk of Suicide Response Chart for adults and youth is available for you to download along with other great resources [CLICK HERE](#)

These tools will assist you to support an individual that is experiencing mental health concerns by listening to them without judgement. Learn how to assess if the person is at risk of suicide or harm and what steps to follow.

For those in leadership and pastoral support roles further training is available through the Pastoral Care Well-being and Self-care, and Pastoral Care Suicide Awareness Training modules.



## RISK OF SUICIDE - RESPONSE QUESTIONS

**IF YOU ARE ALONE WITH THE PERSON:** Bring another person into the situation.  
**IF THE PERSON IS NOT WITH YOU:** Find out where they are and who is with them?

### ASK

#### ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE?

If the person says YES or NOT SURE: it is important to try and find out if they are in immediate danger by asking:

- a. Have you thought about HOW you would kill yourself?
- b. Have you thought about WHEN you would kill yourself?
- c. Have you taken any steps to GET the things you would need to carry out your plan?
- d. What support can they access to stay safe and get help?

### RESPOND & SUPPORT

#### If at risk of immediate harm:

1. Call emergency services 000 and follow their directions  
**STAY WITH THEM UNTIL HELP ARRIVES AND FOLLOW UP**

#### If unsure of danger:

1. Visit the GP or Hospital – Emergency Dept
  2. Contact Helpline:
    - Lifeline 13 11 14
    - Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
    - Kids Helpline (5-25yrs) 1800 55 1800
    - Indonesia: Ministry of Health 500-454
- STAY WITH THEM WHILE ACCESSING HELP AND FOLLOW DIRECTION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**

#### If in no immediate danger:

Encourage Help Seeking and Safety Planning: GP, Psychologist, Counsellor, Current Support Network  
**STAY IN TOUCH AS APPROPRIATE**

### CHURCH CARE & SUPPORT

Report to Pastoral Care immediately to support the person and you the responder.  
**PASTORAL CARE 1300 53 53 53.**

If you have contacted 000 or have child protection concerns report also to **SAFE CHURCH** via [safechurch@hillsong.com](mailto:safechurch@hillsong.com) or 1800 557 264

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## Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse can be defined as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

Behaviours that could be considered Elder Abuse include an older person being denied the right to make their own decisions, treated like a child, threatened, humiliated, harassed, financially taken advantage of, denied access to their own funds, subject to neglect, physical or sexual assault.

If an individual discloses or you are made aware that a person may be experiencing Elder Abuse contact your Campus Leadership, Pastoral Care or Safe Church. You can also access information, advice and support through the National Elder Abuse Hotline 1800 ELDERHelp [1800 353 374].



## Known Offenders and Persons of Concern

Due to the significant proportion of children and young people who constitute Hillsong-Related People, Hillsong will maintain a zero tolerance approach to registerable sex offenders as it poses an unacceptable risk. Those who are registerable sex offenders are not permitted to take part in any Hillsong services, programs, activities or events.

If an individual discloses to you, or you become aware, that a person associated with the church has committed child sexual offences, Campus Leadership, Pastoral Care and Safe Church should be notified immediately. Note: that is even if the offence is historical and the individual has since completed their criminal sentence.



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## **Section 4 - Responding and Reporting**

**The topics covered in this section include:**

- How and When to Report
- How to Access Further Advice and Support

## Responding and Reporting



Incidents and concerns in relation to Child Protection, Work Health Safety, Transport Safety and Food Safety should be reported to Safe Church. Concerns about adult well-being or behaviour should be reported to Pastoral Care or Campus Leadership.

### How and when to report:

#### Mental Health and Risk of Suicide Concerns

- If a person is in immediate danger call 000 and follow their directions, then contact your Campus Leadership or Pastoral Care.
- If you have contacted 000 or have child protection concerns contact Safe Church.

#### Domestic Family Violence

- If a person is in immediate danger call 000 and follow their directions, then contact your Campus Leadership or Pastoral Care.
- If you have concerns or become aware that a person is experiencing domestic family violence contact your Campus Leadership or Pastoral Care and seek assistance from 1800 Respect (1800 737 732 / 1800 RESPECT.org.au).
- If a child or young person witnesses or is subject to domestic family violence then contact Safe Church.

#### Elder Abuse

- If a person is in immediate danger call 000 and follow their directions, then contact your Campus Leadership or Pastoral Care.
- If you have concerns or become aware that a person is experiencing Elder Abuse contact your Campus Leadership or Pastoral Care and seek assistance from 1800ELDERHelp (1800 353 374).

#### Concerns about Children or Young People

- If a child or young person is in immediate danger call 000 and follow their directions, then contact Safe Church.

- If you have a concern that child or young person is at risk of harm or observe any inappropriate behaviour towards children or young people report to Safe Church.

**Incident during Hillsong service, program, event or on Hillsong property**

- If there has been an incident during a Hillsong service, program, event or on Hillsong Church property please report to Safe Church immediately.

**Other concerns**

- If you have a general concern, question or are unsure how to proceed with a situation contact Safe Church.

**Safe Church:**

[Safechurch@hillsong.com](mailto:Safechurch@hillsong.com)

1800 557 264

**Pastoral Care:**

1300 53 53 53

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## Key Take Homes

### Respectful Relationships

- We respect others' boundaries when we consider if it is the appropriate time, location, circumstance and if the interaction respects and focuses on what is best for the other person.
- The Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Leaders outlines the expected behaviour of those that serve within Hillsong Church.
- As church workers we have a responsibility to care for those who are more vulnerable, acting in the best interests of those they serve.

### Principles for Safe Ministry

- Maintain safe and respectful boundaries in the areas of physical touch, electronic communication, prayer and in our leadership roles.

### Vulnerable People and Concerns About People

- Through your involvement in serving in the life of Hillsong Church you may come across issues relating to harmful behaviours and concerns about people. Be aware of issues including:
  - bullying
  - sexual harassment and sexual violence
  - domestic family violence
  - mental health and risk of suicide
  - elder abuse
  - known offenders or persons of concern

And, respond appropriately by contacting Pastoral Care or Safe Church.

### Report

Report all concerns and disclosures of harm to Safe Church [safechurch@hillsong.com](mailto:safechurch@hillsong.com)

For urgent reports contact 1800 557 264

### Advice and Support

If you have any questions please contact the Hillsong Safe Church office

Ph: 02 8853 5352

Email: [safechurch@hillsong.com](mailto:safechurch@hillsong.com)

If anything covered in this training module caused you distress please seek support from your oversight, Pastoral Care, Safe Church or one of the following support services:

- 1300 53 53 53 - Pastoral Care
- 13 11 14 Lifeline - Crisis support and suicide prevention ([chat online lifeline.org.au](http://chat.online.lifeline.org.au))
- 1300 22 4636 Beyond Blue ([chat online beyondblue.org.au](http://chat.online.beyondblue.org.au))

For more information on areas of concern for Adults:

- 1800 Respect [1800 737 732] – National Sexual Assault, DFV Counselling service
- 1800 272 831 – Bravehearts information or support relating to child sexual assault
- 1800 ELDERHelp [1800 353 374] - National Elder Abuse Hotline
- 1300 22 4636 Beyond Blue – Mental Health Support

## Resource

Volunteer safety information and resources including domestic family violence and risk of suicide response charts are available at [VHub Downloads](#).

Safe Church Contact details:

- Email: [safechurch@hillsong.com](mailto:safechurch@hillsong.com)
- Ph: (02) 8853 5352

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You have successfully completed this module!



**Thank you for completing Protecting People!**

Don't forget to save your completion certificate. Or, alternatively record the receipt number if you are unable.

**Remember:** You can resume training at any point. The system will remember the slide you have last completed. Feel free to take a break at anytime.