2024 Edition

BREAKING THE SILENCE

FOUNDATIONS

TRAINING WORKBOOK

MODIFIED VERSION

2024 EDITION

Conduct Protocol Unit

Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW/ACT

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About the Modified Version:

This training workbook has been adapted to accommodate the needs of those who have sensitivities relating to this subject matter. It includes much of the standard Foundations Training material but leaves out the overly descriptive sections. One of the key sections this affects is the **Code of Conduct** which has been abridged in order to convey the main points. This version also does not require any scenarios to be watched or listened to, and instead only includes two case study exercises about identifying wise practices in ministry settings.

Method of Completion:

Rather than completing this training in a large group session, or online as an individual, this Modified Version should be completed by the participant with the assistance of a facilitator - an appointed leader (with current BTS training) who the participant knows well - and with another trusted friend present for support if needed. Read, discuss and respond to the material together. If at any point the participant feel distressed, they can let the facilitator know and take a break. Once finished, everyone needs to sign the completion form (see back of workbook) and send it to the CPU to be recorded. This satisfies the participant's BTS training requirements.

Content warning: This modified training course still contains content relating to abuse that some people may find upsetting. If you find that you are distressed and need to talk to someone, please get in touch with one of your church leaders or contact the **Presbyterian Counselling Service** on **1800 818 133** if needed.

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Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training – Modified Version.
Produced by the Conduct Protocol Unit, Jericho Road, 2023. Adapted January 2024. breakingthesilence.org.au

INTRO

What is Breaking the Silence?

Breaking the Silence 2023 edition is the policy and procedures used by the Presbyterian Church of Australia in a number of states, territories, and ministries to address and prevent abuse within the church. It is overseen by the Conduct Protocol Unit (CPU), which has been established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales to address all safe ministry matters in our various churches, and ministries.

What is Foundations Training?

Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training covers the essential areas of safe ministry that all those in a position of church leadership need to be competent in as part of our commitment to ensuring that our church communities, ministries and activities are safe places for all. Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training replaces Breaking the Silence Basic Training. The course must be completed every three years by **anyone in a position of authority within the church** and **those interacting directly with children and young people** in their position. This may include the following roles:

Anyone with **preaching or pastoral responsibilities**	- Ministers - Elders - Home Missionaries - Pastoral assistants (supervised and unsupervised) - Licentiates - Commissioned Deaconesses - Church staff with preaching or pastoral care responsibilities - Ministers/elders emeriti who occasionally preach or provide pastoral care - Ministry students and trainees - Other similar roles
Anyone with a **congregational care position**	- Deacons and Deaconesses - Bible study group leaders (of any age group) - Women's ministry workers - Pastoral care coordinators and volunteers - Anyone involved in ministries for the vulnerable (language classes, ministry to people with disabilities and in aged care facilities) - Other similar roles
Anyone **working with children or young people in any capacity**	- Sunday School/Kids' Church teachers, leaders, and helpers - Creche, Playgroup and Mothers' group leaders and helpers - Leaders and helpers for Youth Groups or other activities or services provided to **young people.** - Kids program leaders and helpers (kids club, church camp, mission event) - Other similar roles

National Safe Ministry Framework

In 2019, the General Assembly of Australia adopted the National Safe Ministry Framework to establish a uniform and consistent approach to the protection of **children** within the Presbyterian Church of Australia. This was adopted by the NSW General Assembly in 2020.

"We remember at all times that we are representing the Lord Jesus Christ in all our conduct and we will, accordingly, strive to refrain from any action that is contrary to Scripture or a law of the land consistent with Scripture or which violates the requirements of biblical ethics, striving to ensure that all our conduct is motivated by love for God and a desire to commend him and to promote his glory." – **Fundamental Conviction** of the **National Safe Ministry Framework.**

Duty of Care

Duty of care is your obligation to act as a reasonable person towards others in whatever circumstances arise in your position as a leader. Your actions will affect other people and should be made with care, attention, caution, and common sense. If they are not, then you may breach your duty of care. To minimise the risk of breaching your duty of care:

- Regularly re-assess your ministry and take steps to minimise the risks.
- When you see a situation that may be dangerous, take action.
- Seek advice when you are unsure of what to do.
- Do nothing to harm any person.
- Complete this training every three years, and complete the Read & Review each year in-between.
- Be fully aware of the Breaking the Silence requirements, in particular the **Code of Conduct**.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. - 1 Peter 5:2

Our Policy

This policy applies to all persons holding a position of authority within the church, and all congregations, presbyteries, organisations, and committees within the church. It is our commitment to dealing with abuse within the church. The statement contains some terms that have a specific definition within Breaking the Silence. As you read the policy statement on the next page, you will see bolded terms which are defined in the boxes. The full list of terms is found at the back of this workbook and is important in understanding the scope of Breaking the Silence.

Our Policy is a clear reflection of our values and our attitudes. It shows that we are serious about protecting those under our care, confronting abuse when it arises in our church and being transparent and accountable for our attitudes and actions.
Our Policy is public. It can be accessed by anyone wanting to know what we are doing to prevent and address abuse. We want to be held accountable.
Our Policy acknowledges that people place an enormous amount of trust in us, and that the right response to that is to be committed to making sure that all our actions are morally upright. We want our ministries to be places of safety for everyone.

Policy Statement

- We commit ourselves to respect other people's minds, emotions, and bodies. We have established **Breaking the Silence** as the public criteria according to which the community may judge the resolve of **the church** to address issues of abuse within **the church**.

- We acknowledge and accept the trust granted to us by those who are taking part in church activities, their families, and the wider community. We therefore commit ourselves to striving to ensure that all our actions are morally upright.

- We acknowledge that, as a church, our responses to **victims** in the past have varied greatly. We express regret and sorrow for the hurt caused whenever the response has denied or minimised the pain that **victims** have experienced or caused them to experience further pain.

- We are committed to establishing a process that strives for truth and confidentiality. We will ensure as far as possible that a compassionate response is the first priority in all **allegations**, even at a time when it is not yet certain that the **allegations** are accurate, through offering assistance, protection and care without passing judgement or prejudicing the rights of the **alleged offender**. We acknowledge that concealing the truth is contrary to the character of God, unjust to victims and a disservice to **offenders**.

- We understand and value the need for support to all parties involved in an **allegation**, including the **aggrieved person** and the **alleged offender**, and we actively seek to provide this support.

- We acknowledge the personal and public difficulties that a false, misconceived, malicious or vexatious **allegation** can cause for the person accused. We will take whatever steps are possible to address these difficulties.

- We are willing to know the full extent of the problem of abuse and the causes of such behaviour within **the church**. We will strive to be aware of our legal responsibilities and obligations in relation to prevention, reporting and processing requirements and seek to meet them at all times.

- We acknowledge that we have had to make changes in the way that we relate to **children** and **young people** and others, and as a result some good things have been lost. However, we will bear this loss to ensure as far as possible that the vulnerable are safe.

- We will ensure as far as possible that all people in **positions of authority within the church** and/or working with **children** and

The Church:
The Presbyterian Church of Australia in those States or Territories where Breaking the Silence has been formally adopted by the appropriate State general Assembly, including all:
- congregations,
- organisations,
- committees,
- associations,
- groups,
- schools,
- hospitals, and
- other institutions.

Victim/s:
The person against whom abuse was directed, many of whom refer to themselves as survivors.

Allegation:
A complaint, incident, allegation, or allegation – reportable conduct includes any matter brought to the church by an aggrieved person that may be rightly dealt with under Breaking the Silence.

Alleged Offender:
The person who is alleged to have offended.

Aggrieved Person:
The person making the complaint, whether they present as a victim or complainant.

Child / Children:
Any person/s under 16 years of age and in some instances any person under the age of 18 years of age.

young people are aware of the appropriate standard of conduct and boundaries. We require those who work on behalf of **the church** to indicate their agreement with this policy statement and work towards providing an environment that prevents abuse.

- We believe that churches ought to be places of safety and refuge for **children**, **young people** and others, where they should be and feel safe from any threat when on church property or involved in activities operated by **the church**, or accessing services provided by **the church**. We believe that the church should be a place where people can disclose abuse and have it dealt with effectively.

- As a church we are committed to the implementation of the **Child Safe Standards**.

- We will establish a prevention strategy that includes screening, sound recruitment and selection procedures, clear boundaries, risk identification and management, education, support, supervision, and training.

- We acknowledge that the age of consent for sexual activity is determined by legislation. However, we are mindful that this must be read in the light of our moral and spiritual responsibility. All people in a **position of authority within the church**, be it real or perceived, paid or unpaid, have a moral and spiritual responsibility towards those over whom they have authority. In this situation it is never appropriate to take part in sexual activity of any kind, regardless of the person's age. We affirm that sexual behaviour belongs in a biblical marriage relationship only and that in this context it is a good gift of God.

- All **allegations** will be notified to the appropriate external authorities, overseen by the **CPU**, investigated thoroughly and determined as described in **Breaking the Silence**.

- Irrespective of any other action that may be taken by authorities outside **the church**, **the church** reserves the right to exercise its powers according to the **Code of Discipline** and **Breaking the Silence** wherever this action is deemed necessary.

Young Person/s:
Any person/s above 16 years of age but under 18 years of

Position of Authority within the Church:
Those in a position of authority within the church include all:
- ministers
- home missionaries
- deaconesses
- licentiates
- elders
- paid employees
- church workers whether paid or volunteers
- those working with **children and young people.**

Child Safe Standards:
Standards identified by the Royal Commission which aim to make institutions safer for **children**

CPU:
Conduct Protocol Unit of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales, acting on behalf of the church.

Code of Discipline:
Contained in the Presbyterian Church of Australia Constitution, Procedure and Practice - Code of Discipline.

Reporting

Every day we come into contact with people, (adults, **children**, and **young people**) who are vulnerable in one way or another. As a church we are privileged to be in a position where these people trust us. **We therefore need to be clear that when we become aware someone has been abused, we have an obligation to report**. The legal reporting requirements can differ depending upon what kind of abuse has taken place and who is involved. **All abuse will be reported to the appropriate civil authorities and the CPU.**

What needs to be reported

The Conduct Protocol Unit must be advised of all 'notifiable circumstances', including:

- any fact, circumstance, allegation, notification, knowledge of, verbal advice of, direct or indirect connection to, or attempt of abuse, and
- all allegations, complaints, reportable allegations, and allegations - reportable conduct.

A notifiable circumstance may identify:

- someone who is currently or has been a member of the church,
- someone who is currently or has been a person in a position of authority within the church,
- a current or ex-employee, a current or ex-student, a current or ex-volunteer, and/ or
- a current or ex-third party.

Basically, if you are aware of anything at all in relation to an abusive situation, whether it is happening right now or at some time in the past, you should let the CPU know.

Am I a mandatory reporter?

Legal requirements about mandatory reporting, particularly in relation to **children and young people**, vary depending on a leader's role and are different in different states and territories. **In the church it has been agreed that any person in a position of authority, or any person working with children and young people in any capacity, will consider themselves to be mandatory reporters.** This means that people in these roles, whether they are required to or not under legislation, must consider themselves to be mandatory reporters. This may mean reporting to external authorities such as Community Services. Remember, that all abuse and allegations of abuse are also to be reported to the CPU. The CPU can help you work out what is required in any particular situation.

The important thing to remember is that you are not alone in these things. Seek advice and assistance. It is always better to err on the side of caution.

How to make a report or notification

- Within the local church, you can notify church leadership (your minister/elder) or the BTS rep and they will be able to contact CPU.
- If you don't feel comfortable discussing it with your church leaders, you can contact the CPU directly by phone, email or on the BTS website.
- Reporting to civil authorities is sometimes necessary – The CPU will assist in any reports that might need to be made to external agencies such as Community Services or other government agencies.



Remember: It is very important that you do not share the information with anyone beyond those you must inform in order for the proper process to take place. In order to ensure the safety of the people involved and to ensure a fair process can take place, confidentiality must be maintained.

What happens when you contact the CPU

We will be able to discuss the nature of the notifiable circumstance to ensure all aspects of mandatory reporting and risk management have been appropriately considered.

We will be able to provide the person contacting the CPU with relevant supports and resources appropriate to the situation.

If you are unsure what to do or whether you need to report something, we can provide a safe and confidential way to work out what to do next.

We also check in with the person reporting the notifiable circumstance to ensure their care and well-being. Sometimes people can be emotionally impacted by a situation which has happened if they are closely connected to the aggrieved person.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. - Proverbs 3:27

Our questions are very broad and open and usually the person calling initiates what they want to talk about.

Depending on the circumstances we may ask specific questions regarding mandatory reporting and risk management such as:

- Are there any **children** involved and how old are they?
- Does the person of concern have contact with **children**?
- Does it meet the threshold for reporting to Community Services (risk of significant harm)?
- What other supports are in place for the aggrieved person?
- Is the aggrieved person currently safe?
- Any other information which is relevant to the case.
- What pastoral care supports are in place?

Consent and confidentiality

- **The BTS policy of reporting all notifiable circumstances is applicable to all persons holding a position of authority within the church. You do not need the consent of the aggrieved person to notify the CPU. That said, it is good practice to inform the aggrieved party where it is possible and practical to do so.**

- **If the aggrieved person does not wish to be identified, it is not always necessary to provide their name, but initials are helpful, if possible, for documentation purposes. The reason for notifying is to ensure that all appropriate steps have been taken by the church leader to ensure duty of care to the aggrieved party.**

- **CPU keeps confidential records of all notifiable circumstances. The information is collected and held in accordance with the Data Protection Principles endorsed by the NSW Privacy Commissioner. More**

PREVENTION & PROTECTION

Adopting and upholding Breaking the Silence makes a difference to the leadership, culture, and practices of ministry activities. The principles and values of safe ministry need to be a considered element of every part of church life. This section will discuss the ways in which this is achieved by focusing on **people**, **places**, and **practices**. These measures are part of the way we implement our commitment to the **Child Safe Standards**.

> As a church we are committed to the implementation of the Royal Commission's **Child Safe Standards**.
>
> *Breaking the Silence Policy Statement, Point 11.*

Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance, and culture

Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved

Standard 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account

Standard 5: People working with **children** are suitable and supported

Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of **child** sexual abuse are **child** focused

Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep **children** safe through continual education and training

Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

Standard 9: Implementation of the **Child Safe Standards** is continuously reviewed and improved

Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the institution is **child** safe

The core components for implementing each of the standards are embedded in the advice of this section. The implementation of these ten standards became mandatory in 2021, and you can read more about them on the BTS website on our info sheet *BTS & the Child Safe Standards*.

People

People are central to what occurs in a ministry. Therefore, we have the following measures to ensure that leaders are chosen carefully and are well supported.

Good **selection** processes for are crucial to ensuring leaders are suitable. The BTS selection procedure involves an application, reference checks and a formal appointment by Session. It is extremely important that Sessions have a formal appointment process for all key roles, and that people working with **children and young people** are reappointed by Session each year.

Screening people to make sure they are suitable is also done by verifying a person's Working with Children's Check (or equivalent). The CPU admin team completes all verifications, which is why anyone in a position of authority within the church, including those who work directly with **children and young people**, must submit a registration form to the CPU before serving at church.

For people that are teaching or helping with Special Religious Education, or SRE, you will also need to apply for an authorisation card from the CPU.

Supervision is an important way of creating a safe environment and preventing abuse. Supervising bodies, such as Sessions, that have people engaged in activities involving **children**, **young people**, or other vulnerable people, will strive to ensure that an appropriate level of supervision is provided. It is particularly important to directly supervise people that have been newly appointed to roles. Supervision also involves leader support. Session ensures that support is provided for all leaders once they are appointed.

When we think about people in terms of wise ministry, we also need to consider the people who we are coming into contact with. God has blessed humanity with diversity. In our ministry activities, we encounter people from different backgrounds and cultures, young and old. We must be mindful of these differences and always look to treat others with respect and **sensitivity**. Think about the particular needs of the individuals you serve and work out what you can do to make everyone feel welcome so that nothing hinders the work of gospel.



So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

Places



An environment shapes what can or cannot happen. You should always consider the **safety** of the space in which you run ministry activities. Part of your duty of care is to reduce any foreseeable risks that have the potential for harm. This means that you should be maintaining your furniture and building to a safe standard, but also consider the different risks posed to the different kinds of people who use the space – for example, something that is low risk to adults may pose a high risk to toddlers. You can find out more about risk assessments on the BTS website or from the Church Insurance Department.

The **visibility** of a location in which an interaction takes place can increase or minimise the risk of abuse. In order to maintain accountability and transparency, a lot of interactions need to be kept in view of other people. Think about where an appropriate place would be to have a private conversation while still maintaining accountability by being visible to others.

These considerations are just as important when running an off-site activity.

In addition to physical places, we must also think about **virtual spaces** and **online environments**. Ministry can occur in person, but can also occur using technology-facilitated communication, such as running a prayer meeting in a video conference or sending pastoral encouragement to someone via text message.



Social media and online messaging can be really useful ways to connect with people in your ministries, however it is important to implement measures that prevent it from being misused. Visibility and accountability are key considerations for the virtual spaces that are used in ministry, particularly with **children and young people**.

More information on technology can be found on the BTS website.

Practices



Wise ministry practices involve developing and implementing a certain way of doing things so that safety, **accountability** and **transparency** are embedded in your actions.

These include practices relating to record keeping, transport, medication, food, activities, pastoral care, listening to **children**, discipline strategies and technology. The BTS website has info sheets on these topics where you can access those relevant to your ministry role.

As a person appointed to a particular role within the church, whether that is as a minister, elder, Bible study group leader or any other role, you have been given certain authority. When the church appoints a person into a position such as yours, they are saying "We trust this person to represent God's church in this way."

This privilege is not something to be taken lightly, and leaders should prayerfully consider their willingness to take on the responsibility that comes with authority before accepting such an appointment. The power that comes with your position in authority is something that you must not abuse. It is always your responsibility to ensure that your actions do not cause harm.

The **Code of Conduct** can be described as the fence we build around the church. That fence achieves two things: it makes our churches and activities as safe as possible by creating an environment where it is difficult for offenders to hide; and we educate those in a position of authority within the church about appropriate boundaries, the dangers of crossing those boundaries.

> In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.
>
> **Titus 2:7-8**

Point 8 of the policy statement says:

We acknowledge that we have had to make changes in the way that we relate to children and young people and others, and as a result, some good things have been lost, however we will bear this loss to ensure as far as possible that the vulnerable are safe.

We should remember this as we look at the boundaries contained within the **Code of Conduct**. It is central to keeping our communities safe so that our ministries can flourish.



Code of Conduct

The following is an **abridged** version of the church's **Code of Conduct** for behaviour for a person in a position of authority within the church:

1. As a person in a position of authority within the church you must always be concerned about the integrity of your position, likely perceptions of the church and the wider community, and the need to acknowledge the real or perceived power given to you as a result of holding this position. You should avoid situations where you are vulnerable to temptation or where your conduct may be construed to be a breach of this **Code of Conduct**. You will make yourself familiar with the provisions of Breaking the Silence.

2. You must not fail to take action to prevent to the best of your ability and report as required any of the following:
   - **child** abuse,
   - a **child or young person** at risk of significant harm,
   - reportable conduct,
   - sexual misconduct, and/or
   - conduct that breaches the Breaking the Silence **Code of Conduct**.

3. Sexualised behaviour is only permitted as set out in the Word of God – with one's own marriage partner. If you are not married, you must abstain from all sexual or sexualised behaviour.

4. You must not engage in or condone any behaviour that could be considered to be:
   - **child** abuse,
   - putting a **child or young person at** risk of significant harm,
   - reportable conduct, and/or
   - conduct that breaches this Breaking the Silence **Code of Conduct**.

5-8. You must not engage in or condone any behaviour that could be considered to be sexual misconduct, which includes any behaviour that could be reasonably considered to be sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, coercion or grooming of an adult or a **child or young person**.

9. With regard to **children and young people**:
   - You will not visit a **child or young person** in their own home unless a parent is present, or you visit with another person in a position of authority within the church with parental permission.
   - You will adhere to Section 16 of **Breaking the Silence** when providing overnight activities which include accommodating groups of **children/young people** in any way other than with their **carer**.
   - You will not conduct a camp or other activity involving overnight accommodation without appropriate "camp parents" (ideally a married couple over the age of 25 years, of known maturity and Christian commitment) approved by the supervising body.
   - You will not provide any form of accommodation for any reason where there is not strict segregation by sex, with the exception of married couples and families. Supervision of **children and/or young people** must be provided by a person of the same sex.

- You will ensure that any activity involving **children and/or young people** is open to observation by parents and other adults with a legitimate interest.

10. With regard to adults, **children**, and **young people**:
    - You will not condone or participate in bullying behaviour.
    - You will not participate in or allow nude swimming or other such activities.
    - You will not participate in or allow initiations and secret ceremonies.

11. With regard to adults, **children**, and **young people**, either the Presbytery or Session may make temporary variations in respect to the details of the following. These temporary variations will be formally recorded by the Presbytery or Session and will be made on a restricted basis for individuals in specific circumstances for a specific period of time. Where no temporary variation is formally recorded, the following will apply without change:
    - You will take care to ensure an appropriate balance of transparency and confidentiality so that the private concerns of others are not disclosed or revealed improperly. In ordinary circumstances, when you are providing pastoral care to, or working with members of the opposite sex, you will strive to do so in an environment that allows visual surveillance and, where reasonable, have other people within hearing distance.
    - You will not allow a **child** to sleep in close proximity to an adult, other than a parent or guardian, unless there is a significant separation, and privacy of all parties is respected.
    - You will not allow an adult to share accommodation with one **child or young person** only unless they are a parent or guardian of that **child or young person**.
    - You will not drive a **child or young person** unaccompanied.

Where specified provisions cannot be followed in an emergency, the circumstances of the emergency and the actions taken should be reported to and approved by the supervising body. Where the actions taken are not approved, they will be considered to be a breach of the **Code of Conduct.**

Any breaches of this **Code of Conduct** for any reason will be reported to the appropriate supervising body as soon as possible. The supervising body will then report the matter to the CPU.

PLEASE NOTE:

This **Code of Conduct** has been abridged for the purposes of the modified training course. All leaders will be held accountable to the full version of the **Code of Conduct,** which is available on the BTS website.

PATH TO WISE MINISTRY

Making sure our ministry practices are safe requires us to think hard about ourselves, our ministry and what boundaries should be put in place for us, personally. And we need to do this before we confront a situation.

In safe and effective pastoral care and ministry, appropriate boundaries are held in place by the person in authority. When thinking about your personal boundaries and the various safe ministry considerations needed in your role, you can use the 'PATH to wise ministry' as a self-check method. Ask yourself:

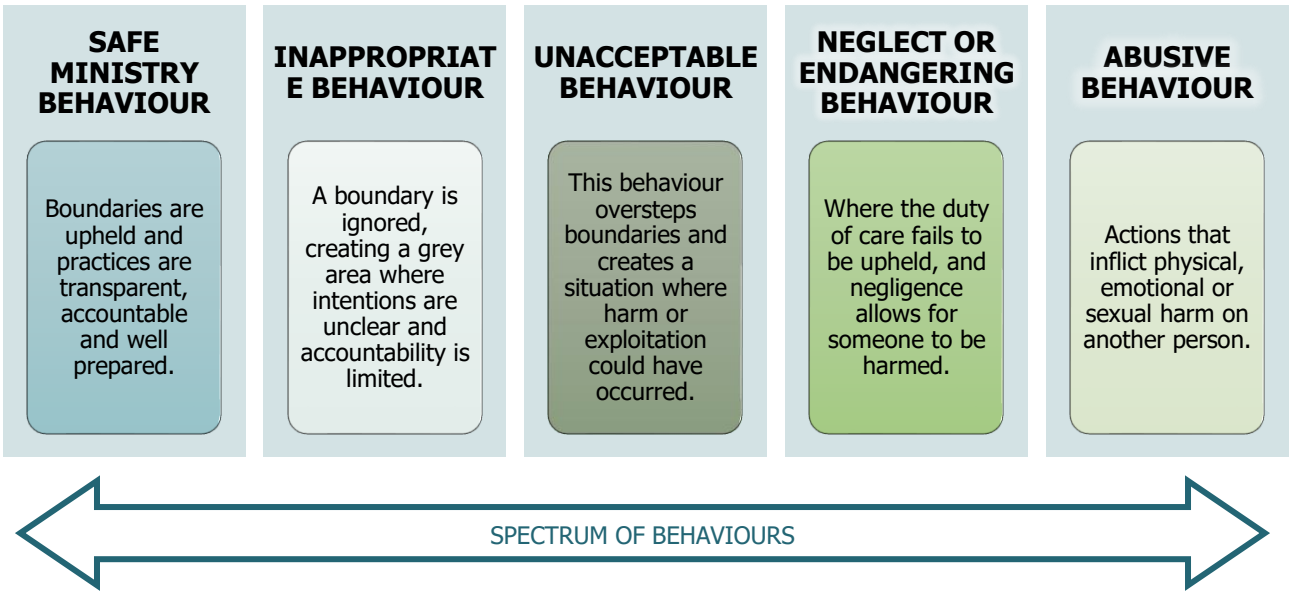
Preparation	Have we prepared for this ministry activity? (risk management, consent forms, screening, and training for all leaders, etc.)
Accountability	How are we staying accountable in this activity? (always more than one leader, recording incidents, agreeing to the **Code of Conduct**, etc.)
Transparency	How are we maintaining transparency in our ministry? (online interactions open to observation by other leaders, clear communication to parents, etc.)
Humility	How are we practicing humility in our role? (Acknowledging our limits, getting support from church / CPU, being godly in the way we serve, etc.)

Write down the ways you demonstrate preparation, accountability, transparency and humility in your main ministry role:

CASE STUDIES

Spectrum of Behaviours

We will now look at some examples of responses to various situations. Using the things we have learnt in this training, assess the examples and identify where each response could fit along the spectrum of behaviours.



EXAMPLE 1:

Elder
You are chatting with Josh, one of the teenage boys at church, discussing a school woodwork project he is working on. He is almost finished the construction but one of his dad's power tools has stopped working and his parents are away for the week. You are a keen wood worker yourself and have the right equipment at your home where you live alone...

A. You suggest to Josh that you could both drive to his house, collect the project materials and go back to your house to use your equipment. Josh is keen to finish the project and gladly accepts your offer. You both get in your car and head off.

B. You suggest to Josh that he could come use your tools after school during the week if he checks with his parents first. You organise for one of the other elders and his son to be there while Josh is over.

C. You tell Josh that you can deliver some of your tools to his house while he is at school the next day. You drop off the tool Josh needs, along with a couple of other tools he might find handy, including your spare circular saw.

EXAMPLE 2:

Creche leader
You, and two other leaders, are looking after the young children of those attending the Wednesday morning Bible study which meets in a room upstairs. There are 9 kids in the creche. At some point, two of the children start fighting over a toy, resulting in one of them falling over and knocking her lip on the corner of the table. Her mouth is bleeding and she begins to cry...

A. You quickly pick her up and take her out of the room to calm her down. She is screaming loudly, so you take her into the kitchen to wash the cut under cold water.

B. You take both children aside and tell them that this is what happens when you don't share. You tell the children that they mustn't tell their parents what happened because you will all get in big trouble if they do.

C. You ask one of the other leaders to call the girl's mother on her mobile. While she does that, you get the girl to hold a tissue to her lip and reassure her that her mum is on the way.

APPENDIX:

DEFINITIONS

Throughout **Breaking the Silence** there are words in bold. This indicates that there is a definition for that term, which is provided below. Please note that these definitions are inclusive of the singular and plural of the term used and noted in bold throughout the text.

- **Abuse**: **Abuse** is a broad term. For the purposes of **Breaking the Silence**, **abuse** includes:
  - **child abuse**
  - **risk of significant harm**,
  - **reportable conduct,**
  - **sexual misconduct**, and/or
  - conduct that breaches the **Breaking the Silence** Code of Conduct.

- **Adult**: Any person over the age of 18.

- **Aggrieved person**: The person making the complaint, whether they present as a **victim** or **complainant**.

- **Allegation**: A complaint, incident, allegation, or **allegation – reportable conduct** includes any matter brought to the church by an **aggrieved person** that may be rightly dealt with under **Breaking the Silence.**

- **Allegation - reportable conduct**: An allegation made within a procedure conducted in terms of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) of **reportable conduct** must identify a current employee (including volunteer leaders); describe behaviour that may constitute **reportable conduct** or details of conviction; and involve a person who was under 18 years at the time of the alleged behaviour or conviction. All such **allegations – reportable conduct** are **notifiable circumstances**.

- **Alleged offender**: The person who is alleged to have offended.

- **Breaking the Silence**: Unless otherwise specified this refers to the current issue of **Breaking the Silence**.

- **Bullying**: The repeated seeking out or targeting of an **adult**, **child** or **young person** to cause them distress and humiliation or to exploit them. It includes exclusion from a peer group, intimidation and extortion.

- **Carer**: The adult person responsible for a **child** or **young person**.

- **Child**: Any person under 16 years of age and in some instances any person under the age of 18 years of age.
- **Child abuse**: Includes neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence as defined in *Section 2*. **Child abuse** is a **notifiable circumstance.**

- **Child-related** employment: Employment where at least one of the essential duties of the position involves direct contact with children where the contact is not directly supervised, such as **child** protection services, pre-schools, kindergartens, childcare centres, schools, refuges used by **children**, hospitals, clubs, Sunday schools, camps etc.

- **Child Safe Standards:** Standards identified by the **Royal Commission** which aim to make institutions safer for **children**.

- **Civil authorities**: The Police and officials of government departments responsible for child protection, for the administration of laws relating to complaints of sexual harassment, for the discipline of professions and for industrial relations.

- **Code of Discipline**: Contained in the Presbyterian Church of Australia Constitution, Procedure and Practice - Code of Discipline.

- **Coercion**: Physical or psychological actions intrinsic to initiating or hiding abusive behaviour, which involved the manipulative cultivation of relationships with vulnerable **adults**, **children** and/or **young people**, their **carers** and others in authority. This is also referred to as "grooming". **Coercion** is a form of **sexual misconduct**.

- **Community Services**: The relevant State or Territory government department with responsibility for caring for **children**.

- **Complaint**: See **allegation**.

- **Complainant**: The person who has alleged abuse. In most cases, but not all, the **complainant** will also be the person against

whom it is alleged that the abuse was directed. Unless it is necessary to specify **complainant** the term **aggrieved person** is used throughout this document.

- **Contact persons**: The **CPU** can appoint a **contact person** so that if an **aggrieved person** wishes to make a complaint to a person who is independent of **the church** they may do so.
- **CPU**: Conduct Protocol Unit of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales, acting on behalf of **the church**.

- **CPU Advisors**: The Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Assembly, the Law Officers, the Superintendent of the Ministry and Mission Committee and the General Manager are advisors to the Manager, Conduct Protocol Unit.

- **Direct supervision**: Where the supervisor is present at all times and is observing the contact by the person under supervision with any **child** and is responsible for directing that person if required.

- **Disclosure**: A **disclosure** occurs when someone informs a **person in authority within the church** that they have been subject to **abuse** or know of **abuse**. A **disclosure** may or may not be an **allegation** or a **notifiable circumstance**.

- **Domestic or family violence:** Actions which involve violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour carried out by a partner, carer or family member to control, dominate or instil fear, including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial or other types of abuse.

- **Facilitator**: Those appointed by the **CPU** to facilitate procedures by which agreements may be reached between an **aggrieved person** and **the church** about what **the church** can and should do to assist the **aggrieved person**.

- **Grooming behaviour**: Physical or psychological actions intrinsic to initiating or hiding abusive behaviour, which involve the manipulative cultivation of relationships with vulnerable **adults**, **children** and/or **young people**, their **carers,** and others in authority. This is also referred to as "coercion". Grooming behaviour is a form of **sexual misconduct**.

- **National Safe Ministry Framework:** a framework adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia to establish a uniform and consistent approach to the protection of **children** within the Presbyterian Church of Australia and all of the State churches.

- **Notifiable circumstance**: The **CPU** must be advised of all **notifiable circumstances**, including:
  - any fact, circumstance, **allegation,** notification, knowledge of, verbal advice of, direct or indirect connection to, or attempt of **abuse**, and
  - all **allegations**, **complaints**, **reportable allegations** and **allegations – reportable conduct**.

  A **notifiable circumstance** may identify someone who is currently or has been a member of the **church**, someone who is currently or has been a person in **a position of authority within the church**, a current or ex-employee, a current or ex-student, a current or ex-volunteer and/or a current or ex-third party.

- **Offender**: The person who perpetrated proven abuse.

- **Pastoral care** or **pastoral support**: The provision of care, counsel and education to persons who seek the support of **the church**, including:
  - guiding to make decisions concerning spiritual matters by means of Biblical teaching,
  - prayer,
  - provision of practical support, such as medical care or counselling,
  - reconciling someone to God and/or other people,
  - spiritual guidance, and
  - sustaining through a period of hardship and/or crisis.

- **Person of concern:** A person of concern can be considered to be subject of a substantiated complaint of abuse; has been convicted of an offence relating to abuse; has been denied a clearance or where their clearance has been withdrawn, suspended, barred or revoked; or poses a reasonably-known risk to **children, young people** or other vulnerable people

(refer **National Safe Ministry Framework** section 2.5).

- **Position of authority within the church**: Those in a position of authority within the church include all ministers, home missionaries, deaconesses, licentiates, elders, paid employees, church workers whether paid or volunteers and all those working with **children** and **young people**.

- **Prohibited person**: Under New South Wales law, a **prohibited person** is someone who is a registrable person as defined in the *Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000* (with some exceptions) or has been convicted of certain offences as set out in the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.**.** Where a declaration in relation to prohibited persons is required under New South Wales law, a similar declaration is required in other States and Territories under **Breaking the Silence.**

- **Reportable allegation**: A claim, statement or assertion that has yet to be substantiated or proven within a procedure conducted in terms of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW). All **reportable allegations** are **notifiable circumstances**.

- **Reportable conduct**: is a defined term that appears in the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW). Section 20 of the Children's Guardian Act defines **reportable conduct** as:
  - a sexual offence,
  - sexual misconduct,
  - ill-treatment of a **child**,
  - neglect of a **child**,
  - an assault against a **child**,
  - an offence under section 43B or 316A of the Crimes Act 1900,
  - behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a **child**.

  Reportable conduct is a standard that is applied to all people in a **position of authority within the church** under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW). **Reportable conduct** applies to conduct towards **children** under the age of 18 years. Reportable conduct includes conduct that is defined in relevant legislation that occurs within a person's public ministry as well as their personal life. All **reportable conduct** is a **notifiable circumstance.**

  Reportable conduct in **Breaking the Silence** also covers ACT, TAS and WA. The **CPU** will maintain an internal policy setting out the administrative requirements of each scheme in more detail.

  Where **Breaking the Silence** has been formally adopted by the appropriate State General Assembly in other States and Territories, the **CPU** will provide support to establish a local policy for any reportable conduct scheme implemented in that State or Territory.

- **Risk of significant harm**: At **risk of significant harm** is a term used by **Community Services** for situations where a reasonable person has current concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a **child or young person**. Conduct putting **a child or young person** at **risk of significant harm** may also be **reportable conduct** and is a **notifiable circumstance**.

- **Sexual misconduct:** Any behaviour that could be reasonably considered to be **sexual assault**, **sexual exploitation**, **sexual harassment, coercion** or **grooming** of an **adult** or a **child** or a **young person** as defined in the Code of Conduct. **Sexual misconduct** is contact or invitation, via any means, of a sexual nature which is inconsistent with the integrity of a person **in a position of authority within the church** or who is working with **children or young people.** It includes behaviour that may reasonably be perceived to be of a sexual nature according to the standards of the time by the person to whom it is directed. **Sexual misconduct** is a **notifiable circumstance**.

- **Sexual assault**: Any intentional or reckless act, use of force or threat to use force against an **adult**, **child** or **young person** without their consent as defined in *Section 2,* and in the BTS Manual.

- **Sexual exploitation**: Any form of **sexualised behaviour** with an **adult**, **child** or **young person**, whether or not there is consent and regardless of who initiated the behaviour, where that behaviour is contrary to the Word of God and as defined in point 6 of the **Code of Conduct.**

- **Sexual harassment**: Any unwelcome **sexualised behaviour**, whether intended or not, in relation to an **adult**, **child** or **young person** where the person reasonably feels in all circumstances offended, belittled or threatened as defined in point 7 of the **Code of Conduct**.

- **Sexualised behaviour** is any behaviour that may reasonably be perceived to be of a sexual nature according to the standards of the time by the person to whom it is directed. **Sexualised behaviour** is only permitted as set out in the Word of God.

- **Supervising body** or **bodies**: The body with direct supervision and jurisdiction over a person or person/s. For example, the **supervising body** for an ordained minister would be the presbytery. The **supervising body** for a school Principal would be the Board or Council.

- **Support persons**: Appropriate individuals sourced by the Manager, **CPU** from time to time, drawn from within and without **the church**, from diverse backgrounds, having skills in areas such as mediation and conflict resolution, **child** protection, the social sciences, civil and church law and industrial relations.

- **Survivor**: The person against whom proven abuse was directed. See **victim**.

- **The church**: The Presbyterian Church of Australia in those States or Territories where **Breaking the Silence** has been formally adopted by the appropriate State general Assembly, including all congregations, organisations, committees, associations, groups, schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

- **Victim:** The person against whom abuse was directed, many of whom refer to themselves as **survivors**.

- **Young person** or **young people**: Any person/s above 16 years of age but under 18 years of age.

NOTES

In the space below, write down things that you learn throughout the training, any questions you want to follow up on, and any tasks or actions that you need to complete as part of applying BTS to your ministry practices.

Who do I talk to about safe ministry paperwork and requirements?

BTS Rep: _____

Contact: _____

Who supervises and supports me in my ministry role?

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Who do I talk to when I have concerns about abuse / misconduct?
e.g. the minister, an elder, or pastoral carer appointed for this purpose.

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Or contact the CPU on:
02 9690 9325 or
cpu@jerichoroad.org.au

BREAKING THE SILENCE | Conduct Protocol Unit
Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW/ACT

Foundations Training Workbook

Nov 2026

For more information, contact Conduct Protocol Unit, Jericho Road
02 9690 9325 □ cpu@jerichoroad.org.au □ breakingthesilence.org.au

Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training

MODIFIED VERSION COMPLETION FORM

PARTICIPANT

Given name/s:	**Family name:**
Email address:	
Statement: By signing this form, I hereby indicate that I have completed this modified training course and acknowledge the variations indicated in the material. I understand that this material has been provided as an alternative training, but ultimately does not replace or overrule the current version of Breaking the Silence.	
Signature:	**Date:**

FACILITATOR

Given name/s:	**Family name:**
Email address:	
Role / Position:	
Signature:	**Date:**

Please scan and send this completed form to the Conduct Protocol Unit at cpu-admin@jerichoroad.org.au to confirm and record.