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Our Advocacy & Support Program



An advocate's job is to provide support and advice to families of children who have disclosed or who are at risk of child sexual assault., as well as to adult survivors.

The personal turmoil, unknowns and the system that these children, their families and adult survivors are exposed to, leave many feeling alone and in need of support and advice from services that have specialised knowledge in this area. The capacity to access advocacy and support is an integral part of providing an effective and holistic response to the needs of all survivors of child sexual assault.

Bravehearts' advocacy and support workers can help families and individuals to have their voices heard.

What is Advocacy & Support?

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT

Validate and believe them. If they feel ashamed or guilty, reassure them that the assault was not their fault and that their feelings are normal. Although you feel you might have reacted differently, remember that their reactions are uniquely theirs.

Allow them to express a full range of feelings. The feelings of a survivor of sexual assault can be very strong. Expressing these powerful feelings in a safe environment is an important part of the healing process. If you can feel comfortable supporting them in expressing their feelings, this can be very helpful.

Offer options, not advice. Survivors often struggle with important and complex decisions. You can be most helpful by helping them identify all of the options available and supporting them in their decision-making.

Advocate. They may need someone to help ensure that their feelings are validated and their rights are upheld.

Believe in the possibility of healing. Let them know that you believe that healing is possible and that they has the strength and capacity to heal.

BRAVEHEARTS believes that in order to successfully meet the needs of our clients, we need to play an active role in advocating for survivors; including:

- Supporting the therapists in providing for the needs of their clients;
- Undertaking survivor casework;
- Networking and involvement in committees and forums on child protection;
- Providing referrals, advice, and advocating on behalf of survivors of childhood sexual assault;
- Pursuing appropriate Government and community channels to assist survivors in the resolution of their concerns or experienced problems;
- Utilising specialised knowledge regarding legal avenues to give survivors realistic and accurate advice about matters for which they have sought assistance;
- Keep abreast of research and literature;
- Regular communication with relevant Government departments (eg. Communities, Child Safety, Queensland Police Service and Crime and Misconduct Commission) to report trends or specific cases of concern; and
- Liaising with the media to increase public awareness and effect legislative reform.