

## Daniel's Case Study

To xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxx

From Terry O'Connell  
Director, Real Justice Australia

Subject Real Justice report regarding Restorative Intervention with  
Daniel

Thank you for your instructions and the opportunity to be involved with Daniel xxx. Daniel was sexually abused by Fr. xxxxx [now deceased] in the 1970's and has requested a review of his Towards Healing experience.

I have structured this report to reflect the four key considerations cited in your briefing letter, namely:

1. What was it about the initial handling of this matter that Daniel says failed to provide "any healing"?
2. What Daniel thinks would have helped with the initial response.
3. What you could offer or suggest that might contribute to Daniel's journey towards healing.
4. Any general suggestions that could improve the Towards Healing processes.

As my reference document, I used the Towards Healing document [dated January 2010]. I understand that this is the latest version.

I have greatly appreciated the chance to assist Daniel and his family as well as being given the opportunity to look for ways to strengthen the Catholic Church's Towards Healing process.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or you need clarification.

Warm regards

Terry O'Connell  
Australian Director, Real Justice Australia.  
20<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

## 1. What was it about the initial handling of this matter that Daniel says failed to provide “any healing”?

I spent two days with Daniel and his wife Linda at their rented family home in xxxxx [xxxx] on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Daniel’s ailing 84 year-old father also resides at their home although I did not speak with him. My first contact with Daniel was by telephone, after I had spoken with his solicitor xxxxx [xxxxxx] on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2014. At the time, Daniel was a patient in the xxxxxx Clinic, xxxxx Hospital. He was admitted to this clinic by Dr xxxxx [Consultant Psychiatrist] and was being treated for a major recurrent depressive disorder, a result of his PTSD from his sexual abuse.

Needless to say Daniel was highly anxious and nervous when we first met around 9am on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April. I was introduced to his wife Linda who subsequently participated in every conversation over the next two days. I had suggested in my early communication with Daniel that Linda would be most welcome to be involved [and also his father]. Daniel was very reluctant for this to happen so I was delighted that Linda was involved from the outset. To include his father was never an option due to his ill health. I also detected a deep sense of resentment towards me once his father realized what our conversations were about. His passing comment [relayed to me by Daniel] was something like ‘you have killed one son and ruined my remaining son’s life’.

I began the conversation by asking Daniel and Linda **what it** was like waiting for me to arrive. They talked about their fears and uncertainty. They mentioned that they did not know what to expect. Daniel talked about his concern that my involvement was going to be ‘more of the same’. I inquired about what this might look like. Daniel said that to date, that nothing positive had ever happened in any of his dealings with the Catholic Church and he feared that my visit loomed as yet another negative experience.

Daniel qualified this by saying that he was grateful to Sister xxxxxx who visited him whilst he was a patient at xxxxx Hospital in xxxxxx. Daniel eventually disclosed to Sister Marie. He also spoke very highly of Bishop xxxxx and described him as a ‘decent person’.

I asked Daniel to reflect upon his life after he had been abused and to describe what he found the hardest thing to deal with. The hardest thing was the pain and suffering his brother xxxxxxx had endured throughout his [xxxxxxx’s] life. He felt powerless to do anything that could have helped xxxxxxx – *my brother had a horrible life and he deserved better*. Daniel talked about the impact the abuse had on his sister xxxxxx. It is important to remember that Fr. xxxxxx had also abused xxxxxx and xxxxxx. Daniel described his own life as being a ‘roller coaster’ of emotions, one that felt a bit like being to ‘hell and back’ every day.

I spent some hours exploring the harm that Daniel [and Linda] had experienced as a result of being sexually abused. Daniel’s story revealed the true extent to which Daniel had become defined by this abuse, and his

greatest fear being that nothing would ever change. He said he faced the prospect of life in psychiatric wards and his hopelessness was palpable. Daniel said that Linda was the only good thing that had happened for him in his life but feared that she was struggling to cope with his mental disorders.

Our conversation eventually got to the question, '*Daniel you mentioned in your report on a couple of occasions that there was no healing for you in the Towards Healing process. What was it about your experience that caused you to feel this way?*' Daniel's initial response was '*I am not sure*'. He said that he had an expectation that something that was called Towards Healing would result in some sort of healing. I inquired what healing would have looked like if it had happened. He again said that he didn't know. So I asked him if he woke up one morning and he felt 'healed', what would that be like. Daniel quickly answered, "*When I woke up and I was no longer defined by what Fr xxxxx did to me or for **that** matter, who Fr xxxxxx was.*"

## 2. **What Daniel thinks would have helped with the initial response.**

It came as no surprise to me that Daniel was not able to articulate why the Towards Healing process failed to provide him with 'healing'. However when prompted by the question about 'waking up one morning', he easily described what would be happening for him. He was never going to describe what was needed for the Towards Healing to 'heal him' not at least without being prompted by the right questions. I was very deliberate not to 'lead' Daniel by sharing what I thought might have helped. There is however a simple logic with Daniel's expectation that some sort of 'healing' would happen in a process called Towards Healing, and it didn't happen.

The answer to what might have helped with 'healing' was to be found in Daniel's statement [dated 21 February 2014], however the reader would need to know what to look for. In my case, having spent many years working with victims [for a range of trauma] the clues became fairly obvious. Most are found beginning at sentence 53 [page 5]. I will list the issues I explored with Daniel and what he said when I asked him about each of these experiences.

### 53. *I felt sick **when** to be back at St xxxxxx*

Daniel talked about having to go back to the same parish to where the abuse had occurred – he was terrified.

### 53. *Father xxxxxx was stone faced while I told him everything that happened.*

Daniel didn't know if he was being believed. There was no acknowledgement or feedback – Daniel said it made him feel worse.

### 53. *There was no talk about entitlements to compensation. There was no suggestion that I should seek advice from a lawyer.*

Daniel said he felt alone being interviewed by a priest. He said he didn't know what to expect and just had to go along with everything. He did so because Sr. xxxx encouraged him. Daniel said he was disappointed when he later found out that he could have his own support people involved.

54. *I was still experiencing mental health symptoms at the time.*

Daniel says that in hindsight he realized that being interviewed at that time was really not appropriate given what he was going through already.

54. *When I returned to hospital, the Church sent a person whom I believed to be the Professional Standards Director.... He explained that he was not part of the Church...he sat with me in the hospital for about 1 hour. He took notes.*

Daniel mentioned that he was again interviewed but on this occasion in a psychiatric ward by someone who said he was 'not part of the church'. Daniel now realises he was employed by the Catholic Church.

56. *In November 2008 I received a letter of apology from Bishop xxxxx.*

When I asked Daniel about the importance of this letter, his response clearly indicated that the letter was not significant. The fact that Bishop xxxxx had signed it was however important as Daniel had a high regard for the Bishop.

57. *....On 28 May 2009, I received a letter from Bishop xxxxx confirming that the amount of \$4380 was sent direct from the Archdiocese to the tombstone company. This was the only financial support I received from the Archdiocese.*

Daniel said at no stage did anyone from the Church inquire about what impact the abuse had on himself or his family. He strongly believes that the sexual abuse he and his siblings suffered has taken **its** toll on all aspects of their lives, particularly financially. Daniel was very disappointed that this was never discussed.

58. *I felt encouraged and supported by Bishop xxxxxx. He said he believed my story. I feel I have remained close to Bishop xxxxxx. I feel dissatisfied with the Towards Healing process. It hasn't healed anything for me.*

Being believed by Bishop xxxxxx appears to be the most significant thing to come out of Daniel's Towards Healing experience. Yet, in the same sentence Daniel expresses his dissatisfaction with his Towards Healing experience

I asked Daniel the following question, *“What could Bishop xxxxx have done that may have helped with your healing?”* Daniel’s response *“He could have asked me about my statement.”*

I then asked Daniel, *“Which of the following words best describe your Towards Healing experience. Things were done to you, for you, not at all or with you?”*

Daniel’s immediate response was, *“definitely done to me, I was never asked about how it was for me or my family. I never really understood the process. I just relied on what I was told and even then I didn’t understand. In hindsight there were a lot of things that could have been done differently.”*

At this point I asked Daniel if anyone involved in the Towards Healing process had ever asked him to tell his story. Daniel didn’t respond immediately. He reflected for a few moments, then looked at me and said, *“Not in the way you have asked me about my story.”*

## **2.1 Why Daniel’s Towards Healing Experience Was Not Healing.**

What was it about my approach that Daniel sensed was different? Having spent some hours with Daniel and his wife at this point, I saw a noticeable change in his physical demeanor. His face exhibited positive affects [emotions] of interest and enjoyment. When I first spoke with Daniel that day, his face displayed the opposite, mostly negative affects - shame, fear and disgust.

I will shortly explain the reasons for Daniel’s change, however, I want to now explain why I thought Daniel’s Towards Healing experience was never going to be a positive or healing one. The key reason being that Daniel experienced a fundamental lack of fair process.

Fair process according to Kim & Mauborgne<sup>1</sup> responds to a basic human need. We all want to be treated with dignity and respect. The general theme of fair process being that as individuals we can live with any outcome regardless of whether we win or lose, if we are treated fairly.

Kim & Mauborgne suggest that ‘fair process’ has three key principles:

1. Engagement – opportunity to have your say.
2. Explanation – understanding processes including how decisions are made.
3. Expectation clarity – shared understanding of expectations, rules and so on.

Let me now return to Daniel’s response when I asked the question about how he felt he was treated. I have used the fair process principles as a template to

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<sup>1</sup> W.Chan Kim & Renee Mauborgne [Fair Process: Managing in the Knowledge Economy, HBR July-August 1997]

highlight that what Daniel said illustrates why he experienced a lack of fair process:

1. Engagement : *“definitely done to me, I was never asked about how it was for me or my family.*

Comment:

It was very clear the conversations Daniel had [as part of his Towards Healing experience] were about what happened, **whereas** my conversations focused largely on how Daniel and his family were affected by what had happened. This in part explains why Daniel had a different experience, one that he felt engaged with me. His other experiences were mostly about the details of what happened. He was involved but never engaged.

Restorative engagement has a focus on harm, relationships and healing. Engagement is about emotionality and connection. It is the foundation upon which empathy is developed. Involvement is mostly about rationality and its likely result in sympathy. When Daniel received an apology from Bishop xxxxx, he appreciated the gesture because he respected the Bishop. Daniel's answer to my question about what Bishop xxxxxx could have done differently was 'he could have asked me about my statement'. This is clear evidence that Daniel had not been engaged and that the apology in truth was not authentic because it didn't have a meaningful context. That is not to suggest that Bishop xxxxxx was not sincere in what he said or did. If Daniel had been 'engaged' he would have experienced Bishop xxxxx's empathy because the dialogue would have resulted in an emotional connection between them.

I rely upon the Psychology of Affects [Silvan Tomkins] to explain why engagement is fundamental to our emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. Being heard and understood is an innate human need and this happens when we are in relationship. Nathanson [1994] developed a 'blueprint' for building and maintaining relationships and suggests this happens when the following conditions exist:

1. Sharing and reducing negative affects [best achieved by listening and acknowledging];
2. Sharing and increasing positive affects [by affirmation];
3. Expressing our affects [telling our story];
4. Doing more of 1,2 & 3.

Healing can only begin when those experiencing harm are able to deal with the whole range of human emotions in a way that is consistent with Nathanson's blueprint. In 1991, I developed a set of restorative questions that if used as a 'template' and overlaid on Nathanson's blueprint go some way to satisfying those conditions.

The following questions were developed and used with those experiencing harm [and consistently used in my conversations with Daniel and his wife]:

### **Restorative Questions 11**

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?*

- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

For those responsible for causing hurt and harm [in Daniel's case, Fr xxxxxx, the following questions are used:

### Restorative Questions 1

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

In his statement Daniel [sentence 77, page 7] made reference to the need to subject 'paedophiles to the law'. Yet when I asked Daniel about what he would say to Fr xxxxxx if able to, he said that he would tell him how he ruined the lives of his brother and sister as well as his own [Daniel's].

2. *Explanation: I never really understood the process. I just relied on what I was told and even then I didn't understand.*

Comment:

Daniel says he had no real understanding about the Towards Healing process. There was no explanation given or information provided. He was never told that he had rights e.g., to legal representation.

3. *Expectation Clarity: I thought that something called Towards Healing will result in some healing.*

Comment:

Daniel never knew what to expect. Daniel said that whilst there was nothing explicit stated about expectations, he assumed that he would experience some form of 'healing' because the process was called Towards Healing.

He did say that he was offered 'counseling' but declined as he was being treated for a psychiatric condition. This is the only occasion it would seem that anyone involved in Towards Healing inquired about what Daniel might need or want. It appears that Daniel simply responded to the various requests made of him such as an invitation to meet with Archbishop xxxxxx.

Final Comment:

It was clear that Daniel was very disillusioned about his experience. He was not engaged at any point. He was asked to provide details on what happened but was never invited to 'tell his story'. Daniel was subjected to some very questionable practices including being interviewed whilst he was a patient in a psychiatrist ward. Without a doubt his most hurtful experience was being let down again by the Catholic Church, because he had an expectation that he

might begin to ‘heal’ but it appears he ended up feeling worse as a result of the experience. In his statement [Page 7, point 77] Daniel wrote, “*I want to restore my faith in the Catholic Church, but I cannot believe the incompetence in the way the abuse has been handled.*”

### **3. What you could offer or suggest that might contribute to Daniel’s journey towards healing**

Prior to meeting Daniel and his wife, I read his statement [dated 21/02/2014] to try and identify what Daniel thought he was looking for. It was clear he wanted a better experience even if he was not able to articulate exactly what was needed for this to happen.

In his statement on page 7 under the heading ‘Life Today’ Daniel described what he was wanting [starting at point 73 and concluding at point 80, page 8]. Although the list is not explicit, it nonetheless provides some important clues that point to the areas in his life that he wants change.

I will briefly summarize what I understood Daniel to be saying which broadly could be described as the need to:

- A. Tell his story so that the Church understands the hurt and harm that he and his family have experienced because of Father xxxxx’s actions.
- B. No longer rely upon mental health professionals.
- C. Be able to socialize and develop normal relationships.
- D. Restore his faith in the Catholic Church.
- E. Receive some appropriate compensation.

I used this list to guide my conversations with Daniel and his wife. Having spent the past 20 years working with victims who have experienced significant trauma, this was a familiar ‘list of needs and wants’. I will now briefly describe how I attended to each of these points.

#### **A. Story Telling**

Our initial conversation was limited as understandably Daniel and his wife were nervous and a little skeptical. I was mindful of Daniel’s previous experience of Towards Healing. Although I have already covered the key parts of our conversation in this report, I need to briefly mention how I explained my role to Daniel and his wife. I said that I was engaged by the Catholic Church to work with him [Daniel] and his family with a view to facilitating some healing. I pointed out that in order to begin this process, I needed to understand why he felt his experience of Towards Healing was not a positive one. I said that hearing his story was an important first step.

Daniel’s story telling really began when I asked him to describe ‘life after the abuse’. I drew on the Restorative Questions 11 [page 7] throughout this process and this took some hours. Daniel described in some detail how the abuse had impacted his life, and that of his brother and sister. He said that when his mother eventually learned about the abuse some years later, she was never the same.

The process of encouraging Daniel to tell his story achieved a couple of important outcomes. There was a noticeable shift in the affects [or emotions] displayed on his face from negative [fear, anguish, anger] to positive ones [interest, enjoyment]. It was also an experience in which Daniel felt that he was 'engaged' and that at last, someone associated with the Catholic Church was interested in hearing his story. Being asked about the impact the abuse had on him and his family was significant for Daniel. This is key to what Scheff and Retzinger<sup>2</sup> say needs to happen if victims are to experience 'symbolic reparation', the opportunity to be heard and understood. This process is fundamental if healing is to take place.

## **B. No longer rely upon mental health professionals.**

This was a re-occurring theme in all our conversations. Daniel's anxiety with having to rely upon mental health professionals was evident. He just wanted to be 'normal' and to no longer rely upon professionals, hospitalization and medication to manage his life. Daniel's greatest wish was to be able to 'live' life again. What came from this discussion was Daniel wanting to feel 'okay about himself'. The implication of this is that Daniel was not feeling 'okay about himself'.

This just happens to be the key to what is likely to 'unlock' the process of healing and what keeps you and I out of relationships. Daniel is describing what has happened to him as a result of the abuse. His sense of self is diminished. His shame is overwhelming and this causes him to always feel vulnerable.

Shame according to Nathanson<sup>3</sup> is one of nine affects. Its function is to **partially** disrupt positive affects. Nathanson describes shame as the central social regulator that sets our social parameters; shame shines the spotlight on something we really don't want to know about ourselves. What would happen if we never got to experience shame? Simple, there would be nothing to help us 'self regulate' and we would not know what feeling good was like. A healthy response to shame is to learn to stay with the moment and to realize that a small attribute of oneself has been exposed - *I can still love myself and I know that others still care for me, but I need to pay attention to something [delete I did or said] that has interrupted me feeling good*. Shame becomes that critical opportunity for personal growth if handled honestly.

Unfortunately, when we are not able to positively deal with shame there are four universal ways [described by Nathanson as the Compass of Shame] in which we attempt to minimise the awful feeling, to make it go away. These are: withdrawal; avoidance; attack self; and, attack others. In his statement

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<sup>2</sup> [Retzinger, S.](#) and [T. Scheff](#) (1996). "Strategy for Community Conferences: Emotions and Social Bonds." In: B. Galaway and J. Hudson (eds.), Restorative Justice: International Perspectives. Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press, pp. 315-336.

<sup>3</sup> Nathanson, Donald L – Name of The Game is Shame; Report to Academic Advisory Council of the National Campaign Against Youth Violence 2000.

Daniel described how he struggled throughout his life, and without exception, coping was largely his way of dealing with his own shame:

- Withdrawal – he isolated himself; became depressed and needed professional assistance.
- Avoidance – he would numb his awful feelings with drugs, alcohol and sex.
- Attack Self – blaming himself and feeling of not being worthy; suicidal.
- Attack Others – blaming others, particularly the Catholic Church.

Given that Daniel did not disclose his abuse for many years, he predictably behaved in ways that were harmful to himself and his relationships. Nothing was going to change for Daniel until he was able to talk about what had happened to him with those who were significant in his life. He struggled with intimacy, trust and his own vulnerability.

Brene' Brown<sup>4</sup> in a wonderful U-Tube video talks about vulnerability and its impact on relationships. Brown [Social Worker] whose research into how individuals manage life's challenges, found that those who did best at relationships, knew they were vulnerable, but were still worthy of loving and belonging. Brown discovered that these people have in common three important attributes: Courage – are able to tell their story with their whole hearts; Compassion – they are able to be kind to themselves; Connection – have an authentic need for connection [with others].

Whilst never diminishing the importance that mental health professionals have played in his life, Daniel wants desperately to change this continued reliance on these professionals but has no idea how to. Like Brown, I believe that the answer to this dilemma is to be found in helping Daniel learn how to deal with his vulnerability so he does begin to feel that he is worthy of loving and belonging. For this to happen, it means that Daniel has to experience new conversations and some different experiences.

### **C. Be able to socialize and develop normal relationships**

Daniel just wants to be 'normal', to do the things that other normal people do. When Daniel likened his abuse to having 'HIV aids' it spoke of his sense of social isolation and alienation. As I explored this issue with Daniel he talked about how good it would be to meet other people and to be able to socialize in regular ways. Daniel said that he was new to xxxxxx and this didn't help.

With this in mind I contacted xxxxxxxx [President of the xxxxxx St Vincent de Paul] and asked for his assistance. I explained that I was visiting xxxxxxxx in relation to helping a victim of clergy abuse and that I was keen to discuss how his Conference might assist this victim and his family. xxxxxx was initially

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<sup>4</sup> Power of Vulnerability – TED Talk -

[http://www.google.com.au/search?q=brene+brown+ted&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&gfe\\_rd=cr&ei=ek-aU4nWFMyn8QfAsYCgCw](http://www.google.com.au/search?q=brene+brown+ted&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&gfe_rd=cr&ei=ek-aU4nWFMyn8QfAsYCgCw)

'taken aback' but was very obliging. He organized a meeting that evening at the St Vincent de Paul [xxxxxxx]. There were 16 members involved and the meeting went for approximately two hours. The first part of the meeting focused on discussions on how each person felt about clergy abuse and the Catholic Church [given they were all Catholics]. This will be covered in some detail in the final part of this report that deals with 'suggestions to improve the Towards Healing processes'.

I then shared some brief details about Daniel [I did not identify him by name or address] and that he needed support. When I asked who would be interested in supporting Daniel, twelve individuals indicated their willingness with a show of hands and four were available to meet Daniel and his wife the following evening. I explained that I needed to speak with Daniel before I could confirm the meeting.

On Tuesday morning [29<sup>th</sup> April] I met with Daniel and Linda. I explained that I had a meeting with the xxxxx St Vincent de Paul Conference members and after hearing briefly about his story, they were very keen to support him and his family. Daniel was delighted with this news and a meeting was arranged at 7.30pm that evening at Daniel's home.

Four Vinnies members [and myself] met with Daniel and Linda. The meeting lasted for around 90 minutes and some wonderful conversations and sharing took place. It was great to see Daniel and Linda enjoying the moment and they were genuinely delighted by the suggestions and offers of support. The evening proved to be an important 'milestone' in Daniel's journey towards normalisation and healing.

#### **D. Restore his faith in the Catholic Church.**

In his statement Daniel talked about the importance of being Catholic. He expressed a great desire to have his faith in the Catholic Church restored. This was a reoccurring theme in every conversation I had with Daniel. It became clear to me that this was driven in part by his relationship with his grandmother and her Catholic faith, and his need to have a very different experience with the Catholic Church.

Daniel talked about the love he had for his grandmother who it seems was an extra-ordinarily compassionate person. Whilst she had a large family of her own, Daniel cited many examples of her selflessness in reaching out to others. Daniel's motivation to 'reconnect' with the Catholic Church is the need for him to restore his faith in an institution that ruined his life, so that his grandmother would be proud of him.

A fundamental need that most victims share is the importance of having a 'different experience' around those who have harmed them. This process is vital to how victims get to change their image of what has defined them for so long. A powerful example of this was seen in the ABC award-winning documentary Facing The Demons [2000] involving the murder of schoolboy Michael Marslew. As a then serving police officer, I facilitated the Conference

that involved those responsible for Michael's death [offenders], as well as Michael's family and friends. In a follow-up interview with Joan Griffith [Michael's mother], she revealed that as a result of being able to confront the offenders that her image of Michael lying in the morgue no longer haunted her because she was no able to appreciate the joy Michael brought into her life. Her words *'all the good things came flooding back. Things are now a lot more normal for me.'*

In a similar way, Daniel's strong desire is to reconnect with the Catholic Church has to do with his need for a different experience. One legacy of his abuse is that Daniel feels overwhelmed when he is near a Catholic Church. It would seem that Daniel knows exactly what ritual or process is needed for this to happen. Confirmation. Yes, Daniel mentioned this on a few occasions and when asked by a Vinnies member *'Daniel, why confirmation?'* he answered, *'It would make me whole.'*

Without a doubt the highlight of the Tuesday evening meeting was when a Vinnies' member invited Daniel to be part of her journey towards Confirmation. He gladly accepted this invitation and it seems things are in train for both of them to be confirmed. I suggest that this occasion might be something that Archbishop xxxxxx might want to be part of.

In an email I received [following my visit to xxxxxx] Daniel said:

*Hi Terry,  
Thanks again for last week. Ellie has been popping by daily and Linda and I are going to Elli's for a barbecue this Saturday with the Vinnie's group, we are sorting out going to mass and myself volunteering for Vinnie's.*

*It's really wonderful what is happening and I feel like I am relaxing a bit more having come thus far, Ellie is working on her and mine confirmation, Terry as an abused person, and what I have encountered with the church response, I would like to say what you have done is absolutely fantastic, I know this would help so many.....being cocooned by the others and led gently has made me feel safe, wanted, understood and this is all very genuine.*

*I would advocate this to anyone.....so God Bless Terry*

*Best Regards Daniel*

## **1. Receive some appropriate compensation.**

Whilst this was not part of my brief, it is nonetheless an important consideration in terms of what 'I suggest might contribute towards Daniel's journey towards healing'. Without a doubt, Daniel's ability to live a meaningful life is greatly influenced by his financial capacity. The enormous impact of the abuse has severely limited his earning capacity. The hopefulness that Daniel

is now feeling can only be sustained if he has the financial means to take control of his own life. Appropriate compensation has two important dimensions – practical and symbolic. The latter being the recognition and validation that is a fundamental part of Daniel's 'healing journey'.

### **Final Comment**

There is little doubt that for Daniel and his wife life is now generally more positive and hopeful as a result of my involvement. They are involved in social and community events. Daniel appears to have secured some casual work. His wish to be confirmed is 'on track' and this event will be an important ritual to 'welcome back' Daniel to the Catholic Church. It would be even more special if Archbishop xxxxxx were to confirm Daniel.

There is a very real danger however that the positive changes Daniel is now experiencing will not be sustainable if his financial situation does not change. The stress and pressure he and his family are experiencing is casting a dark shadow over their lives.

### **Recommendations**

1. That Archbishop xxxxxx be asked to confirm Daniel xxxxxx at the xxxxxxxxxxxxxx Catholic Church in xxxxxx.
2. That the matter of appropriate financial compensation for Daniel xxxxxx receive urgent consideration.

#### 4. Any general suggestions that could improve the Towards Healing processes.

The Toward Healing document [January 2010] describes the ‘principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church of Australia.’ Having recently been involved with Daniel xxxx, and on two prior occasions with other victims who have participated in the Towards Healing process, I have a number of thoughts and suggestions that I believe can improve this process.

#### Observation of Towards Healing – A Critical Overview

Given the name of the document is called Towards Healing what does it mean particularly given that there is no definition of ‘towards healing’ in the document? One is left to assume that we all share the same understanding on what it means.

A simple way of testing this assumption is to ask all those who administer the Toward Healing process throughout Australia a couple of pertinent questions:

- What does ‘towards healing’ mean?
- If a person were ‘healed’ what would be happening for this person?
- What practice is needed to support ‘healing’?
- List the main elements of a good healing process?

What answers would the administrators give to each of these questions? I suspect that most would struggle to answer these questions with any confidence and even then, I would imagine the explanations would be many and varied.

The lack of **explicitness** is a major flaw in the document and this is best evidenced by its fundamental failure to articulate what ‘towards healing’ means; what healing looks like when it happens; and, what practice is needed to achieve healing outcomes. The critical word missing from the documents’ ‘principles and procedures’ is **process** [or practice]. It is also clear that those who wrote the document didn’t start with the ‘end in mind’ but the assumption that taking victims towards healing was the ‘end game’ and surely, something that no would take issue with.

I certainly do because I believe the document contains vague assertions and value statements that provide very little specific guidance on practice. The implications of not defining ‘the conditions needed for healing’ are far reaching. How are you able to measure effectiveness with Towards Healing if there is no clarity on what success looks like? If you are not sure what ideal outcomes look like, what does it mean for how you practice? Or even worse, how do victims know what to expect if there is no clarity on what their experience will be like?

It could be argued of course that the purpose of the document is to provide some parameters [and procedures] to generally guide those charged with the

administrative responsibility of the Towards Healing process, and not to **prescribe [opposite of proscribe]** exactly how to do it. The ‘companion’ document [titled Guidelines for Church Authorities] contained more detail on procedures and mention is made in Appendix A [under the heading The Facilitation Process] about the need for victims to tell their story, and to be given a chance to talk about how the abuse has impacted their lives.

If I were to use my own experience of working with victims who have been involved in Towards Healing as a guide, then there was something lacking in the process. Without exception, each victim had very similar experiences. They were involved but never engaged; they provided facts but were never invited to tell their story; their families were never a part of the process; and, each reported it was not a good experience nor did they experience healing.

What was missing for each of those victims in the Towards Healing process? Without question it was the absence of a meaningful ‘journey’. When I was asked a group of St Vincent de Paul members what Towards Healing meant for them, one member said *‘Towards implies journey; healing involves connection or relationships.’*

My description of the process used with the victims [I just referenced] was that it was a ‘front and back loaded’ process. The ‘front loading’ was the interview and offer of counseling. The ‘back loading’ was the apology and compensation. The missing bit was the ‘journey’, the opportunity for story, engagement and rebuilding relationships.

The following are specific suggestions that I believe will strengthen the Towards Healing documentation and process:

#### **Part One - Definitions**

- Need to define ‘healing’.
- Reparation – there is a need to rework this definition as monetary considerations are secondary to symbolic reparation – being heard, validated and acknowledged.
- Need to define ‘compassion’ as it relates to empathy and story.

#### **The Victims [Page 8]**

- There is no specific reference to the ‘impact on their own relationships’.

#### **The Response Of The Church**

- There needs to be a reference to fairness, transparency. Note: Fair process has three key principles: engagement; explanation and expectation clarity.

#### **Appendix A – The Facilitation Process**

- I suggest that both documents need to be revamped to include the key elements of process outlined in A to F. All those involved in administering Towards Healing should view themselves as ‘facilitators’, someone who is able to ask questions, capable of engaging victims

and their significant others. I suggest the restorative questions are ideally suited to shape the dialogue with victims and can be used at every interval in the process from the person initially taking the complaint; to the Church authority offering an apology.

### **Victim Needs - Generally**

Both documents correctly identify all those likely to be impacted when abuse happens. There are however a couple of important issues that have not been addressed that I suggest are significant to individual victims, families and the broader Church community. I will deal with each of these:

**Individual victims** – this means those who have experienced abuse. In my experience what makes the greatest difference for individual victims is when they get to journey with those who are significant in their lives. Being acknowledged and validated by those who matter most in our lives is a critical step in the healing process as well as being the best ‘support’ a victim can receive.

Professional assistance or counseling may have a part to play but the greatest difference comes from ‘normal’ conversations from family, friends and members of a victim’s Church community.

**Families** – Families generally need to be involved in the victim’s journey because both have very similar needs for healing.

**Church Community** – When I met with the xxxxxxx St Vincent de Paul Conference to discuss the issue of support for a victim of clergy abuse, it was always going to be a difficult conversation. Yet some ninety minutes later there was an overwhelming sense of relief, hope and optimism amongst the group. What brought about this change?

I asked every member to tell his/her story:

- What did you think when you began to realize the extent of the clergy sexual abuse?
- What impact have this had on your personally?
- What has been the hardest thing for you about this abuse?
- What do you think needs to happen to begin to heal lots of the hurt?

This was the first occasion that anyone had been asked to talk about someone that was in the words of one member ‘too shameful to even talk about.’ The idea of being able to reach out and support an actual abuse victim was something that resonated strongly with everyone.

I asked them to look ahead some thirty years and to imagine they are answering a question from one of their grandchildren about the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse. What would you say? What would your narrative look and sound like?

I believe that the only way to change the storyline is to change the experiences. Involvement of the whole Church community is the only way this can happen. xxxxxxxx Catholic Parish [ xxxxxxxx Diocese] is making a great attempt at doing just that. Groups of parishioners have met on a two occasions to begin these discussions. Whilst they have some way to go, it is a promising and encouraging start.

The next installment of Towards Healing must be about engaging with the broader Church.