



Survivor Support Pack

An Information Pack

A guide for survivors who are seeking support

Introduction

Mangrove Yoga Ashram has acknowledged that in the late 70's/early 80's some of the children living in the Ashram were subject to serious abuse both physical and sexual in nature. The perpetrators involved were subsequently charged and dealt with under law and/or permanently banned from the Ashram.

This support pack is designed to offer the survivors of this abuse a structured and realistic mechanism that may help them better manage their ongoing suffering. Accordingly, the scope of support offered is not only counselling and professional consultation but also includes a range of legal services that may be leveraged by the individual.

Why are we doing this?

Rather than a legal responsibility, we believe that we have a moral responsibility to help those who were hurt and damaged. We have been advised that the events that took place do not fall under the domain of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as the offence was not systemic and was dealt with under law; nor does the Ashram have any legal liability in relation to those offences.

Regardless, with respect to those individuals who were abused, the ashram management believes that there is a moral obligation to offer whatever assistance we can within our means.

What are our goals?

It is our goal to offer a support pack that provides survivors with various options that may be matched to suit you and your personal needs. In so doing, we hope to help you find ongoing peace in your lives. We acknowledge that there are no 'quick fixes' and that this will be a significant undertaking that, for many of you, will be the next stage in what has been an ongoing journey.

We can only offer and hope that you will embrace the pack and join us in working with the external experts to help you develop a new narrative around your experience that might help to restore your equanimity.

Is the Ashram Involved?

No. The service pack leverages external experts who have no relationship with Mangrove Yoga Ashram. The only involvement from the Ashram is organizational and financial in terms of financing the proposed pack offered.



In framing these services, the Ashram has used the services of external experts, from a group called Real Justice, who have extensive experience in addressing similar issues in the Roman Catholic Church.

Who can use this support pack?

All survivors who wish to use the support of Real Justice must submit an application for pre-approval. It has been agreed that approval will be given to all survivors of the period in question whether the abuse was physical or sexual in nature and irrespective of whether the individual was a minor or a legal adult.

Please note that we do not require you to tell us your story, as we understand this may cause further pain for you. For this reason the Application Form, available at the end of this document, requests you give basic details only. Note that the deadline for applying for these services is 31 August 2014.

What's on offer?

We have structured our support service in a way that is accessible to everyone, but as importantly, provides you with a range of options that you may choose from. Many of the survivors are all over Australia so the mechanism of delivering the service is largely phone based which makes it easy to access. Where possible however, face to face options will also be provided.

The options available include:

Option 1 - Real Justice

We originally consulted with Real Justice to help us structure our approach. We have worked closely with their director, Terry O'Connell, and have developed a high level of trust in the simple and compassionate approach he uses to engage others.

This service is fully financed by Mangrove Yoga Ashram and is primarily focused on three main aspirations:

1. Help you change the internal narrative in relation to the horror of your experience.
2. Help you focus on, and where possible, repair the relationships that are primary to your life.
3. Help you restore balance and peace in your life.

Terry is an internationally recognised Restorative practitioner with considerable experience working with sexual abuse survivors and families. By focusing on the harm and hurt experienced, Terry will help everyone involved change the narrative that has for so long defined them. As the ancient sage Rumi once stated "*we are a conversation*". If we can change the conversation we have then we can change the experience.



Option 2 - Adults Surviving Child Abuse

Adults Surviving Child Abuse is a highly respected organization that has been in existence for many years and has developed a deep understanding of how to assist survivors.

As they say, healing from child abuse can be a winding path, once described as, “a spiral - a repeated traversing of the issues, layer by layer, piece by piece, sorting and resorting, until the toxicity of the abusive experiences has been released.” (Baringer 1992)

ASCA is working to create new possibilities for more than 2 million Australian adults surviving child abuse to ensure that they are able to access the help they need.

The service is provided over the phone by trained counsellors who have the skills, experience and resources to assist you.

The organization offers workshops specifically designed for the survivor and also for the survivor and their families who are so often the silent victim in these types of trauma.

As importantly, their website provides a broad range of related information and resources that may be leveraged as the case may be.

Adults Surviving Child Abuse is a free service and may be contacted on **1300 657 380** or www.asca.org.au. If necessary, the counsellor also has the capacity to refer you to a professional in your area who may be better suited to assist you.

Option 3 - 1800 Respect

Funded via the Commonwealth Government, 1800 Respect aims to provide a best practice, professional telephone and online, crisis and trauma counselling service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week that is structured to assist people who have been or who are affected by sexual assault, domestic or family violence.

This organization has been in existence since 2010 and has developed unique and innovative support services.

Again 1800 Respect is a free counselling service delivered by highly experienced individuals. This service is perfectly suited to survivors located in non-metropolitan areas as it is largely made available via telephone.

To contact 1800 Respect ring **1800 737 732** or connect online to a counsellor via their website www.1800respect.org.au.

Option 4 - Professional Services

Both ASCA and 1800 Respect have the option of referring you to a more professional service if this is required. Typically these services are psychiatric and psychological in nature and may assist you to navigate particularly difficult times or areas of experience. Costs for these are covered under Medicare (discussed below).



There may be a gap between the cost of the service and the funding provided by Medicare. In these cases, the Ashram will give consideration to paying for this gap as required.

Please note that these services may also be accessed by a referral from your GP.

Legal Services Available

We believe that survivors should be given the opportunity to seek legal advice on any issues they feel require a professional opinion. Often the financial constraints involved in using these professionals are prohibitive. The services nominated below are free subject to their specific conditions. These include:

- a) **Legal Aid.** Available in all locations. Requires pre approval and is subject to a means test.
- b) **Women Legal Services** is a telephone based free service for women. Is primarily focused on domestic violence but does also provide advice to sexual abuse victims.
- c) **Knowmore** is an independent service giving free legal advice to people who are considering telling their story or providing information to the Royal Commission. They will not represent the victim but will refer them to an appropriate professional if required.
<http://knowmore.org.au/>
- d) <http://www.justanswer.com/> is an online free legal service that provides advice on a range of matters including personal ones.

Government Based Financial Assistance

The Government does offer financial support. These include:

Medicare: provides applicants with 10 professional counselling services per year. In order to access this service the individual will need to see their General Practitioner to gain a referral.

Legal Aid: provides free legal aid services. This will require pre approval and is subject to a means test.

How do I apply?

Fill out the Application Form attached and email it to workingtogethertf@gmail.com or post to Mangrove Yoga Ashram, 300 Mangrove Creek Road, Mangrove Creek, NSW 2250 for the attention of the Working Together Task Force.

So that budgets can be properly managed, the deadline for applications is 31 August 2014.



Application Form

Note: all information provided is strictly confidential

Please complete this form if you are seeking to apply for the support program offered by Mangrove Yoga Ashram.

Spiritual Name (if any).....

First Name..... Surname.....

What was the period that you were at the Ashram when the abuse occurred?

Date from..... Date to.....

What was the nature of the abuse (*we do not want details*)?

Please tick whichever is applicable. Sexual Physical

General Comments (*optional*). Please provide any comments you feel you would like to make in relation to your application.

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Office Use Only:

Processing officer.....

Approved or Not Approved.....

Authorized by.....

Date approved.....

Forwarded to Real Justice.....