

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 29 October 2008

Relationships Australia

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Booklet to shed shame and guilt

A new booklet to help men who were sexually abused as children to shed shame and guilt, will be launched at Relationships Australia (SA) in Hindmarsh at 4pm tomorrow.

'It's not your fault, men talk about living beyond the effects of sexual abuse' is the culmination of years of work by men dedicated to helping others cope with the effects of child sexual abuse.

Driving force behind the booklet, Andrew Groome, embarked on developing the booklet after seeing a gap in resources for men. Mr Groome said, 'People hardly ever talk about the sexual abuse of young males, meaning that quite often, men who were sexually abused as children live their lives thinking that they were the only one. However, we know from research that about one in six men were subjected to childhood sexual abuse.

'It's the isolation that intensifies the effects of abuse, such as feelings of shame and self blame.'

Quotes from men who were sexually abused as children form a significant part of the booklet. One contributor, John* hoped the booklet would give other survivors hope and strength.

'I want to show other men out there that they're not alone, that they can be released from the shame, the guilt and the ongoing effects of abuse. I know a lot of people don't address childhood sexual abuse until later on, usually after devastating consequences because they didn't know how to live a normal life.

'I advise men to address the effects of abuse as early as possible and break the cycle. Just being able to speak out has healing qualities. Often survivors don't know what choices are available for them, but this booklet lays it all out.

'This booklet has the potential to turn victims into survivors.'

'It's not your fault' sends a strong message that men are much more than the sexual abuse they were subjected to and the effects it has on their lives. It explains the:

- Abuse of power that occurs during sexual abuse
- Effects of manipulation and betrayal
- Ways young people and adults have acted to protect themselves from painful effects of abuse.

'It's not your fault' is also helpful for professionals, family members or friends who may be supporting male survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

'It's not your fault' booklet launch

When: 4.00pm, Thursday October 30, 2008

Where: Relationships Australia (SA), 49a Orsmond Street, Hindmarsh

Speakers: John*, survivor and booklet contributor

Michael O'Connell, Commissioner of Victim's Rights

'It's not your fault' is available for download from the Respond SA website www.respondsa.org.au and in hard copy from Relationships Australia (SA). Phone 8216 5200 to order copies.

'It's not your fault' was funded by the South Australian Government Department for Families and Communities.

*Name has been changed to protect confidentiality

About Relationships Australia (SA)

Relationships Australia (SA) helps people build better relationships. A non-profit organisation, Relationships Australia (SA) works to discover, develop and deliver appropriate services to assist diverse groups of people. Its values of diversity, respect, belonging and learning are entwined throughout its holistic service range, which address issues to do with relationships, adoption, gambling, abuse, mental health, HIV, hepatitis C and more. Services include counselling, family dispute resolution, community development, short courses and workshops, bookshop, library, and providing information and referrals. It also provides industry relevant training to government departments and across the community services sector.

For more information or to request an interview, call:

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