

Creating Safe Spaces Workshops Overview

Dear Church Leader,

Creating Safe Spaces is the NSW & ACT Baptist Churches workshop that contains recommendations that are designed to help our local churches establish and maintain safe ministry.

Many of our churches have engaged in this workshop and implemented the recommendations in the desire for your church to be a safe space. Thank you. However, there are still many churches and church leaders and workers who have yet to engage in the process or are in need to attend the workshop again as it has been 3 or more years since they last attended.

The need to talk about 'safe' churches may seem strange or unnatural as there is the notion that all churches are safe, aren't they? In a perfect world this would be the case. However, the church has not always lived up to its calling. The church has historically been a trusting body and sometimes an 'easy target'.

Our Creating Safe Spaces workshop, as part of the Safe Church Training Agreement (where we join with other denominations in maximising the training opportunities available), aims to reduce the instances of abuse and all other kinds of duty of care and/or safety failures by providing procedures for Holistic Safe Church Ministry – this refers to God honouring, abuse free, harm free, person valuing and respectful ministry and includes prevention and response policies, procedures and implementation support in: duty of care; caring for vulnerable people; appropriate use of positions of power; codes of conduct; response to allegations of ministry misconduct and/or abuse; incident reporting; monitoring of practices; safe recruitment and supervision of leaders; the preparation and conducting of physically and emotionally safe church programs and events.

Who is this workshop for? There has been a misconception that this workshop is only related to 'child protection' and therefore only for people working with children and youth in the church. This is not correct and it is recommended by the Baptist Union of NSW that this workshop be attended by every team leader and team member working with 0-18 year olds, including SRE teachers, as well as all Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Board members (policy decision makers) and team leaders of all other church ministries. This includes both volunteers and paid workers.

It is recommended that the above groups of people attend a Creating Safe Spaces Introduction workshop within their first year of ministry and a Refresher workshop every 3 years. Please note that the Refresher workshop is a completely separate workshop and not just part of the Introduction workshop.

If your church would like further information in relation to the possibility of hosting or attending a Creating Safe Spaces Introduction or Refresher workshop, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Williams on 02 9868 9213 or Judy Henderson on 02 9868 9221 – Email: css@baptistnsw.asn.au.

We also recognise that a workshop alone does not ensure safe ministry but that this will be achieved through the implementation of the policy and procedures. The Creating Safe Spaces manual handed out at the workshop is designed to assist with the implementation and these documents are also available in template format on the Baptist Union website <http://baptistnsw.asn.au/standards.html> by selecting 'Creating Safe Spaces Implementation Ideas and Forms'.

Thank you for your valuable time and for what you are doing in serving your local community.