



Breaking Free

March 2017

From the Editor

Welcome to the March edition of Breaking Free for 2017.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on last month's issue, the first online version of Breaking Free. We are glad that you like the new format. It is also wonderful to hear from so many readers with your ideas, tips, tools, and resources for self-care. If you have an idea you would like to share, feel free to make contact via the email address provided below.

In our cover story 'How to be Colourful and Mindful in March', we explore and share new ways to bring mindfulness practices into your life. The 'In the News' section covers some of the news stories that affect survivors including Royal Commission updates.

Our Fundraising article focuses on online fundraising and the easy ways you can fundraise on behalf of Blue Knot Foundation and survivors by using them.

'My Story' is written by Sue, who attended our recent Survivor Workshop. Sue writes that it has taken her 43 years to get along to such an event. She now feels less alone, more, supported and starting to finally choose how she will live.

In the new SELF CARE RESOURCES section, we have included information about an interesting app and two books. One of the books is written by the well-known trauma expert Babette Rothschild and the other one encourages activities and colouring-in to aid healing. This month's audio features a must-listen interview with a woman who once lived with multiple identities after a childhood of family abuse and how she eventually became integrated.

The Blue Knot Helpline Counselling Team believes that the SELF CARE RESOURCES section of Breaking Free will become important resources for callers, their loved ones and community members as the collection expands. As with all self-help tools, what is helpful for one person may not be for another, so please experiment, explore and find what suits you.

If you have comments about what you have read in this issue or suggestions for future editions, please contact me at newsletter@blueknot.org.au.

Warm Regards,
Jane Macnaught | Editor

How To Be Colourful And Mindful In March

By *Breaking Free* editor Jane Macnaught

In this article we take a look at the benefits of mindfulness and share a couple of simple, colourful and creative mindfulness ideas. With the colours of autumn on their way, we discuss ways to spend the cooler days ahead.

Mindfulness is a practice. Like any skill it needs to be learnt, but for many of us that can be really difficult. We often don't feel comfortable in the early stages of practice and that can deter us from trying again. Perhaps you have incorporated mindfulness into your daily life and are enjoying the benefits, however if you would like some fresh ideas, read on...

Why mindfulness?

Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn, who first developed mindfulness in a therapeutic setting, says: "**Mindfulness** can be cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the **present moment**, and as **non-reactively**, **non-judgementally** and **openheartedly** as possible".

In **mindfulness** we are paying attention to whatever we choose to attend to.



The **present moment** and the reality of being in the 'here and now' means we observe and become aware of the way things are, as they are now. Nothing need change our experience. It is okay just as it is – it is valid, it is correct.

Non-reactively. A reaction is automatic. We have no choice; however, a response is a deliberate and considered action, thereby being non-reactive.

Non-judgmentally. We are constantly thinking and judging each experience as good or bad, something we like or dislike. In the moment-to-moment experience of mindfulness we let go of judgment. This helps us see things authentically, openly and honestly.

Openheartedly. Mindfulness is an action linking the mind and the heart. To be open-hearted is to bring a quality of kindness, self-compassion, warmth and curiosity to our experience. See if you can experience this.

Mindfulness can lead to relaxation but remember that the aim of mindfulness is not relaxation. In mindfulness, you can't fail because you don't have some experience you have to achieve. You simply practice paying attention to whatever your experience is, as best you can, and whatever happens, happens. You gain an understanding from your experience.

Reference: Kabat-Zinn, Dr. Jon "Full Catastrophe Living"

Remember those coloured pencils?

Once upon a time we all (in Australian schools) had access to a generous supply of coloured pencils and pens. Many of us carried a pencil case every day to school – how marvelous were those moments?! As children, throughout the day, we would get out our colours and use them in our schoolwork and play.

As children we were more:

Creative
Playful
Delighted
Absorbed
Decorative
Mindful



About 18 months ago I was in a large city bookstore and I was amazed to see the enormity of the section displaying adult colouring-in books. I now have a varied collection of these wonderful books at home – do you have one? And pencils or pastels – do you have any that are just for your colouring-in?

Why are we talking about colouring-in here?

Colouring-in is a stress reducing activity. Once you settle down to colour-in and focus on the activity, your mind switches onto the task and you become mindful. As you focus, your heart rate decreases and breathing slows as you create calmness inside your body.

In cultivating mindfulness by colouring-in, you keep your thoughts in the **present moment**. The activity is **non-reactive** as you deliberately choose colours and concentrate on staying between the lines. There is **no-judgment** as there is nothing right or wrong in the activity. I have no doubt that you will enjoy a sense of **openheartedness** in this childlike space of pencils and paper. Just like Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn explained above.

When there is a joyful, absorbing task involved then mindfulness ‘just happens’ without you noticing.

The amygdala (the fear centre of the brain) relaxes – and your brain gets the rest it needs. (See 3D Brain App in later article to locate the ‘amygdala and learn more about the brain)

* TRY colouring-in on your own, with friends or family around the dining table – it’s fun, you can relax and talk. Unlike drawing, colouring is easy to do for all of us.

* STAYING between the lines, focusing on the shapes and choosing colours encourages us to focus on the task and slows down the rush of thoughts. You can forget your worries mindfully.

* IDEAS for books and free colouring pages are included in the SELF CARE RESOURCES section of this newsletter.

Please remember that what is helpful for one person may not be for another so experiment, explore and find what suits you.

You are welcome to provide feedback on this article via email at newsletter@blueknot.org.au

Taking one more step closer to living as WE CHOOSE to...

I recently attended the Adelaide Survivor Workshop and found this to be another jigsaw piece that is putting together the story of my trauma and assisting me to grasp sayings, tips and facts that are helping to calm me in “coming out” more.

I am a survivor, now I can say those words, albeit still not as strongly as I would like.

I realised that I am not alone in this journey; many others are on their own path to 'freeness'. Freeness from the nightmares, flashbacks, triggers and self-doubt: freeness to move past the memories.

“The trauma does not define who I am” is something that stays with me from the workshop.

I am grateful that I was permitted to bring my daughter along on the day for support. This certainly made it easier to take that step and enter the room. It took me 43 years to go to a space alongside other survivors and I would willingly go again: anything to understand more.

The facilitator was personable and a great speaker. Meeting other survivors, some of whom shared part of their stories, was mind-blowing.

Fortunately, my perpetrators are deceased. They can't hurt me anymore. But that doesn't stop the past or the loss of my childhood, the betrayal, confusion and guilt.

I was 12 and naive.

I protected my sister and mum and still do to this day.

How I would love to sit down with mum and tell the other side of him.

Would I be believed?

I think not.

Would it kill her as he said it would?

She is elderly and not in good health now.

I am not sure I can live with that on my conscience.

So Blue Knot, thank you.

Keep up the educational workshops, the support and assistance to those of us who are taking one step closer to living as WE CHOOSE to do.

Kindest regards

Sue

For information about the next series of survivor workshops, please stay subscribed to this newsletter where details will be announced when they become available.



Talking About Trauma Can Be Challenging

This month Blue Knot Foundation released a publication called: “Talking About Trauma, Guide to Everyday Conversations About Trauma.” Written by Blue Knot Foundation President Dr Cathy Kezelman AM and Head of Research Pam Stavropoulos PhD. It is the first of a ‘Talking about Trauma’ series which will include publications for different audiences.

As our Blue Knot Foundation community know, a vast number of people are affected by trauma, so we believe trauma needs to be everyone’s business.

The guide includes vital information for having effective everyday conversations and providing sensitive social support to those affected by trauma.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has drawn attention to the endemic child sexual abuse and systemic betrayal of trust that occurred within Australian mainstream institutions including churches, schools, and orphanages. While prevalent and damaging, this is only one sort of trauma.

Trauma also includes physical and emotional abuse, neglect, the effects of violence in the home and on the streets, as well as the impacts of other adverse childhood events such as living with a parent with a mental illness or who abuses substances.



The reality of trauma has entered the public psyche through the 24-hour news cycle, social media and published research. To reduce the repercussions of trauma in our community, the community-at-large would benefit from being informed about the nature and sources of trauma and how to respond appropriately, in particular, when trauma touches the family unit. Families are complex and any interpersonal trauma within the family can cause a ripple effect.

Dr Cathy Kezelman AM, President of Blue Knot Foundation, said, “sometimes it may seem easier to talk with a person we know, yet knowing them well can also be a hindrance. Trauma within the family unit can have repercussions for other family members and the family system as a whole. If you suspect or become aware of a family member’s interpersonal trauma, it is more important to raise your concerns sensitively rather than stay silent.”

The core trauma-informed principles are safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment and Dr Kezelman says these need to form the basis of all conversations, especially with those who have experienced interpersonal trauma. Dr Kezelman advises considering the following questions for conversations with a family member who is suspected or known to be experiencing interpersonal trauma:

What is my ‘role’ relationship to the person? (i.e. mother, partner, sibling etc.) Are there any power dynamics that I need to consider?

How do our personalities and roles affect our relationship? How close do I feel to this person and how might it affect our conversation? This includes the sense of safety and level of comfort

How frequently am I in contact with this person? How does that affect having this conversation, including if I need to follow up? A situation in which you are in regular contact with a family member to whom you generally relate well is different to one in which you have a significant conversation ‘out of the blue’ with a family member with whom you don’t have a good personal connection. In this case the ‘role’ aspect may dominate

Might I need ‘support to offer support’? Can I enlist this support from inside the family? If not, who might I consult? Note that safety, both physical and emotional, is paramount

This is an important and essential guide. You can download the paper for free here and share “Talking About Trauma, Guide to Everyday Conversations About Trauma”.

Online fundraising – new pathways for giving

The fundraising landscape has changed drastically over the past decade as the power of the web and social media have forged new pathways for giving. The online global community provides opportunities for connection, and increasingly, for support.

As an organisation, Blue Knot Foundation continues to thrive in part, due to this technology. Only last year we were able to run a Survivor Workshop in every state and territory across Australia by raising over \$48,000 through our 2016 online appeal.

Blue Knot Foundation is currently registered with fundraising platforms Everyday Hero, Go Fundraise and Just Giving, where you can register your own fundraising event, or support other community fundraisers online.

Blue Knot Foundation supporter, Daniel from NSW (photo right), raised almost \$1,000 using everydayhero.com.au, where he registered his fundraising event. “I participated in ‘Tough Mudder’, a 20km fun run with 25 obstacles to complete”, said Daniel. “I was recommended Everyday Hero and the setup was very easy, it just took a few minutes. I just wrote a few lines and put up pictures so my supporters could follow my progress leading up to the event”. Daniel’s event was a huge success, with family, friends and co-workers supporting him online.



GoFundraise is another popular fundraising site, with many Blue Knot Foundation supporters raising funds through the platform gofundraise.com.au. This site offers a 3 click process of 1. Find your passion, 2. Set your own goals, and 3. Make a difference! You can set up your own event using one of their pre-designed templates, or search under ‘Blue Knot Foundation’ to support events in your community.

Over 24 million people have supported causes through the Just Giving platform justgiving.com, where you can also choose to take part in an existing event or set up your own page to raise funds for Blue Knot Foundation.

Whether you are taking part in a fun run, sponsored swim or baking Blue Knot Day cupcakes, community fundraising plays an integral role in helping us to support survivors. For example:

\$250 will sponsor a survivor to attend a Blue Knot Foundation Survivor Workshop

\$1,000 will fund a day’s Helpline service

\$6,000 will support a full-day workshop where 30 survivors can attend

If you have ever thought about doing something special for Blue Knot Day, or setting up your own community fundraiser for Blue Knot Foundation, there’s never been a better time - by harnessing the power of the web, online fundraising has opened the door for innovation and made it easier than ever to raise funds!

NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING: A THREE-PHASED APPROACH – WORKING THERAPEUTICALLY WITH COMPLEX TRAUMA CLIENTS

This two-day interactive professional development training presents the 3-phased approach for working therapeutically with complex trauma clients.

Day 1 focuses on phase 1 safety and stabilisation emphasising the need for 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to treatment, assessment and resource acquisition. Day 2 presents phase 2: processing the trauma focusing on an overview of memory, including traumatic memory and perception, and workshoping working within the 'window of tolerance' – tracking pacing & titrating. It also explores transference/countertransference, enactments and working with 'difficult' behaviours.

Also on Day 2, phase 3: integration focuses on the neurobiology of integration, the development of mentalisation, dealing with cognitive distortions and the arena of freedom and liberation. The training promotes safety and the significance of phase 1 throughout all phases and the centrality of the therapeutic attachment alliance.



The training is interactive and involves role plays, vignettes and case studies. Participants will acquire insights, tools and strategies that support safe therapeutic work, based on best practice principles, with clients who have complex trauma histories.

By participating in this professional development training, attendees will:

- Delineate the three (3) phases of trauma treatment establishing the critical importance of phase 1, 'setting the scene' and conducting phase 1 assessment
- Foster resource development across all 7 domains of self-care
- Acquire knowledge and skills around components of phase 2 trauma work
- Apply an understanding of traumatic memory and working within the window of tolerance to practice
- Workshop skills for working with transference/countertransference, enactments and working with 'difficult behaviours'
- Demonstrate knowledge & understanding of the components of integration (phase 3); mentalising, cognitive distortions/meaning making & the ability to experience pleasure

This workshop assumes good basic prior knowledge including an understanding of trauma-informed principles, the dynamics and the neuroscience of childhood trauma.

Recent feedback from the training include:

"Excellent training! Provided insight into behaviours and coping strategies individuals have learnt due to trauma. Gave strategies to better equip the individual to regulate their emotions, identify their triggers and lead more fulfilling lives with resources and support systems." -Centacare Catholic Family Services, SA

SELF HELP RESOURCES

In this section, we will review self-help resources our Blue Knot Helpline counselling team collects to share with people who call the Helpline. We are delighted to share these ideas with our Breaking Free readers. What is helpful for one person may not be right for someone else so please experiment, explore and find what suits you.

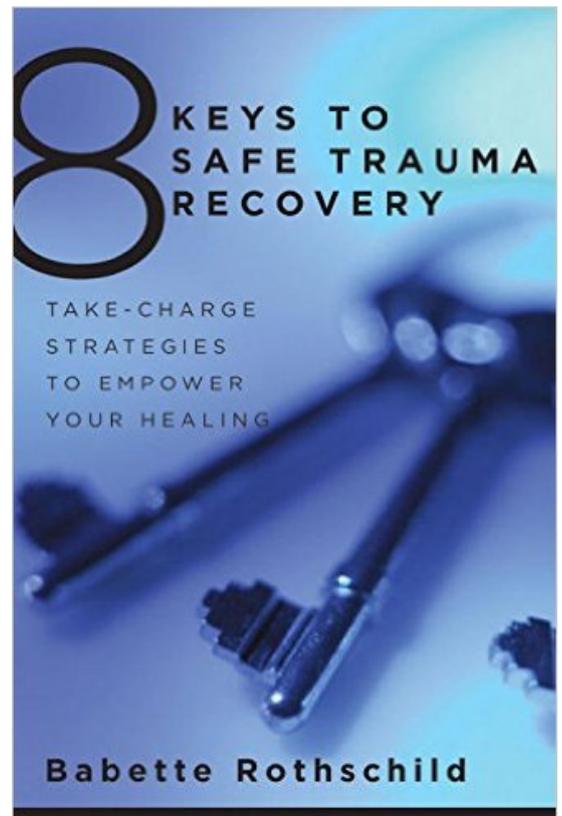
Reading suggestions from the Blue Knot Helpline

8 Keys to Safe Trauma Recovery – take charge strategies to empower your healing by Babette Rothschild, 2010

Babette Rothschild is the author of 5 books, including the bestselling 'The Body Remembers'. She travels the world giving professional lectures, trainings and consultations. Babette is in Australia this month, many of the Blue Knot community – staff, trainers, counsellors are attending trainings delivered by her.

The 8 Keys To Safe Trauma Recovery is a very practical book, filled with common sense ideas steeped in clinically proven methods. Rothschild's approach is very much "try it and see if it works - if it doesn't then stop!". It isn't dogmatic or prescriptive, which is important for trauma recovery self help ideas. This is brief book and therefore accessible to a wide audience. The book directly targets safe, successful recovery in a way that compels and convinces the reader to give her 'keys' a try.

In the introduction to each 'key' Rothschild invites readers to ask themselves: Does this concept 'make sense to you?' If so the reader should complete the exercises. If the concept described in the chapter makes no sense, - or the reader feels at all distressed Rothschild suggests to either simply read through the chapter, postpone further reading or skip to the next chapter.



QUOTES from the book:

“The best trauma recovery program for you will be the one that is tailored to your individual needs” p5

“Take care with what you say to yourself, as it actually affects you, particularly when it is about trauma. p59

A Coloring Book of Healing Imaging for Adults Survivors of Child Abuse <http://colortoheal.com/>

Author: Ellen Lacter Illustrators: Robin Baird Lewis & Jen Callow

This delightful book was created to help bring healing to anyone who was abused as a child. The authors hope that the messages and images will promote and encourage healing. They provide ideas, directions, and inspiration to help readers pave a personal healing path – this is a hopeful, fun colouring- in book.

Each of the 17 chapters has a list of suggestions for using creativity in the healing process, pages of pictures to colour -in, space to write affirmations, and loads of fresh ideas to inspire the reader.

Written by Ellen Lacter, an art therapist and clinical psychologist, based in San Diego USA. She specializes in the treatment of adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, ritual abuse and mind control. There are two illustrators: Robin Baird Lewis, a professional and highly regarded illustrator and Jen Callow a fine artist and survivor of ritual abuse.

Podcast suggestion from the Blue Knot Helpline

All in the Mind – Dissociation and coping with trauma

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/dissociation-and-coping-with-trauma/8290294>

Reports from the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse reminds us of the devastating impact that early abuse has on mental health. Dissociative identity disorder is a condition which can develop as a protective mechanism against trauma, and we hear the compelling account of a woman who, after a childhood of family abuse, lived with identities too numerous to count—and how she eventually became integrated.



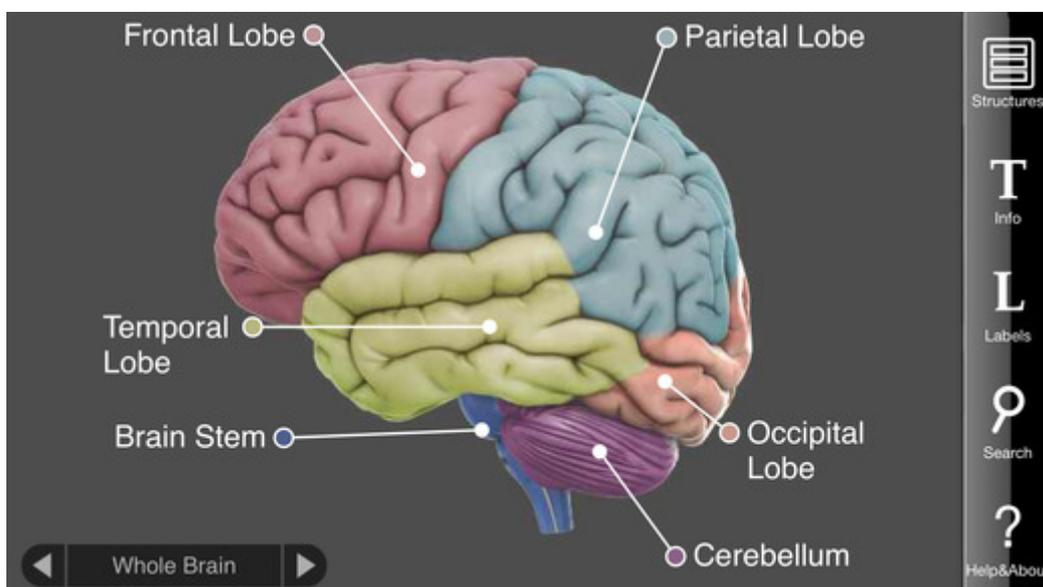
App suggestions from the Blue Knot Helpline

3D Brain – a wonderland

Locate your amygdala, prefrontal cortex and more...

Do you want to understand your brain better so you can understand the way trauma can affect you??

Perhaps a counsellor on the Blue Knot Helpline or your face to face counsellor has referred to the “limbic system” – that part of the brain that is active when you are regulating emotions and forming memories. That is where we find the amygdala – the fear centre – and when it is activated the front part of the brain – the prefrontal cortex shuts down.



The prefrontal cortex is involved in higher order thinking – reasoning, planning, judgement – when it shuts down it is much more difficult to manage day to day life without reacting.

Learning to regulate your emotions, thinking and so your reactions helps you to turn off the excess activity in the amygdala – this is a skill that most survivors find challenging. Our cover story discusses mindfulness, a practice that promotes self-regulation.

An important part of the recovery journey is to learn more our brain and how trauma can affect us. The 3-D Brain app may be helpful. Download free at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/3d-brain/id331399332?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D8>.

Website suggestions from the Blue Knot Helpline

Sounds True – help to live a more genuine and meaningful life www.soundstrue.com

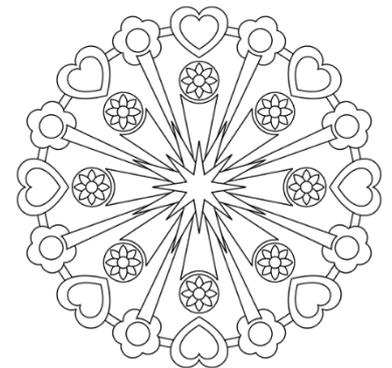
The Sounds True website is a gateway to a curated selection of resources to help with stress relief, mindfulness, relationships, calming music, self-guided courses. A wide range of authors available and the topics are provided, many at low cost, some free and in any format that you may prefer – CD, audio downloads, books, video.

Free Mandala to Colour-In www.printmandala.com

These are free printable mandalas for you to print, colour and share.

Mandalas, known as sacred circles, can be as simple as a circle that a child draws, or as complex as the sacred images Tibetan monks create with coloured sand or the related labyrinths found in gardens and holy buildings across the world.

According to Jung, a pioneer of psychoanalysis, mandalas symbolise "a safe refuge of inner reconciliation and wholeness." They provide an opportunity to experience wholeness amid the chaos of everyday life. Making a circle brings order to things, order begets patterns that the mind can grasp and understand. Drawing a circle around even some scribbled notes will achieve some harmony and order. Each time you turn a circle, or colour a mandala, you invite a little harmony into your life. The experience can be soothing for the soul.



A circle suggests a centre point, like a magnifying glass acts to focus the sun's rays to a single bright spot. The centre attracts attention, even if it is not marked out. The capacity of the circle to catch and focus attention means you take less notice of what is outside the circle. Like in meditation where it is helpful to concentrate attention on one thing, breathing slows, the body relaxes, and heart rate slows. Making use of the circular form of mandalas helps to organize perception, thought and physical responses. Try printing & colouring some of these sheets in.

IN THE NEWS

Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse: 1,880 alleged perpetrators identified in Catholic Church

More than 20 per cent of the members of some Catholic religious orders — including Marist Brothers and Christian Brothers — were allegedly involved in child sexual abuse, a royal commission hearing in Sydney has been told.

Nearly 2,000 Catholic Church figures, including priests, religious brothers and sisters, and employees, were identified as alleged perpetrators in a report released by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The hearing is examining the current policies and procedures of the church's authorities in Australia relating to child protection and child safety standards, as well as their response to allegations of abuse.

In her opening address, Gail Furness SC said a survey revealed 4,444 allegations of incidents of abuse between January 1980 and February 2015 were made to Catholic Church authorities.

Ms Furness said 60 per cent of all abuse survivors attending private royal commission sessions reported sexual abuse at faith-based institutions.

Of those, almost two-thirds reported abuse in Catholic institutions.

The royal commission's report found of the 1,880 alleged perpetrators from within the Catholic Church, 572 were priests.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-06/royal-commission-into-child-sexual-abuse-begins-in-sydney/8242600>

Abuse victim want equal access to redress

People sexually abused as children need equal access to redress no matter where they live, victims' advocates say.

It is critical all states and territories opt into the planned national scheme to compensate victims of child sex abuse in institutions, says Cathy Kezelman, president of survivor group Blue Knot Foundation.

"If everyone opts in, it will be a level playing field certainly from the point of view of survivors of institutional child sexual abuse," Dr Kezelman said.

Dr Kezelman said she hoped governments would recognise it was inequitable for survivors who live in one geographical location to not receive the same redress, counselling and psychological care as a survivor who lives elsewhere or was abused in a different institution.

Care Leavers Australasia Network chief executive Leonie Sheedy said people who were sexually abused in orphanages or children's homes do not want to participate in state-based schemes.

"People do not want to go back to the state government who abused us, who didn't care about us as children, and now we have to go back to them and they get to decide our level of compensation," she said.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/abuse-victims-want-equal-access-to-redress/news-story/f33a7f6246288298d3c15b2de1f7e377>

Catholics for Renewal President Peter Johnstone Says Vatican diplomatic recognition is in question because of abuse crisis

A former senior federal and state government executive and leading Australian Catholic reform group president has backed calls for Australia to break diplomatic ties with the Vatican over the tragedy of child sexual abuse.

Catholics for Renewal president Peter Johnstone said the response was “right on the money”, in comments after telling the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that Australia needed to send a “hard” message to Pope Francis and the Vatican.

“I have no hesitation in arguing the royal commission should say to the government that if the Catholic Church will not cooperate in making major changes – and the Australian church can’t change without the global church changing - then the government should say to the Catholic Church it will reconsider its diplomatic recognition of the Holy See,” Mr Johnstone said on Tuesday.

Australia’s diplomatic recognition of the Catholic Church had “handicapped” the commission, he said.

Mr Johnstone said the church’s unique position as the only religion granted statehood status, with a permanent observer seat at the United Nations and diplomatic relations with more than 180 countries, is a factor in the “considerable hubris” he believes has contributed to the global child sexual abuse crisis.

Read more at <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/4485370/diplomatic-reformers/>

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