

# Abuse and Harassment Reporting

- 1. Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.
- 2. Assure privacy but not confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
- 3. Get the facts, but don't interrogate.** Ask questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.
- 4. Be nonjudgmental and reassure the youth participant.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Assure the young person that the situation was not his or her fault and that he or she was brave and mature to come to you.
- 5. Record.** Keep a written record of the conversation as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the young person's words, and record only what has been told to you.
- 6. Contact youth protection or legal authorities.** Rotarians and other adults involved in youth programs are not trained professionals with expertise in determining the seriousness or legal implications of an allegation; therefore, they should not decide whether an allegation constitutes abuse or harassment unless the decision is made in close consultation with youth protection service agencies, law enforcement, or a district youth protection officer trained in handling allegations of abuse or harassment toward young people.
- 7. Report to Rotary contact.** Inform your Rotary contact — either the district youth protection officer, district youth programs chair, or district governor — who will then contact Rotary International within 72 hours.