



Australian Government



Years 8 and above

Why would I want to repair the relationship?

You are likely reading this because harm has occurred, either by you or to you. This resource is not here to make you feel shame or guilt. It is a private, honest space for you to process what happened and to see if repair is possible.

This resource has two parts: one for if you have experienced harm, and one for if you have caused harm. Use whichever section applies to you, or read both if that feels helpful.

There are no right or wrong answers. You do not have to share your responses with anyone. Take your time working through these questions. Doing so can help you decide on the best way forward.

You have experienced harm. What happens next?

Being asked to think about repair after you have been harmed can feel unfair. You did not choose what happened to you, and you should not have had to experience it. You can't control the other person's behaviour, but you can decide what to do next. This tool focuses on your rights and boundaries. It helps you understand what you need to feel safe and supported as you move forward.

'The first step to regaining power over yourself is to accept yourself for who you are and were, through reflection and healing.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 13,
PROJECT ROCKIT NATIONAL
YOUTH COLLECTIVE

Note

Make sure you feel truly ready before joining any repair conversation. Don't let others or time pressure you. If you're not sure, talking to a trusted adult first is a good step. If the first person you tell does not help or take you seriously, tell someone else. Keep trying until you find someone who listens. For more information on support systems, go to the connected resources or the organisations listed at the end of this resource.



Take a moment to reflect on what repair is and what it is not.

Repair is...

Putting your safety, feelings and boundaries first. It means your experience is recognised, and the other person takes full responsibility without making excuses. You have the power to decide what happens next. This could mean staying at a respectful distance from the person who harmed you, or gradually rebuilding your connection with them. Whatever you choose, it should fit your timeline. This way, your right to feel safe will be fully restored.

Repair is not...

Being forced to accept a quick, half-hearted apology so that everyone can pretend the problem is solved. It is not about 'forgiving and forgetting', keeping secrets or being pressured to be friends again. Repair never means minimising your pain, letting the other person avoid responsibility, or putting up with a situation that makes you feel unsafe.



If you have been bullied or harmed because of who you are, such as your race, gender, disability or any other identity-based factor, go to the **Australian Human Rights Commission** at humanrights.gov.au to learn about your rights and find support.



You can report harmful behaviour online to **eSafety** at esafety.gov.au/report.

Note



If the harm was connected to your identity (for example, your race, sexuality, gender, disability or religion), repair may look different and require additional care. Processes for dealing with identity-based harm need to move at your pace and may need support from a trusted adult or community leader.

'Forgiveness is the first step in your journey of healing; holding grudges does nothing to your growth except to pull you down.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 16,
PROJECT ROCKIT NATIONAL
YOUTH COLLECTIVE

Reflection prompts for the person harmed

Take a slow, deep breath in, hold it and slowly let it out. Bring your attention back to where you are right now. Repeat this step if needed as you reflect on the situation. Use this time to look honestly at the situation and focus on what you actually need, not what you think you should want.

These questions are designed to help you process what happened, understand your needs, and figure out the best way to feel safe and supported. Take your time to reflect, and if it helps, write your thoughts down.

1. The situation

What happened? Who was involved? How did it make you feel at the time?

2. The impact

What have you thought or felt since this happened? What has been the hardest thing about it?

3. Your boundaries

When it comes to the other person: Do you want a renewed friendship? Do you want distance with respect? Or something else?

4. Safety

What needs to happen for you to feel safe around this person again?

5. Accountability

What would genuine accountability or an apology from the other person look like to you?

6. Personal wellbeing

What do you need to feel okay and move past this, regardless of what the other person chooses to do?

7. Support network

What support do you need right now? Who are the trusted people or support services you can go to for it?

8. Final thoughts

Is there anything else important about how this has affected you that you want to add?

Taking the time to reflect on what happened can be hard, but it's important for moving forward. It's okay if you choose not to pursue repair or renewed friendship right now. You get to decide what feels right, and this may change over time.

'Oftentimes, these were also the adults who weren't trying to speak for me or solve my problems but the ones who helped me find my confidence and voice to speak for myself.'

- YOUNG PERSON, 18, PROJECT ROCKIT NATIONAL YOUTH COLLECTIVE



You have caused harm. What happens next?

Owning up to your mistakes takes real courage, and the most meaningful conversations are often the hardest to have. Right now, the goal is not to spiral into shame or get defensive. It is definitely not the time to minimise, justify or deflect what happened.

This is not a punishment. It is an opportunity to look honestly at how your behaviour has had a real impact on another person. This impact does not disappear because the behaviour has stopped. Sometimes, genuine accountability is far more valuable than a rushed apology. This is an invitation to do something much harder, but far more useful. It means facing what actually happened, understanding your impact, and learning how to make things better.

Take a moment to reflect on what repair is and is not.

Repair is...

Taking full responsibility and focusing on what the other person needs to feel safe. It means owning the specific hurt you caused without excuses. Respect their boundaries, whether they need space or want to reconnect, and actively changing your behaviour. It is an ongoing process that shows that you can be trusted through your daily actions.

Repair is not...

A quick, empty 'sorry' mumbled just to avoid a consequence. It is not minimising the harm by claiming 'it was just a joke' or expecting immediate forgiveness. Blaming others, making excuses or being respectful only when adults are around isn't real repair.

Take a slow, deep breath, hold it, let it out, repeat. Now it's time to reflect on the situation honestly.

Note

If anything you have reflected on feels overwhelming, talk to a trusted adult or contact a support organisation listed at the end of this resource.

'Taking account of the damage done is the first step; after that, you can decide to either forget or feel permanent guilt.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 13,
PROJECT ROCKIT NATIONAL
YOUTH COLLECTIVE

Reflection prompts for the person who caused harm

1. The situation

What happened? Who was involved? What were you thinking or feeling at the time?

2. The impact

What do you think has been the hardest thing for the other person since this happened? How do you feel about what happened now?

3. Safety

What specific things do you need to change about your behaviour to ensure the other person feels safe around you again?

4. Accountability

What would a genuine, meaningful apology or act of accountability look like from you to them?

'Accountability without change becomes repetition in disguise. Real responsibility is proven through what you choose differently next time.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 16, PROJECT ROCKIT NATIONAL YOUTH COLLECTIVE

5. Personal wellbeing

What do you need to work on within yourself, or what skills do you need to learn to make sure this does not happen again?

6. Support network

What support do you need right now to make better choices, and who are the adults or peers you can go to for help?

7. Final thoughts

Is there anything else important about this situation or your intentions that you want to add?

If you have reflected honestly, you have shown that you are thinking about your impact on the other person. You are willing to make positive changes and take steps towards repairing harm.

'An apology means little if everything around the behaviour stays the same. Real accountability is shown through what changes, not what is said.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 16,
PROJECT ROCKIT NATIONAL
YOUTH COLLECTIVE

Note

If you are finding it hard to sit with this, talking to a trusted adult can help. If the first person you tell does not help or take you seriously, tell someone else. Keep trying until you find someone who listens. For more information on support systems, go to the connected resources or the organisations listed at the end of this resource.



Connected resources

- ◉ Support systems
- ◉ Accountability – I've been called out for my behaviour

Where to get more help

If you need further support, help is available:

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au. Free, confidential counselling for bullying and other harmful behaviours, school issues, online harm and wellbeing, available 24/7.

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au. Mental health support for stress, anxiety or overwhelm, available 24/7.

Lifeline: 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au. Crisis support and counselling if things feel overwhelming, available 24/7.

Dolly's Dream Bullying Support Line: 13 36 55 (13 DOLLY) or dollysdream.org.au. Counselling and guidance for children and young people experiencing bullying and other harmful behaviour, available 24/7.

headspace/ehespace: 1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au. Mental health, wellbeing and early intervention support, available 9 am–1 am daily.

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au. Sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault, available 24/7.

13YARN: 13 92 76 or 13yarn.org.au. Culturally safe 24/7 support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

QLife (LGBTIQA+ young people): 1800 184 527 or qlife.org.au. Free, anonymous peer support and referral service, available 3 pm–9 pm daily.

eSafety Commissioner: esafety.gov.au. Report cyberbullying, get advice and request content removal support.

Australian Human Rights Commission: humanrights.gov.au. Support for cases involving discriminatory harm. Reports can be made via their website or by emailing infoservice@humanrights.gov.au.

State, territory and non-government education sectors will reflect the expectations of the National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian schools in their policies and procedures by Term 1 2027. This includes making reasonable efforts to initiate a response to bullying and harmful behaviour within two school days, recognising that further time may be required to fully address the issue. By Term 1 2027, all schools will also publish or link to policies and procedures that align with the National Framework (or equivalent contemporary jurisdiction specific Frameworks) and their local polices and school context.