

Will you help give survivors of sexual abuse the support they need to break free from the stigma and shame they may face?



*"Sexual abuse happens in all ethnicities - you are not alone.
It's a freeing process - getting help and justice."
- Margaret*

*****trigger warning: sexual abuse*****

Dear firstname,

Overcoming trauma from sexual abuse can be difficult enough, but when you feel you have to face it alone, it can make life unbearable.

For Margaret, to keep her abuse a secret meant enduring decades of stress and anxiety, which strained her mentally, emotionally and physically, affecting her health and self-esteem.

It took immense courage to finally speak up, especially when faced with the stigma within her Chinese culture.

Margaret's cousin, Tin Kai, was 24 years older than her when he took advantage of her while she was living with him, and under his guardianship.

He was supposed to care for her, but instead subjected her to over a

year of harrowing abuse.

Tin Kai groomed Margaret over a long period, emotionally manipulating and coercing her, even twisting the principles of traditional Chinese medicine to control her through fear and shame.

"In Asian communities, people often hold onto old Asian patriarchal societal beliefs. Males are dominant, valued over females... we are told to never question authority and be submissive... this makes it harder for victims to speak out."

Margaret was left in a constant 'hyper-alert' state.

"My health and self-esteem were in a downward spiral, affecting my studies. I tried to forget and suppress the trauma, but the strain haunted me with sleepless nights, panic attacks, flashbacks, indigestion and heartburn, all of which affected me for many years."

Trauma can manifest itself in various ways, and for many survivors of sexual abuse, the effects can last long after the initial hurt inflicted on them. Only specialist counselling can help survivors of sexual abuse to address the core of their trauma and begin to heal.

firstname, will you make a generous gift of \$45 to keep our services available for survivors of sexual abuse to get the help they desperately need?

You can receive 33.3% tax back on your donation made by 31st March.

Make a donation now



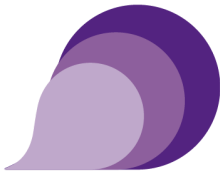
Margaret saw countless doctors and underwent physical therapies to relieve her stress and anxiety, but it was not the help she truly needed. Finally, in 2017 she reached breaking point, and despite the ingrained cultural stigma, she sought psychological help.

"Finding the HELP website and reading the stories of others gave me the confidence to take the next step and tell my family. It reinforced what I knew, that perpetrators are often family members and that I was not alone."

However, when Margaret told her family, they pressured her not to

go to the police.

Rather, they were concerned about Tin Kai going to jail, and the ongoing shame that would bring to the family name.



Sadly, such a response contributes to the current state of sexual abuse reporting in Aotearoa New Zealand. The latest Crime and Victims Survey from the Ministry of Justice revealed that **only 6% of sexual assaults are reported to the police.**

"It's heartbreaking when you realise the people you thought you could rely on aren't there for you. Contacting HELP was the best thing I did. They guided me through the process and were wonderful every step of the way."

firstname, your special gift of \$80 will help provide essential court support for survivors of sexual abuse, so they can find the courage to get justice.

Get a 33.3% tax rebate on your donation made by 31st March or extend the reach of your generosity with Supergenerous.

HELP worked alongside the police to give Margaret as much support as she needed, and the justice she deserved.

Eventually, some of Margaret's siblings decided to participate in the investigation. Tin Kai was arrested for his offending and pleaded guilty to five charges of indecent assault.

He was sentenced to five months' community detention and ordered to pay reparation.

However, Margaret's case is one of the very few to be taken to court (3%) and even fewer (1%) to get a conviction.

Donate now to support survivors to seek justice

For Margaret, the process was liberating.

"I am in the transition stage with this coming to an end. The world is my oyster, which is exciting and a little daunting at the same time. However, I am grateful for going through this difficult journey because it helped me find my voice and learn to love and respect myself."

Margaret waived her own right to statutory name suppression -

automatically and permanently given to all victims of sexual offending - so she could share her story with others.

"I want to empower other victims of sexual abuse to find their inner strength to seek help and report it. You are not alone and there are many who can support you. Telling others doesn't make you weak; it takes courage."

firstname, your amazing gift of \$120 will help empower more survivors of sexual abuse to seek help so they can break the cycle of abuse and break free from the stigma and shame.



Send a gift now to help survivors overcome the stigma and shame they may face and thrive in life

By bravely speaking out about her ordeal, Margaret is shining a light on the sexual abuse that goes on behind closed doors - particularly in the Asian community.

"There is a Chinese proverb: if you don't want anyone to find out, don't do it," says Margaret.

She wants to change the culture of secrecy, to prevent sexual abuse from happening to other young girls, of any ethnicity, so they will never have to go through what she went through.

Please give a gift today to support survivors like Margaret and help give them hope to heal and a voice to speak out against sexual abuse.

Thank you and kind regards,

Kathryn McPhillips
Executive Director and Clinical Psychologist

Redonate your rebate,
and help good go further

supergenerous

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HELP provides professional and specialised support services to survivors of sexual abuse and assault.

Supporting the Auckland community since 1982, HELP works to empower women and children recovering from the effects of abuse and educates the community on preventing sexual abuse in the future.

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Charities commission no. CC23863

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