



# Mental Health Week Warrnambool 2016

Introducing Professor Caroline Taylor AM

## Understanding the impact of trauma from childhood sexual abuse

*These workshops will increase community awareness and understanding of the impact of trauma from family violence and childhood sexual abuse, and build the capacity of professionals and our community to support survivors.*

Trauma from family violence and sexual abuse can have significant detrimental impacts on community health, educational outcomes, mental and physical health and economic productivity. Professor Caroline Taylor AM, founder of Children of Phoenix and a survivor herself, leads these workshops to increase awareness of the impact of family violence and childhood sexual abuse.

### For professionals:

#### Understanding and supporting survivors of childhood sexual abuse

The session will focus on understanding trauma impacts, disclosure, the role and value of support and education to assist the recovery and healing process, legal literacy and understanding and negotiating the criminal justice system.

Workshop for: professionals from welfare/community organisations, health professionals, educators, school counsellors, trauma counsellors, grief counsellors, advocates, lawyers, police, court liaison support workers, pastoral care workers, advocates.

**Cost:** Free. Light meal provided

**Venue:** Deakin University – Warrnambool Campus Room J2.01

**Date:** Monday October 10, 2016

**Time:** 4.30pm to 8pm.

**Bookings essential** - [www.trybooking.com/227688](http://www.trybooking.com/227688) or email [childandfamily@warrnambool.vic.gov.au](mailto:childandfamily@warrnambool.vic.gov.au)

### For the community:

#### Understanding the impact of trauma from childhood sexual abuse in our community

The session will focus on the prevalence of family violence and childhood sexual abuse; understanding disclosure; how to help; understanding the impact of trauma on individuals, and broader impact on community health, educational outcomes, mental and physical health and economic productivity.

Workshop designed for members of the general public including community groups; family members, friends and supporters of affected families and individuals; and those interested in improved community wellbeing.

**Cost:** Free

**Venue:** Deakin University – Warrnambool Campus Room G1.01

**Date:** Tuesday October 11, 2016

**Time:** 7 pm to 8.30pm

**Bookings essential** - [www.trybooking.com/227688](http://www.trybooking.com/227688) or email [childandfamily@warrnambool.vic.gov.au](mailto:childandfamily@warrnambool.vic.gov.au)

If you need assistance or support call Life Line on 13 11 14 or SWCASA 5564 4144

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## Professor Caroline Taylor AM

(Founder and Chair of Children of Phoenix) comments about an unfolding vision:

“Prof. Caroline Taylor harboured a private dream. Having survived long term sexual and physical violence, described by one judge as the worst case of abuse they had come across in their time on the bench, Caroline had to rebuild a new life with no family support or connections and with very little formal education. Determined to rebuild a life on her own terms, Caroline set out on a journey; entering university education as a mature age student. Achieving stunning success in her educational pursuits Caroline went on to do a PhD that won a national award and produce two highly acclaimed and influential internationally published books. In recent years Caroline has been awarded prestigious awards and academic funding grants from bodies such as the Australian Research Council and Australian Institute of Criminology. She continues to publish monographs, books, journal articles and book chapters as well as provide training to police, judges and other professionals around the world.

With a growing international reputation as an academic researcher and her hands on work to improve the lives of children and adults affected by sexual violence Caroline now provides specialist evidence in criminal proceedings. Her journey in life thus far has taken her from a childhood of poverty and abuse that continued into early adulthood; sporadic early schooling; rejection by her family for escaping and disclosing the sexual abuse perpetrated upon her followed by a series of legal trials that resulted in the conviction and gaoling of the offender to her determination to learn to live a full life – not a life half lived. Caroline rebuilt a life from ashes. Putting herself through night school and university where she received stunning results; to creating a life filled with nature and close friends and holding her dream of creating a unique charity.

Acutely aware of the traumatic impact of childhood sexual violence Caroline was increasingly aware that so many child and adult survivors of sexual abuse had their healing and recovery compromised by a lack of meaningful access and connection to knowledge and personal development.

Education – all types and at all levels – not only improves our life chances and our life choices, but enables us to sculpt and create new landscapes and new vistas that

widen our own horizons; allow us to achieve our dreams; to have knowledge for greater, more informed choices, and; to rebuild a life on our terms and not those forced upon us through the actions of an abuser and associated trauma.

From her own experiences of rebuilding a life and the role education played in enabling a deeper level of personal growth and development, Caroline dreamed of developing a foundation that would provide tangible and supported pathways to education for children and adults affected by childhood sexual violence. A foundation that assisted survivors to remain connected to education, to improve their access to educational, vocational and personal skill development; to assist adult survivors re-access education at all levels where their education had been disrupted and compromised or even denied them, as a consequence of sexual abuse.

Prior to establishing her foundation, Caroline provided informal mentoring to survivors who contacted her. In 2004 Prof. Taylor’s dream was realised to found a Foundation that assists making the dreams of survivors a reality. A small number of dedicated members began to fundraise for the purpose of raising money to fund scholarships for survivors and in doing so create educational pathways. From the start Prof. Taylor knew what she would call the Foundation: Children of Phoenix. Prof. Taylor said the title “is in recognition of the magical and poignant legend of the phoenix which renewed and resurrected itself from its own ashes – that from the ashes of destruction, that same life rises to make life anew – the phoenix is a symbol that honours the triumph of the human spirit that epitomise survivors everywhere.”

And, in addition, the tears shed from the phoenix are able to heal the deepest of wounds – and for Caroline, survivors are themselves, wounded healers who, despite their suffering, undertake complex and courageous journeys to not simply heal themselves, but to give support and hope to enable the healing of others.

One of the most noble and healing contributions you can make to the life of a survivor is a future because they can be robbed of that...Children of Phoenix is not a charity – it is about change and that is why it is so empowering for survivors and for those who work with, and support the foundation. It represents a deep commitment and passion to providing resources that allow a person to achieve their own potential that is so often hidden or compromised as a consequence of abuse”

To date Children of Phoenix has assisted many survivors to rebuild assisting with all levels of education from primary school to University; formal and vocational training; or to just learn a new skill that realises a dream and gives confidence.”

For more information go to  
<http://www.childrenofphoenix.org/>

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