



*If I told you,  
What would you do?*

*Would you  
make me **feel**  
**safe?***

**I need** to be noticed. I may not tell you in words —  
I may tell you in my behaviour; I may cry, withdraw or retreat.

**I need** you to know I chose to tell you. I was probably either in desperate crisis,  
or I spent time considering who I could tell before I chose you.

**I need** a place to talk that feels safe.

**I need** your undivided attention.

**I need** your body language to communicate receptiveness, calm and patience.

**I need** time to find the words, and I need to be able to tell you in my own words.

**I need** to be listened to, not just heard, and I need this to be evident  
in your attentiveness and time with me.

**I need** to feel sure that my story is safe with you.

**I need** to sense your respect for me despite what I may feel about myself.

**I need** to be treated with and shown compassion.

**I need** to feel and be safe, emotionally, physically and spiritually.





*God is our refuge and strength—  
a **very present** help in trouble*

Psalm 46:1

## **Our churches should be a reflection of God, who is our refuge and strength.**

We may believe that our churches are safe spaces, but there is always more we can do to signal that people are safe to be themselves and tell their stories.

Just like God, we need to be ‘very present’ when people share their experiences. We need to be attentive to the whole person, and hear what is said and unsaid.

Being very present means taking the time to listen well and respond with compassion.

