

**POSITION:** Senior Practitioner DV Response Services  
Senior Practitioner Family Services

**REPORTING TO:** Team Leader DV Response Services  
Team Leader Family Services

**KEY RELATIONSHIPS:** Crisis Support Advocates, Executive Team members and CEO

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## 1. PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Within the parameters of our constitution, service philosophy and the policy framework established by the Board, and under the direction and supervision of the, the General Manager Operations and the Team Leader, and from time to time, Chief Executive Officer, the Senior Practitioner will:

- Carry a case-load of women and children who contact and/or are being accommodated by **safe steps** as directed by the Team Leader and ensure that all women and their children within the caseload receive a comprehensive risk and needs assessment
- Develop family case plans in consultation with women who are being accommodated by **safe steps** that promotes theirs and their children's safety and work with women and children to facilitate their ability to reach the goals identified in the family case plan
- Work with women and their children who contact and/or are being accommodated by **safe steps** to access appropriate support and referral pathways
- Advocate for women and their children who are accommodated by **safe steps** to access their full entitlements
- Provide family violence and healthy parenting education to women being accommodated by **safe steps**
- Ensure that clinical staff are well supported and receiving adequate supervision as directed by the General Manager Operations or a delegate
- Represent **safe steps** at key stakeholder networks as required and maintain relationships with key stakeholders that assist **safe steps** to provide support to women and their children
- Ensure that all administration and documentation requirements are initiated and completed in a professional and timely manner
- Be a positive and constructive team member of **safe steps** who demonstrates leadership and role models professional behavior at all times

## 2. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

**safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre (formally known as the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service) was set up in 1974 as the Women's Refuge Referral Service to provide a 24 hour 7 days a week telephone helpline for women experiencing domestic violence.

It is now a state-wide incorporated association funded primarily by the Department of Human Services to provide a range of services 24 hours 7 days a week for women and their children who experience family violence. **safe steps** is the primary contact and referral point for access to women's refuges in Victoria. It provides two complementary services:

- a crisis telephone information, support, advocacy and referral service and
- a high security supported safe house accommodation service

The organisation operates out of two separate work locations, one of which houses the 24/7 immediate response telephone service and administration, and the other, which provides accommodation.

**safe steps** is governed by a constitution and a Board of Governance with ten members. The Board elects its own chair and meets monthly to set the strategic direction and policy parameters for the organisation and its work. The organisation is managed by a Chief Executive Officer who operates with a high degree of autonomy, and at the same time working closely and effectively with the Board. She attends Board meetings and services the work of the Board.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring effective relationships with our funding body and with sector partners, and for developing protocols to ensure that the best possible services are provided to the women and children who need them. **safe steps** is a lead organisation in a wider network of domestic violence services in Victoria.

The organisation has an annual budget turnover of more than \$3 million; it employs more than 45 full-time staff, part-time staff, volunteers and students to support the work of the organisation.

The Senior Practitioner is based at the **safe steps** community offices or the accommodation service however will work across both sites when required.

The Senior Practitioner is expected to uphold organisation's policies and procedures as well as the Department of Human Services Standards, which include the following obligations:

- to respect client confidentiality;
- to obtain consent for the disclosure of information about a client; and,
- to inform any client who wishes to make a complaint about the organisation of their right to do so, and to assist them to initiate a complaint.

**Safe Step's** location/s and unlisted telephone numbers may not be disclosed to any other person except in accordance with Service procedures. The location/s and unlisted telephone numbers of any high security refuges may not be disclosed to any other person other than in accordance with the instructions of each such service.

### 3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

**(i) PROVIDE SUPPORT, INFORMATION, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN:**

- Maintaining a case-load of clients as directed by the Team Leader
- Ensuring that women and their children experience a strength-based service response that empowers them to be self-determining
- Ensuring that women and their children who contact and/or are being accommodated by **safe steps** receive a 'whole of family' needs and risk assessment
- Ensuring that women participate in the development of a family safety plan that outlines the family's service goals
- Ensuring that women and children being accommodated by *safe steps* receive appropriate and timely referrals to support agencies
- Advocating on behalf of women and their children with other agencies so that they may receive their full entitlements
- Completing client case notes and data collection for women and their children in a timely manner and to a high standard
- Undertaking a comprehensive face-to-face and/or telephone risk assessment and providing appropriate and relevant support options to women and their children experiencing family violence
- Liaising with, advocating for, and referring women to other agencies including refuges and other accommodation sources to secure access for clients to the services and service pathways they require
- Deliver services that are accessible to, and respond to, women from CALD or Indigenous/Torres Strait Islander backgrounds in a culturally appropriate manner to optimise their service experience and safety
- Deliver services that are accessible to, and respond appropriately to, the most vulnerable clients including those with a disability, mental health, drug & alcohol and high and complex needs
- Travelling to sites where women are being accommodated to assist families to meet their needs as required
- Facilitating a 'warm referral' process to connect clients to a range of family services
- Support and link women to safe and appropriate housing
- Provide court and other legal support remotely
- Provide 'on-call' after hours service back-up across all services as required for a minimum of 7 consecutive days each six week period
- Act up, across and down as may be required including working across sites and direct service programs

**(ii) SERVICE DEVELOPMENT: To contribute to the development of the safe steps and to the opposition and prevention of domestic violence by:**

- Participating in service improvement strategies as required
- Participating in training and induction of staff as required
- Provide supervision and mentoring to staff as required
- Attending and constructively participating in training, supervision, staff meetings and the induction of other staff members as required
- Attending community meetings as a representative of *safe steps* as required

- Providing support and debriefing to colleagues, and contribute to a positive team dynamic and work environment
- Maintaining clearly defined and appropriate personal and professional boundaries with colleagues, clients and stakeholders
- Reporting patterns of difficulty in applying existing procedures or in liaising and advocating with other agencies

**(iii) ADMINISTRATION: Through the use of organisational procedures ensure that all administration and documentation requirements are initiated and completed in a professional and timely manner.**

- Recording of accurate, timely and detailed concise case notes
- Maintaining the integrity of client files
- Contributing to internal communication systems processes
- Collating and preparing reports and other written documents as required
- Assisting with the upkeep of resource files and databases
- Working within the delegations of authority documents and ensuring financial accountability requirements are adhered to and met.
- Ensuring that accountability reports, including National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) and SHIP data returns and the Internal Data Collection are produced and collated as necessary
- Participating in the Centre and staff well-being evaluations as required
- Adhering to Occupational Health and Safety Standards and assuming responsibility for the proper use of all equipment and the monitoring of the environment to ensure safe practice.

**(iv) OTHER TASKS**

- Maintain positive relationships with a broad range of stakeholders
- Maintain an orderly and clean work site and vehicle to ensure that all families receive a positive 'first impression' experience
- Applying a 'can do' and flexible approach to the work so that all aspects of the service are covered in an appropriate and timely manner as required
- Constructively participate in the *safe steps* Leadership Team and other internal groups as may be required
- Participate in organisational change processes in a positive and constructive manner
- Carrying out other duties as requested by a Team Leader, Manager, CEO or a delegate

**4. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Essential**

- Tertiary qualifications in a community/social service profession and/or 3 years' experience in the field of mental health, alcohol and other drug or family violence including leading a team in a social services setting
- Significant experience in the provision of family violence or other support services to women and children; experience leading a team in a social services setting.
- Demonstrated understanding of feminist practice, demonstrated experience in applying this as a framework to understand and respond to the gendered nature of violence against women and children
- Demonstrated experience working with cultural and language barriers, disability and other factors that may further marginalize women and children in crisis
- Demonstrated experience undertaking comprehensive risk and needs assessments; demonstrated experience leading risk and needs assessment practice within a team.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the effects of family violence on children and the ability to apply child centered practice including the ability to conduct a comprehensive family risk assessment that gives priority to the safety of children
- Demonstrated experience in providing clinical supervision to a team of clinical staff
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and negotiation skills
- Demonstrated capacity to work independently as well as part of a team
- Ability to deal appropriately with stress, maintain composure and apply effective engagement strategies with clients in crisis
- Capacity for self motivation, ability to cope with changing work functions, workloads and tasks
- Experience or demonstrated commitment to 24 hour service delivery and the ability to provide an on call after-hours response on a roster basis
- Competent computer skills
- Willingness to commit to the living expression of **safe steps** values; non-violent, empowering, feminist, ethical and respectful, collaborative, authoritative and evidence-based
- Current Victorian Drivers Licence
- A current Working With Children Check
- Willingness to undergo a National Police Check

#### **Desired**

- Competence in using a range of information technology applications including SHIP and Shoretel
- Proven experience providing face to face crisis-intervention and safety planning in a residential setting

#### **5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EXEMPTION**

**safe steps** is exempt from the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 which would otherwise require the appointment to this position to be a on non-gender specific basis. Applications for this position will be considered from women only (Exemption A366/2011).

#### **6. IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- All offers of employment are subject to satisfactory background checks including a National Police Check (including an international police check if resided continuously in an overseas country for 12 months or more in the last ten years), Working with Children Check, disclosure of previous or current disciplinary action, referee checks, proof of eligibility to work in Australia and qualification checks.
- Where background checks are not to the satisfaction of **safe steps** in its absolute discretion, the offer of employment may be retracted or terminated.
- If you are offered employment with **safe steps** and are not currently an existing employee you will be required to disclose full details of any pre-existing injuries or illness that may be affected by the work and/or undergo a health assessment. The disclosure/health assessment is conducted to ensure you have the health and mental capacity to meet the requirements of the position and to identify any adjustments that may need to be made in the workplace. Failing to notify or hiding a pre-existing injury or illness which might be affected by the nature of the proposed employment, could result in that injury or illness being ineligible for future compensation claims.

## 7. STAFF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have received, reviewed and fully understand the position description.

Employee Name	
Employee Signature	
Date	