

POSITION:	Senior Practitioner – Specialist Trauma Counselling Team
REPORTING TO:	Manager Client Services
KEY RELATIONSHIPS:	Program Leader, Senior Practitioner, CEO, General Manager Operations and Executive Team members, 1800 Respect Counselling service providers
POSITION STATUS:	Fixed Term ending 31 December 2019

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 Manager Client Services, the Senior Practitioner – Telephone and Online Counselling Service will support, and serve as a contact point for a national telephone counselling service for those whose lives have been impacted by domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault. The Senior Practitioner – Telephone and Online Counselling Service will support Specialist Trauma Counsellors by way of assisting with escalations, providing debriefing and professional supervision, and managing a small case load.

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 Health and 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 a range of complementary family violence services from prevention, early intervention, response and recovery including:

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

The organisation operates out of two separate work locations, one of which houses the 24/7 immediate response telephone service, strategy and development programs and administration, and the other, which provides safe 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. As the only specialist family violence state wide service in Victoria **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 \$10 million; it employs more than 65 full-time staff, part-time staff, volunteers and students to support the work of the organisation.

The Senior Practitioner – Telephone and Online Counselling Service is based at the **safe steps** community offices. The position reports to Manager Client Services

The Senior Practitioner – Telephone and Online Counselling Service is expected to uphold organisation's policies and procedures as well as the Department of Health and Human Services Standards (DHHS), which include the following obligations:

- to respect client confidentiality
- to obtain consent for the disclosure of information about a client
- 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 locations and unlisted telephone numbers may not be disclosed to any other person except in accordance with service procedures. The locations 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 SPECIALIST TRAUMA COUNSELLORS

- Guide and provide supervision of counsellors in the provision of telephone counselling services
- Support and collaborate with the Program Leader in the development and delivery of coaching and feedback sessions to staff, and as required.
- Provide feedback into policies, protocols and effective communication channels.
- Maintain a caseload of clients
- Use your specialist knowledge to provide clinical advice and respond effectively to vicarious trauma experienced by frontline staff
- Oversee the implementation of clients' therapeutic plans and make operational decisions regarding mandatory reporting requirements.

- Ensure equitable distribution of workload between specialist trauma counsellors, including planning for backfilling and scheduling of work shifts as directed Manager Client Services or her delegate.
- Provide and maintain capacity to provide on-call support or a recall capacity as required
- Completing client case notes and data collection in a timely manner and to a high standard
- 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
- Act up, across and down as may be required including working across sites and direct service programs
- Ensure that all administration and documentation requirements are initiated and completed in a professional and timely manner
- Be a positive and constructive team member who demonstrates leadership and role models professional behavior at all times

(ii) SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

- 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
- Providing supervision 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 required procedures

(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 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
- 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
- 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 Manager Client Services

4. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- Minimum three year tertiary qualification in counselling, psychology, social work, behavioural services or a related field is essential
- Demonstrated experience leading and supporting a team in a social services setting
- Eligible for full membership with a governing body of profession with either Australian Association of Social Workers, the Australian Psychological Society or Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia
- Minimum three years trauma specialist counselling experience (preferably telephone counselling) or full time equivalent experience in specialised sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling
- Experience and understanding of issues relating to service delivery with an agency that is committed to socially and culturally inclusive practices
- An understanding of federal and state based child protection legislation relevant to service delivery
- 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 those 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 providing administrative and clinical supervision to a team of community-based service workers
- 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

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 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	