

POSITION:	Crisis Support Advocate
REPORTING TO:	Direct Services Manager
KEY RELATIONSHIPS:	General Manager Operations, Program Leader – Residential Services, Executive Team members, CEO, Crisis Support Advocates, Family Services Team

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 Chief Executive Officer and the General Manager Operations the Crisis Support Advocate will:

- Provide a telephone crisis response and support service to women and children who have experienced domestic or family violence
- Assist women to determine their options, identify relevant service pathways and advocate for required support
- Respond to domestic/family violence as criminal acts against women and children
- Complete required data capture and case notes
- Contribute ideas and feedback in the ongoing quality improvement process at **safe steps**.

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 \$5.5 million; it employs 35 full-time or part-time staff, and has a pool of volunteers and students to support the work of the organisation.

The Crisis Support Advocate is based at the **safe steps** community offices however will work across both sites when required.

The Crisis Support Advocate 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
- 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) CRISIS RESPONSE DIRECT SERVICE: provide a crisis response and support service to women and children experiencing domestic violence, advocating and responding to domestic violence as criminal acts against women and children by:

- Supporting women experiencing family violence to determine their own needs and priorities
- Assisting women to access and advocate to Victoria Police to have violent relatives, usually male partners, removed from the home
- Liaising and advocating with other agencies including the police, refuges and other accommodation sources to secure access for clients to the services and service pathways they require
- Accurately recording the service/s provided and outcomes for each woman and her children, and other data collection required by the service
- Making effective use of the handover period at the beginning and end of shifts for the exchange of information concerning referrals for women and children in progress and for peer support

- Employing effective time management and communication techniques to optimise crisis line access
- Seeking direction and consultation from the Direct Services Manager and/or GMO where a need to depart from Service procedure is assessed

(ii) FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECT SERVICE: To support and provide a safe environment for women and children escaping domestic or family violence by:

- Providing a crisis and support telephone service to women and their children affected by family violence
- Providing face to face support and advocacy for women and their children accommodated by safe steps including women accommodated in motels and at a safe house
- Maintaining a safe, comfortable and secure environment for women and their children
- Liaising with other agencies to obtain access for women and their children to the services they need on an immediate basis
- Accurately recording the service/s provided and outcomes for each woman and her children, and other data collection required by **safe steps**
- Liaising effectively with other services such as refuges involved in the provision of longer stay accommodation or support, in a manner which optimises access to all women and children requiring service support
- Making effective use of the handover period at the beginning and end of shifts for the exchange of information concerning resident women and children and for peer support and debriefing;
- Seeking direction from the Direct Service Manager, Program Leader – Residential Services, On-call worker or GMO where a need to depart from service procedures is assessed

(iii) ASSESSMENT: To assist women in assessing their priorities and appropriate service pathways, in the context of each woman's/family's range of immediate and medium term safety and support needs.

- Undertaking a comprehensive assessment to determine with each woman her immediate needs
- Providing women with information about available services and options to assist them in exercising choice on an informed basis
- Supporting and advocating for women's decisions

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

- Reporting patterns of difficulty in applying existing procedures or in liaising and advocating with other agencies
- Participating in ongoing internal evaluations of **safe steps** performance and the development of procedures to improve the quality of service to women and their families
- Providing support, resourcing and debriefing to colleagues, and to contribute to a positive team dynamic and work environment

- Participating in training, support and resourcing, supervision and staff development activities as required by **safe steps**
- Attend meetings, supervision, training and other organisational activities as required
- To carry out other duties as requested by the CEO, Direct Services Manager or GMO

(v) 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 and detailed case notes
- Contribute to the internal communication systems
- Respond to requests for reports and other written documents
- Assist in the upkeep of resource files and databases
- Ensure financial accountability requirements are adhered to and met
- Ensure that accountability reports, including National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) and SHIP data returns and the Internal Data Collection are produced and collated as necessary
- Participate in evaluations as required
- Adhere to Occupational Health and Safety Standards and assume a responsibility for the proper use of all equipment and the monitoring of the environment to ensure safe practice

4. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- Tertiary qualifications in a community/social service profession and/or experience in the field of violence against women, human rights, social justice, law reform or general advocacy
- Demonstrated understanding of feminist practice and how this is used as a framework to understand and respond to the gendered nature of violence against women and children.
- Understanding of cultural and language barriers, disability and other factors that may further marginalise women and children in crisis
- Demonstrated ability to undertake comprehensive assessments and facilitate clients to make decisions on an informed basis
- 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 effective engagement with clients in crisis
- Experience or demonstrated commitment to 24 hour service delivery and the ability to work rostered business hours and after hours shifts
- Capacity for self motivation, ability to cope with changing work functions, workloads and tasks
- Willingness to commit to the living expression of **safe steps** values; non-violent, empowering, feminist, ethical and respectful, collaborative, authoritative and evidence-based.
- A current Victorian Drivers Licence
- A current Working With Children Check
- Willingness to undergo a National Police Check

Desired

- Familiarization of a range of information technology applications including SHIP and Shoretel
- Proven experience providing 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	

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