

Position Description

Position title:	Counsellor Advocate
Department:	Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House), Social Model of Health
Classification:	Qualified Social Worker Grade 2 (SC21 – SC24)
Agreement:	Allied Health Professionals (Victorian Public Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026
Reporting to:	CASA House Manager

About us

Located in Melbourne on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the Royal Women's Hospital is Australia's first and leading specialist hospital for women and newborns. We offer expertise in maternity services, neonatal care, gynaecology, assisted reproduction, women's health and cancer services. We advocate for women's health in areas that have long been overlooked or stigmatised, including abortion, endometriosis, family violence, female genital mutilation, menopause, women's mental health, sexual assault and substance use in pregnancy.

Our vision, values and declaration

The Women's vision, values and declaration reflect our promise to our patients and consumers, and articulate our culture and commitment to our community and each other.

Our vision is '**Creating healthier futures for women and babies**'. Our values are:



Courage



Passion



Discovery



Respect

The Women's declaration reflects the principles and philosophies fundamental to our hospital, our people and our culture.

- **We are committed to the social model of health**
- **We care for women from all walks of life**
- **We recognise that sex and gender affect health and healthcare**
- **We are a voice for women's health**
- **We seek to achieve health equity**

Our commitment to inclusion

The Women's is committed to creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive environment which enhances staff and consumer wellbeing, and nurtures a sense of belonging. We strongly encourage anyone identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to join us. We offer a range of programs and services to support First Nations employees. We invite people with disability to work with us, and we welcome anyone who identifies as linguistically, culturally and/or gender diverse, people from the LGBTQIA+ community and people of any age.

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About Social Model of Health

The Women's Social Model of Health Division is a newly formed function that reinforces our commitment to the social determinants of health. Whilst all services at the Women's ensure health equity for all women, the Social Model of Health Division brings together our services and programs that specialise in providing care to women facing challenges that may adversely affect their health. The Social Model of Health Division at the Women's has responsibility for ensuring the hospital's clinical and social support services are coordinated, aligned and leveraged to provide wrap around care for the women who need it most. In particular, the division has a focus on ensuring a woman's social, economic, cultural, environmental, geographic, and other factors are taken into account in her care plan with the overall aim of reducing health inequalities and addressing systemic inadequacies that affect health access and outcomes.

About CASA House

Located in the heart of Melbourne, the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House) is a department of the Royal Women's Hospital. CASA House works with people of all genders (including providing support to trans and gender diverse people and non-binary people and communities) and provides 24-hour services to victim survivors of sexual assault, including immediate crisis care, counselling, support and advocacy, after hours crisis response, support groups, and support for non-offending family members and friends. CASA House also provides secondary consultation, education and training as well as research and advocacy into public policy.

At CASA House you will be joining a team which values inclusivity, diversity and intersectionality, a team that is passionate about ensuring victim survivors are provided with timely support and that the silence which surrounds sexual assault continues to be broken. You will find a workplace that is collaborative, progressive and passionate about learning and working together to ensure you find the exceptional in your everyday.

Position purpose

The Counsellor Advocate role is primarily responsible for the provision of counselling and advocacy services to victim survivors of sexual assault, their non-offending family members and significant others. The Counsellor Advocate also has a role in the provision of consultation and training to other professionals, including delivery of community education. All services are delivered within a clearly articulated intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework.

Key responsibilities

Clinical practice

- Possess high level theoretical understanding and an intersectional approach to your clinical practice in relation to working with victim survivors of sexual assault including knowledge of complex trauma
- Support adults who have experienced a recent sexual assault
- Participate in the duty and intake service assessing and enabling eligible people to access our service with ease
- Provide telephone and face to face support, counselling and advocacy and group work to victim survivors of both recent and past sexual assault

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- Coordinate the provision of follow up medical support, and advocate on behalf of victim survivors with other systems including health, police and broader judicial systems
- Participate in the after-hours on call roster for responding to victim survivors of recent sexual assault
- Participate and collaborate in the development and delivery of group work programs
- Provide information to victim survivors regarding services, supports, options and waiting lists
- Provide secondary consultation to health and other professional practitioners and assist them in making informed referrals and developing plans to respond to victim survivors presenting with multiple needs and complex issues
- Using an intersectional approach, demonstrate an understanding of cultural issues with a view to provision of culturally safe and responsive practice
- Develop and maintain community links with relevant organisations
- Use the Women's electronic medical record (EMR) where required and ensure that accurate information and records are maintained in line with relevant hospital policies and guidelines
- Ensure all documentation and data meets the requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services, including all statutory requirements and relevant hospital policies and guidelines
- Establish an action plan for yourself to complete work efficiently and on time by setting priorities, establishing timelines
- Write reports for and represent CASA House at Courts and Tribunals as required

Communication and teamwork

- Attend all meetings relevant to the position
- Demonstrate professional communication (verbal and written) including through the use of interpreters, ability to negotiate, apply conflict resolution and advocacy skills and escalate service user complaints appropriately
- Work effectively with a diverse range of people, acknowledging individual differences
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Represent CASA House at any external meetings as requested by the CASA Manager and actively promote and represent CASA House
- Participate in the on-call roster

Quality, safety and improvement

- Develop and maintain an understanding of individual and team responsibility for service user safety, quality & risk and contribute to organisational quality and safety initiatives
- Participate in the development of policies and guidelines
- Contribute to social and legal policy responses which work towards the elimination of sexual violence.
- Assist in the implementation of mechanisms to ensure that service users are provided with opportunities to have input into and feedback on the services they receive
- Participate in modification of service delivery practices in line with current evidence-based practice
- Escalate incidents, risks, issues, conflicts, or concerns in a timely way to the Team Leader and participate in problem-solving and mitigating risks or issues
- Learn and maintain a full working knowledge of emergency procedures
- Participate in clinical audits and other relevant quality activities

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Learning and development

- Identify and participate in research opportunities arising from direct practice and attend seminars and conferences relevant to working with victim survivors of sexual assault.
- Critically review and keep up to date with professional literature relevant to sexual assault
- Actively participate in credentialing and scope of practice processes
- Complete all mandatory training and participate in an annual performance development review

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

KPI's are how you will be measured as meeting the responsibilities of the position. These will be set with you as part of your Performance Development Plan within the first six months of your appointment to the position.

- Provision of a service based on an intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework
- Provision of high-quality crisis care and follow up services for victim survivors of sexual assault
- Participation in the after-hours roster to provide 24 hour immediate response to victim survivors of recent sexual assault
- Participate in the duty and intake service assessing and enabling eligible people to access our service with ease
- Provide telephone and face to face support, counselling and advocacy and group work to victim survivors of both recent and past sexual assault
- Participation in regular professional development, supervision, debriefing and consultation when appropriate
- Participation in Annual Performance Review process and ensure all mandatory competencies are completed

Key selection criteria

Experience/qualifications/attributes

- The minimum qualification required for the Counsellor Advocate role is a university obtained Bachelor degree, ideally in Social Work or a health profession relevant to the provision of counselling and support

Essential:

- Eligibility for membership with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) or other Professional Body as relevant to the qualification held
- Demonstrated crisis counselling experience and specialist knowledge and skills in supporting survivors of sexual assault and violence
- Knowledge of contemporary issues in regard to violence against women in policy and practice
- Provision of a service based on an intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework
- Well-developed interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a crisis orientated service
- Excellent communication (verbal and written), negotiation and advocacy skills

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- Demonstrated ability to work as a member of a team and ability to establish and maintain functional networks with a wide variety of health personnel and with other service providers
- Experience and understanding of working with interpreters
- Competent computer literacy including use of a PC, mouse, keyboard, standard Microsoft office software
- Demonstrated knowledge in psychosocial assessment, crisis intervention, short-medium term counselling, advocacy and community liaison and referral
- Possess an understanding of relevant legislation and practice frameworks relating to family violence practice, including but not limited to the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)
- Well-developed interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a crisis orientated service
- Resilience in balancing sometimes competing and conflicting priorities
- The ability to work independently and as a solo worker on shift but seek consultation where necessary
- Competent computer literacy including use of a PC, mouse, keyboard, standard Microsoft office software
- Embodiment of the Women's values

Desirable:

- Postgraduate qualifications or working towards postgraduate qualifications in Social Work, Health or a related area
- Experience in provision of clinical supervision to student social workers
- Experience in training delivery and community education
- Experience in group work facilitation
- Capacity to work effectively in a changing organisational environment

Organisational relationships

Internal relationships

- CASA House staff
- Allied health staff
- Nursing, midwifery and medical staff
- All Royal Women's Hospital departments and clinics and staff in particular the Women's Emergency Centre, the After-hours Manager, Centre for Women's Mental Health and General Counsel

External relationships

- Other Victorian CASAs, the CASA Forum and health organisations
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal
- Other hospitals and health providers
- Community service organisations (eg. Safe Steps)
- Government departments including Department of Health and Human Services

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- Family Safety Victoria
- Victoria Police, particularly the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT)
- Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine
- Other Hospitals and Health providers

Direct reports: 0
Indirect reports: Social work students where relevant
Budget responsibility: N/A

Inherent requirements

Inherent requirements are the essential tasks and activities that must be carried out in order to perform this role, including with adjustments. The Women's is committed to providing workplace adjustments that support all people to work with us. We welcome you to discuss any adjustments with the manager of this role during the recruitment process or at any time during your employment, as we acknowledge and understand circumstances can change. You can also request a copy of our workplace adjustments procedure for more information.

Physical Demands	Frequency
Shift work – rotation of shifts – day, afternoon and night	Occasional
Sitting – remaining in a seated position to complete tasks	Frequent
Standing – remaining standing without moving about to perform tasks	Occasional
Walking – floor type even, vinyl, carpet,	Frequent
Lean forward / forward flexion from waist to complete tasks	Rare
Trunk twisting – turning from the waist to complete tasks	Not applicable
Kneeling – remaining in a kneeling position to complete tasks	Not applicable
Squatting / crouching – adopting these postures to complete tasks	Not applicable
Leg / foot movement to operate equipment	Not applicable
Climbing stairs / ladders – ascending and descending stairs, ladders, steps	Rare
Lifting / carrying – light lifting and carrying less than 5 kilos	Rare
– Moderate lifting and carrying 5–10 kilos	Not applicable
– Heavy lifting and carrying – 10–20 kilos.	Not applicable
Push/Pull of equipment/furniture – light push/pull forces less than 10 kg	Rare
– moderate push / pull forces 10–20 kg	Not applicable
– heavy push / pull forces over 20 kg	Not applicable
Reaching – arm fully extended forward or raised above shoulder	Rare
Head / Neck Postures – holding head in a position other than neutral (facing forward)	Rare
Sequential repetitive actions in short period of time	
– Repetitive flexion and extension of hands wrists and arms	Occasional
– Gripping, holding, twisting, clasping with fingers / hands	Occasional
Driving – operating any motor-powered vehicle with a valid Victorian driver's license.	Not applicable
Sensory demands	Frequency
Sight – use of sight is integral to most tasks completed each shift	Prolonged/Constant
Hearing – use of hearing is an integral part of work performance	Prolonged/Constant
Touch – use of touch is integral to most tasks completed each shift.	Prolonged/Constant
Psychosocial demands	Frequency
Observation skills – assessing / reviewing patients in /outpatients	Frequent
Problem Solving issues associated with clinical and non-clinical care	Prolonged/Constant
Attention to Detail	Prolonged/Constant
Working with distressed people and families	Frequent
Dealing with aggressive and uncooperative people	Occasional

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Dealing with unpredictable behaviour	Occasional
Exposure to distressing situations	Frequent

Definitions used to quantify frequency of tasks/demands as above

Prolonged/constant	70 – 100 % of time in the position
Frequent	31 – 69 % of time in the position
Occasional	16 – 30% of time in the position
Rare	1 – 15% of time in the position
Not applicable	0% of time in the position

Employee awareness and responsibilities

- Employees are required to be aware of, and work in accordance with, hospital policies and procedures.
- Employees are required to identify and report incidents, potential for error and near misses, to improve knowledge systems and processes and create a safe environment for staff and patients.
- Employees agree to provide evidence of a valid employment Working with Children Check and provide complete details for the Women's to undertake a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC).
- Our vision is a future free from violence and discrimination in which healthy, respectful relationships are the norm. The Women's expects all staff to contribute to a culture that promotes and supports diversity, equity, respect and inclusion.
- The Women's provides pregnancy termination services as part of its public health responsibility to provide safe health care to women.

Vaccination requirements

As this role has direct physical contact with patients and clinical environments, employees are required to be vaccinated against or demonstrate immunity to influenza, COVID-19, whooping cough (pertussis), hepatitis B, chicken pox, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and may include hepatitis A, and complete screening for tuberculosis.

Employment with the Women's is conditional upon the provision of satisfactory evidence of vaccination and/or screening, and we may withdraw an offer of employment if the required evidence is not provided at least five business days prior to the intended start date.

Declaration

By accepting this position description electronically I confirm I have read, understood and agreed to abide by the responsibilities and accountabilities outlined.

Developed date: 4 Sep 2025

Developed by: Bernadette Glennon

Date of next review: 4 Sep 2026

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