

Position Description

Position title:	Senior Counsellor Advocate
Department:	Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House), Social Model of Health
Classification:	Qualified Social Worker Grade 3 (SC31 – SC34)
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. Under the leadership of the CASA House Manager and with the support of a fellow Senior Counsellor Advocate, you will be providing supervision and support to a team of passionate Counsellor Advocates [CA]. 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 Senior Counsellor Advocate is responsible for providing supervision, secondary consultation and support to Counsellor Advocates, ensuring that Counsellor Advocates work within the articulated model, policies and philosophy of the Women's and CASA House. A key part of the role is supervising and supporting the day to day operations of the intake team. There are four Senior Counsellor Advocates who will support the Manager of CASA House, to ensure maintenance of high-quality direct service work which is delivered within a clearly articulated intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework.

The incumbent will be required to provide counselling and advocacy services to victim survivors of sexual assault, their non-offending family members and significant others. The Senior Counsellor Advocate will also provide service coordination activities and deliver community education and training to external professionals and community members.

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Key responsibilities

Leadership

- In conjunction with the CASA House Manager and Senior Counsellor Advocates, provide leadership to your team of Counsellor Advocates in relation to knowledge of current research and best practice in the area of counselling and advocacy for victim survivors of sexual assault
- Supporting the day to day operations of the intake team and facilitating intake meetings
- Coordinate a 24 hour roster of staff for intake and on call crisis response in collaboration with the other Senior Counsellor Advocate
- Ensure prompt assessment of new referrals as well as allocation and prioritisation of caseloads
- Demonstrate the ability to assume extra responsibilities as requested by CASA House Manager or Senior Sexual Assault Services Manager
- Motivate and help your team members set performance goals, and then track results and evaluate performance effectiveness
- Provide coaching – engage with staff in developing and committing to their plan that targets specific behaviours, skills or knowledge needed to ensure performance improvement
- Work with your team to assume joint responsibility for monitoring and evaluating activity and develop strategies to improve team outcomes. Inspire others by motivating them towards higher levels of performance that are aligned with The Women's vision and values
- Demonstrate emotional awareness by establishing and sustaining trusting relationships in a complex hospital environment. Aim to accurately perceive and interpret your own and your staff's emotions and behaviour; exercise self-insight to effectively regulate your own responses
- Provide a visible leadership presence in your clinical area and promote multidisciplinary teamwork by assigning tasks and decision-making responsibilities to individuals or teams. Provide staff with clear boundaries, expectations, support and follow-up
- Monitor the performance of assigned Counsellor Advocates and ensure that timely support and debriefing is available following critical incidents
- Participate in the coordination of the CASA House student program and teaching, liaising with other RWH Social Work Student Program coordinators
- Assist the CASA House Manager & the Quality Improvement Program Leader in quality improvement activities
- Ensure performance meets the Women's policies, procedures, accreditation and statutory requirements
- Act as a clinical resource to healthcare professionals within and outside The Women's.

Clinical Expertise/Skills

- Support adults who have experienced a recent sexual assault at the Crisis Care Unit located at Women's Emergency Care at the Women's hospital
- Participate in the intake service assessing and enabling eligible people to access our service with ease
- Provide Counsellor Advocates including the After Hours Crisis Care team with regular supervision in accordance with AASW practice standards or relevant professional body to assist them in the provision of crisis care, counselling and advocacy

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- Provide Counsellor Advocates with informed secondary consultations and assist in making informed referrals and developing plans to respond to victim survivors presenting with multiple needs and complex issues
- Provide Counsellor Advocates with the opportunity to debrief after complex or distressing intakes and interventions including counselling sessions
- 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
- Participate and collaborate in the development and delivery of group work programs
- Provide information regarding services, supports, options and waiting lists
- Using an intersectional approach, demonstrate an understanding of cultural issues with a view to provision of culturally safe and responsive practice
- Participate in the CASA House on-call roster
- Represent CASA House at Courts and tribunals when required
- Senior counsellor advocates may hold a small caseload

Communication and teamwork

- Facilitation of internal and external meetings as required
- 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 client complaints appropriately
- Work effectively with a diverse range of people, acknowledging individual differences
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Participate in the weekend/public holiday on-call roster

Quality, safety and improvement

- Lead quality improvement activities with involvement of the RWH Quality and Safety team as necessary
- Address the concerns and complaints of service users, their families, team members and other hospital departments to ensure that the quality of the service improves; hold yourself and others accountable for providing a positive service user experience; use appropriate techniques to resolve difficult situations and regain service user confidence. Escalate concerns and complaints appropriately
- Contribute and commit to a culture that promotes gender equity, respect and a safe working environment
- Learn and maintain a full working knowledge of emergency procedures
- Participate in clinical audits and other relevant quality activities

Research and training

- Foster and encourage a research based culture and promote participation in clinical evaluation activities
- Identify and lead research opportunities arising from direct practice
- Critically review and keep up to date with professional literature relevant to sexual assault
- Participate in the development and delivery of community education and training

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- Use available data to develop research questions focused upon quality review and improvement of CASA House service provision
- In collaboration with the University sector, support the provision of high quality clinical education to undergraduate and post graduate allied health students
- Identify opportunities and support collaboration between CASA House, SACL, other Women's departments/services and University researchers in relation to sexual assault and violence against women
- Actively participate in credentialing and scope of practice processes
- Complete all mandatory training and participate in an annual performance development review

Practice improvement and Service development

- 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
- Ensure services are delivered in accordance with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) and the Department of Health and Human Service Standards

Information and data management

- Using the relevant databases, maintain timely and accurate statistical data of all work
- Ensure documentation and data meets the requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services, including all statutory requirements and relevant hospital policies and guidelines
- Undertake documentation audits of direct reports on an annual basis
- Ensure collation, entry and analysis of statistics in a timely manner as requested by the Senior Sexual Assault Services Manager and/ or CASA House Manager

Professional responsibilities

- Participate in team meetings, supervision, peer resourcing and service planning forums
- Participate in and provide to your staff an annual performance development review and ensure all mandatory competencies are completed
- Represent CASA House at any external meetings as requested by the CASA House Manager and actively promote and represent CASA House
- Participate in portfolio work or any other project work as required
- Apply conflict resolution skills when dealing with problems
- Attend professional development and training opportunities as required to support you in your role as well as ensure you meet eligibility requirements for membership with the relevant professional body
- Use of the Women's electronic medical record (EMR) where required to fulfil the duties of this position
- Development and maintenance of effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders

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.

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Key selection criteria

Experience/qualifications/attributes

Essential:

- Tertiary qualifications in Social Work or other relevant health profession
- Eligibility for membership with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) or other relevant professional body
- A minimum of 7 years' post-graduate experience in Social Work, or a relevant discipline
- Experience in provision of clinical supervision
- Demonstrated crisis intervention and short - medium term counselling experience and extensive 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
- Demonstrated understanding of a service based on an intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework and experience in applying this approach to your clinical practice in relation to working with victim/survivors of family violence and sexual assault
- Knowledge of working with complex trauma
- Demonstrated excellent level communication (verbal and written), negotiation and advocacy skills
- 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
- 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)
- Competent computer literacy including use of a PC, mouse, keyboard, standard Microsoft office software
- 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 of courage, passion, discovery and respect
- "Can do" and flexible approach
- Well developed interpersonal skills
- Time management and prioritising
- Ability to work in a crisis orientated service

Desirable:

- Experience working within a public hospital setting
- Postgraduate qualifications or working towards postgraduate qualifications in Social Work, Health or a related area
- Experience in group work facilitation

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Organisational relationships

Internal relationships

- CASA House staff
- SACL (sexual assault crisis line)
- All Royal Women's Hospital departments and clinics and staff in particular the Women's Emergency Care, the After-Hours Manager, Centre for Women's Mental Health and General Counsel
- 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 CASA's
- SASVic (sexual assault services peak body Vic)
- Government departments including Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Family Safety Victoria
- Victoria Police, particularly the Sexual Offices and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT)
- Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM)
- Other Hospitals, particularly Royal Melbourne Hospital and St Vincents
- Health providers
- Community service organisations (eg. Safe Steps)
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal
- Other hospitals and health providers

Direct reports: 4-5
Indirect reports: N/A
Budget responsibility: N/A

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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	Prolonged/ Constant
Standing – remaining standing without moving about to perform tasks	Occasional
Walking – floor type even, vinyl, carpet,	Occasional
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.	Rare
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	Prolonged/ Constant
Dealing with aggressive and uncooperative people	Occasional
Dealing with unpredictable behaviour	Occasional
Exposure to distressing situations	Prolonged/ Constant
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	0–15% of time in the position
Not Applicable	

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Employee awareness and responsibilities

- Employees are required to be aware of, and work in accordance with, hospital policies and procedures.
- Be respectful of the needs of patients, visitors and other staff and maintain a professional approach in all interactions, creating exceptional experiences
- Undertake other duties as directed that meet relevant standards and recognised practice
- 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.
- Contributes to a positive and supportive learning culture and environment for health professional students and learners at all levels
- Data integrity is an essential element of clinical and corporate governance and a key performance indicator for the Women's. The management of data influences and directly affects patient care, patient decisions, and ultimately the quality and reputation of our service delivery. Therefore, all staff are responsible and accountable to ensure that (within their area of work):
 - Data recording and reporting, (including RWH external reporting) is timely, accurate (ie error free) and fit for purpose
 - Data management system policies and control processes are complied with on all occasions
 - Where data issues and/or problems become apparent these matters are immediately referred and reported to supervisors/managers

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.

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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: 7/10/25

Developed by: Bernadette Glennon

Date of next review: October 2026

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