

Position Description

Position title:	Counsellor Advocate
Department:	Sexual Assault Crisis Line, 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:	Coordinator, Sexual Assault Crisis Line

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 considered in her care plan with the overall aim of reducing health inequalities and addressing systemic inadequacies that affect health access and outcomes.

About Sexual Assault Crisis Line

The Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) provides a state-wide **after-hours** telephone crisis service to people of all genders and sexualities impacted by sexual assault (including providing support to trans and gender diverse people and non-binary people and communities).

SACL provides immediate crisis care coordination to victims/survivors of recent sexual assault, telephone crisis counselling support and advocacy, information and referral to victim/survivors of recent and past sexual assault. SACL also provides support and information for non-offending family and friends, and professional consultation and debriefing to on call Counsellor/Advocates from Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA's) Counsellor/Advocates and other professionals across Victoria.

Position purpose

The SACL Counsellor/Advocate role is responsible for the provision of telephone crisis counselling support, information, referral and advocacy services to survivors of childhood and adult sexual assault, their non-offending families or friends, professionals and other community members. The SACL Counsellor/Advocate is responsible for coordinating an immediate crisis care response with CASA services throughout the state, to survivors of recent sexual assault.

Key responsibilities

Clinical practice

- Provide telephone crisis response support to survivors of past and recent sexual assault based on a clearly articulated intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework
- Co-ordinate the personnel involved in the provision of immediate crisis care responses to survivors of recent sexual assault (including CASAs, emergency/medical and police/legal systems)
- Participate in an after-hours roster covering evenings, overnights and weekend shifts
- Participate in a roster that provides back-up on-call to the service as required
- Provide consultation and debriefing to CASA counsellor/advocates delivering crisis care responses across the state after hours
- Provide secondary consultation to health and other professional practitioners

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- An understanding of relevant legislation and practice frameworks relating to family violence practice, including but not limited to the Family Violence Information and Child Information Sharing Schemes and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework

Communication and teamwork

- Participate in team meetings, supervision, peer resourcing and service planning forums
- Represent and promote SACL at external meetings
- Participate in portfolio work or any other project work as required
- Apply conflict resolution skills when dealing with problems
- 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

Quality, safety and improvement

- Using the relevant databases, maintain timely and accurate statistical data of all work
- Use of the Women's electronic medical record (EMR) where required to fulfil the duties of this position
- Ensure documentation and data meets the requirements of the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing and, including all statutory requirements and relevant hospital policies and guidelines
- 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 an exceptional service user experience; use appropriate techniques to resolve difficult service user situations and regain their confidence. Escalate concerns and complaints appropriately
- Contribute and commit to a culture that promotes gender equity, respect and a safe working environment and have an understanding of violence against women and family violence issues
- Participate in quality improvement activities; involving the Women's Hospital Quality and Safety team as necessary
- Develop and maintain an understanding of individual and team responsibility for patient safety, quality & risk and contribute to organisational quality and safety initiatives
- Participate in the development of policies and guidelines
- 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 Leadership Team and participate in problem-solving and mitigating risks or issues
- Participate in clinical audits and other relevant quality activities

Learning and development

- Identify and participate in research opportunities arising from the clinical work
- Attend training opportunities, professional development, seminars and conferences relevant to sexual assault and the sector

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- Ensure sufficient professional development is undertaken annually to meet eligibility requirements for membership with the relevant professional body
- Critically review and keep up to date with professional literature relevant to Sexual Assault
- Actively participate in credentialing and scope of practice processes
- Participate in annual performance development reviews and complete all mandatory competencies

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.

Key selection criteria

Experience/qualifications/attributes

Essential:

- Hold an appropriate tertiary qualification, ideally in Social Work, Counselling or Psychology or a health profession relevant to the provision of crisis counselling and support
- 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 regards to violence against women in policy and practice
- An understanding of and commitment to, the provision of a service based on an intersectional feminist, rights advocacy, violence and trauma informed practice framework
- 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
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively within a multidisciplinary team and ability to establish and maintain functional networks with a wide variety of health personnel and with other service providers
- 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)
- 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
- Well-developed interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a crisis orientated service
- Resilience in balancing sometimes competing and conflicting priorities

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- The ability to work independently and as a solo worker on shift but seek consultation where necessary
- Embodiment of the Women's values

Desirable:

- Experience working within a public hospital setting
- Postgraduate qualifications or working towards postgraduate qualifications in Social Work, Counselling, Health or a related area
- Experience in training delivery and community education

Organisational relationships

Internal relationships

- Sexual Assault Crisis Line Coordinators and team members
- Manager of the Sexual Assault Crisis Line
- All departments and staff of The Women's, as required in the course of carrying out Counsellor/Advocate duties. Key teams this role interacts with include; the Women's Emergency Centre, After-Hours Managers and General Counsel
- Social Work division
- Allied health staff

External relationships

- Other Victorian CASA's, SASVic (peak body) and health organisations
- 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
- Other Hospitals and Health care providers
- Safe Steps – Victoria's 24/7 Family Violence Support Service

Direct reports: 0
Indirect reports: SACL students
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.

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Physical demands	Frequency
Shift work – rotation of shifts – day, afternoon and night	Not applicable
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, claspings 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
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	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.

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- 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.

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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: July 2025

Developed by: SACL Manager

Date of next review: (12 months from now)

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