

Fact Sheet 4:

Secondary consultations with the specialist sexual assault sector

This information is intended for specialist family violence practitioners working within the Victorian context to strengthen understanding, skills and confidence when responding to disclosures of sexual violence within the context of family violence.

How to access a secondary consult

- **Within business hours** – Locate and contact the appropriate local specialist sexual assault service via phone call.
- **After-hours, weekends and public holidays:** Contact the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) – 1800 806 292

The specialist sexual assault sector offers **secondary consultations** to a range of professionals, including family violence practitioners seeking advice, guidance or expertise to ensure the best possible support and care for a victim survivor, children, young people and their families impacted by sexual violence.

Secondary consultations may assist you to:

- **gain** information about what specialist sexual assault services and programs are available in your region.
- **access** advice to assist you, or your organisation, to engage effectively and work safely with a person who has experienced or is currently experiencing sexual violence
- **determine** whether a referral is appropriate to a specialist sexual assault service
- **enhance** knowledge and skills through sharing of resources, tools and information about how to support a victim survivor
- **establish** collaborative working relationships across organisations which may include the future development of care teams for mutual clients.

A secondary consultation may lead to a referral for the victim survivor to a specialist sexual assault service. It may also lead to a collaborative approach with a specialist sexual assault practitioner, based on a needs and risk assessment, for the victim survivor to be supported by the family violence service, with continued secondary consultation from a specialist sexual assault service.

Secondary consultations can occur without sharing identifying information regarding the victim survivor to seek guidance on next appropriate steps. However, if the consultation leads to a referral, you will need to seek the consent of the victim survivor prior to doing so. As recommended by the MARAM Practice Guide – Secondary Consultation and Referral, ‘secondary consultations should be considered in line with your authorisations to share information’.

To determine the appropriate course for action, it can be useful to explore:

- What risks, needs or wellbeing issues are present that require response?
- What are the priorities, such as responding to risk, and how do these interact with the co-occurring priorities relating to wellbeing and needs, including the victim survivor's views?
- What actions or interventions (by whom, within what time-frame) would make a difference to an individual's safety, wellbeing or needs?
- The extent to which your organisation can facilitate these directly and what is your role.
- Identifying which other professionals and or organisations might be responsible for providing resources, skills, or practice expertise to respond.

Prior to accessing a secondary consult, it can be helpful to consider:

- If the person seeking support for recent or historical sexual violence.
- If historical sexual violence, such as sexual assault which occurred in their childhood, is the person ready or is this the right time for them to do this therapeutic work, especially if there are current safety risk concerns.
- If the person is going to stay in their current suburb, as this will impact which specialist sexual assault services they are referred to.
- In the event that the secondary consult progresses to a referral, it is preferential for the victim survivor to speak directly to the specialist sexual assault service Intake Team, however, third party referrals are accepted with their consent.
- If it is after hours, the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) can provide professional secondary consults.

Reference: [MARAM Practice Guide – Responsibility 5: Secondary Consultation and Referral](#), Victorian State Government.