

The specialist sexual assault sector

Specialist sexual assault services (SSAS) are available in **all regions of Victoria** to support victim survivors of sexual assault (recent or historic) as well as non-offending family or friends. Services are also available to children and young people who exhibit harmful sexual behaviour. All SSAS are free and confidential and available to people of all ages, genders, sexualities, abilities and cultural backgrounds. Specialist sexual assault services offer:

- ▶ **24/7 crisis** care response following a recent sexual assault (< 2 weeks)
- ▶ **therapeutic** counselling (recent or historic)
- ▶ **advocacy**
- ▶ **group work**
- ▶ **community** education
- ▶ **secondary** consultations to professionals, such as family violence practitioners
- ▶ **VOCAT** report writing for therapeutic counselling clients.

Key facts about sexual assault counselling

All counsellor advocates are tertiary qualified.

All new counselling clients must attend an intake appointment before they can join the wait list for regular appointments.

The number of counselling appointments varies at each SSAS. Contact the service to discuss further.

You do not need a referral from a GP or Mental Health Care Plan to access support.

You do not need to pay or use your health insurance if you are on a temporary visa.

You do not need to use your NDIS funds if you have a plan.

Scan to find
your local SSAS



Considerations before making a referral

Is it a recent sexual assault (within the last 2 weeks)? If so, the victim survivor can receive a crisis care response.

Are there any immediate risk issues (medical, mental health or safety concerns) that require attention?

Is the victim survivor aware of their reporting and support options? Would they like to talk to a SSAS counsellor advocate about this?

Is the victim survivor at serious risk of family violence? Are they able to safely engage in therapeutic work right now?

Will the victim survivor move to a different region? This can impact which specialist sexual assault service they are referred to.

Is a secondary consultation needed to clarify if a referral to a SSAS is appropriate?

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What is a crisis care response?

Crisis Care responses are available 24/7 at a unit inside a designated hospital called a **Crisis Care Unit** (CCU) or within a **Multi-Disciplinary Centre** (MDC). This appointment is available to a victim survivor of a recent sexual assault when they want to proceed with a **Forensic Medical Examination** (FME) or would like to meet with a **counsellor advocate** (from their local SSAS) to talk through their rights and options in person.

This appointment provides the victim survivor with a safe place to :

- ▶ **confidentially** disclose their experience of sexual assault
- ▶ **receive** crisis counselling support and advocacy
- ▶ **make** informed decisions regarding all options available to them including **police reporting** (Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigations Team), receiving **general medical treatment** for injuries, **safety planning** and other **resources and referrals** relevant to their needs (for example, emergency housing, emergency relief money, sexual health referrals).

To access or enquire about a crisis response appointment call:

- Your **local specialist sexual assault service** within business hours
- **The Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line** (SACL) after-hours, on weekends or public holidays - 1800 806 292
- **Victoria Police** - 000 or contact the local police station

Find your local specialist sexual assault service at:
peak.sasvic.org.au/servicemap



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Secondary consultations

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.

Before the secondary consult, consider

- ▶ Is the person seeking support for **recent or historic** sexual violence?
- ▶ If it's historic sexual violence, such as sexual assault which occurred in their childhood, **is the person ready?** Is this the right time for them to do this therapeutic work? This is especially important to consider if there are current safety risk concerns.
- ▶ Is the person going to stay in their **current suburb?** This will impact which specialist sexual assault services they are referred to.

If 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.

To access a secondary consultation with the specialist sexual assault sector:

Within business hours – Locate and call the local specialist sexual assault service

After-hours, weekends and public holidays: Call the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) – 1800 806 292

Find a specialist sexual assault service at
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