

# Position Description

## Position details

<b>Position Title:</b>	Adult and Family Team Counsellor Advocate	<b>Reports to:</b>	Direct Services Team Leader
<b>Team:</b>	Direct Services	<b>Location:</b>	Sunshine
<b>Classification:</b>	Level 6	<b>Status:</b>	1 x Ongoing 0.8 EFT 1 x Fixed Term (maternity leave) 0.9 EFT – 0.8 EFT

## The Organisation

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc. (VFST), also known as Foundation House, provides services to advance the health, wellbeing and human rights of people from refugee backgrounds who have experienced torture or other traumatic events.

Established in Melbourne in 1987, Foundation House is non-denominational, politically neutral and non-aligned. It is constituted as a not-for-profit organisation managed by an elected Board of Management and is funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, philanthropic organisations and donations from private individuals.

Foundation House is a state-wide agency offering services in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Offices are in Brunswick (head office), Dallas, Dandenong, Ringwood and Sunshine. Services are also provided in partnership with other agencies outside of the metro area. With approximately 200 staff the organisation:

- Provides services to clients in the form of counselling, advocacy, family support, group work and complementary therapies
- Works with client communities and the sectors they interact with
- Offers professional and organisational development
- Advocates to governments for improvements to policies and programs
- Conducts and contributes to research

Working with approximately 5,000 clients a year a trauma recovery informed service model guides the integrated organisational structure which is comprised of the following areas:

- Direct (Client) Services
- Practice and Sector Development
- Community Capacity Building
- Corporate Services

Foundation House is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and this is reflected in our organisational policies, protocols and staff development.

## Mission

To advance the health, wellbeing, and human rights of people from refugee backgrounds who have experienced torture or other traumatic events.

## Organisational Area Summary

Direct Services provides services to survivors of torture and other traumatic events in the form of counselling, advocacy, family support, group work, psycho-education, information sessions and



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complementary therapies. Direct Services comprises three regions (Western, Northern and South East), the Intake and Access Team, Complementary Therapies Team, Ucan2 and Rural and Regional Services. There is also Mental Health Clinic activity in each region and the General Manager Direct Services (GMDS) has overall responsibility for the provision of this service. The regional management units are responsible for the delivery of counselling and advocacy services to clients in their geographic regions. Services are delivered through onsite and outreach counselling and advocacy. As an organisation we also undertake comprehensive systemic work with organisations and agencies that provide assistance to survivors.

Direct Services teams are currently located in metropolitan Melbourne with offices in Brunswick, Sunshine, Dallas, Dandenong and Ringwood.

## Position Summary

The key role of the Counsellor Advocate is to deliver effective and appropriate assessment, counselling and advocacy services to clients of VFST who are survivors of torture or other traumatic events. Working within the context of the Foundation House Integrated Trauma Recovery Service Model, the Counsellor Advocate will provide a wide range of interventions designed to address the psychological effects and social consequences arising from a client’s past experiences of human rights violations.

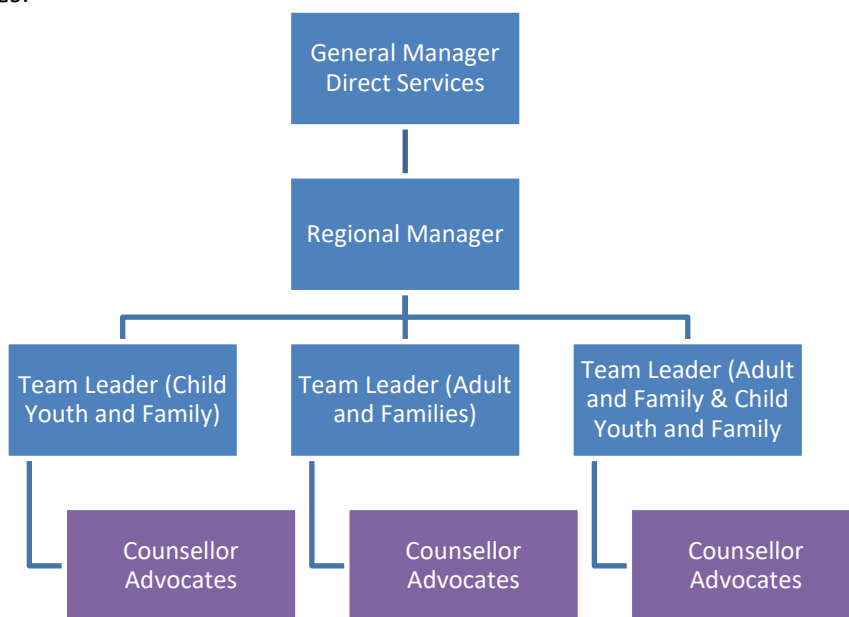
This role provides counselling and advocacy interventions with people who have permanent residency, and asylum seekers. Asylum seekers may be referred from detention centres and community detention, as well as those who are living in the community. Work will include family-based assessments and interventions where indicated. When necessary, outreach work is conducted in homes, schools, community and held detention settings.

## Scope & Dimensions:

Budgets: Nil

Number of staff: Nil

Reporting lines:



## Key Responsibilities

Key Responsibility
<p><b><u>Assessments</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct comprehensive psycho-social assessments with adults and their families to formulate case plans and therapeutic interventions within the VFST Integrated Trauma Recovery Service Model.</li> <li>• Risk assessments to ensure priority and immediate interventions are taken.</li> <li>• Establish expectations of service provision and set goals with client.</li> <li>• Review, revise and evaluate case plans against goals established with each client and in consultation with Team Leader.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Counselling</u></b></p> <p>Provide high quality short, medium and long term counselling interventions with adults and their families utilising a range of therapeutic approaches to deliver agreed client and program outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide psychoeducation for individuals, families and in group settings.</li> <li>• Use a family-based approach where indicated.</li> <li>• Use culturally appropriate approaches to maximise outcomes for adults and their families.</li> <li>• Provide counselling and advocacy according to client needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Advocacy</u></b></p> <p>Undertake advocacy and liaison on behalf of adults and their families with a range of relevant health, community, education, and legal services to enable access to and use of those services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide secondary consultation to external service providers as needed and/or as required by the program.</li> <li>• Facilitate referrals to relevant agencies.</li> <li>• Contribute to identifying systemic issues affecting the delivery of services and contribute to informing relevant policy.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Client Information &amp; Reporting</u></b></p> <p>Document and record all client information required to maintain a comprehensive client record in the client management system - Penelope.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All client based and non-client-based activity must be accurately entered as required in a timely way.</li> <li>• Maintain timely and accurate client records, meeting all requirements of Direct Services and applicable policies.</li> <li>• Prepare documentation and reports for relevant parties as required by the Regional Manager.</li> <li>• Book relevant resources (e.g., rooms, cars, interpreters) to facilitate the provision of services in an effective and efficient manner.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Organisational Obligations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and participate in all agency activities which meet VFST's organisational and professional development requirements. These include staff, team and agency meetings, professional development sessions, supervision, and debriefing.</li> <li>• Undertake a range of project or other duties required to support the effective delivery of direct services to adults and their families.</li> </ul>

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## **Health & Safety**

Actively contribute to health and safety at VFST by being aware of safety policies and procedures and consciously applying these every day to ensure the health and safety of our workplace.

## **Personal Qualities**

- Genuine interest in working with vulnerable clients in promoting well-being.
- Ability to work autonomously and as a member of a multidisciplinary team.
- Ability to manage competing priorities.
- Commitment to human rights and social justice.
- Flexible and adaptable approach to meeting goals.

## **Selection Criteria**

### **Qualifications:**

Relevant tertiary qualifications in social work, psychology, or a related discipline.

### **Skills**

- Demonstrated ability to undertake comprehensive psychosocial assessments and risk assessments with adults and families
- Demonstrated knowledge and skills in providing effective, trauma informed and family centred therapeutic interventions including risk management, for adults and families who are presenting with psychological distress and/or mental health difficulties
- Cross cultural competencies including working with interpreters.
- Experience with advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, or other vulnerable clients regarding a range of issues related to health, welfare, legal and government.
- Ability to write reports for medical and allied health professionals, other services and government bodies, and protection visa applications where required.
- Ability to work collaboratively in partnerships and with service providers.
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills.
- Previous work experience as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Previous engagement with human rights and social justice issues.
- Computer literacy skills in direct data entry for client information, word processing and internet use.

### **Knowledge**

- Expert knowledge in trauma and its psychosocial impact on individuals, families, and communities.
- Knowledge of a range of suitable interventions, using a trauma informed and systems-based framework.



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- Knowledge of the contextual factors – historical, social, cultural, and political – past and present which influence impact of traumatic events and choice of intervention
- Understanding of health and other service systems and how they operate in Victoria.
- Understanding of communities and their role in promoting recovery.

### Conditions of employment

- VFST promotes the safety and well-being of children.
- A satisfactory police check, WWCC will be required of the successful applicant.
- The position is in accordance with the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture Enterprise Agreement
- This position will require some travel between sites and occasionally home visits and therefore the successful applicant must hold a current driver licence.
- The right to live and work in Australia.

## Approval and Acknowledgement

<b>Date PD last reviewed:</b>	April 2021
<b>PD Approved by:</b>	West Regional Manager
<b>Date of approval:</b>	March 2021