

Position Description

Position details

Position Title:	Counsellor Advocate	Program Area:	Direct Services (DS)
Specialisation:	Adults and families	Location:	Dallas, Dandenong, Ringwood, Sunshine
Reports to:	DS Team Leader	Region:	North, South East, West
Classification:	Level 6	Hours:	Fulltime or minimum 0.8 EFT

Organisational Purpose

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, also known as Foundation House, is a leader in delivering specialist trauma-focused services that work with the strengths and resilience of refugees, their families, and communities to rebuild lives shattered by torture and other traumatic events.

Role Purpose

As a Counsellor Advocate, you will provide assessment and counselling using the Foundation House trauma recovery framework, a family-centred approach and a diverse range of developmentally appropriate psychosocial therapeutic interventions aligned with *Rebuilding Shattered Lives: Integrated Trauma Recovery for People of Refugee Background* (2nd edition). These include early intervention, individual, group and family-based approaches which are all accessible, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate to meet the complex needs of refugee background survivors of torture and other traumatic events.

You will also provide client-centred advocacy through accompanied appointments, facilitating referrals and undertaking liaison with relevant health, community, education, legal and other services to support access to, and effective responsiveness from those services. Continuous feedback about your work with clients, via the client information system, is essential to inform the systemic advocacy Foundation House provides, which is aimed at improving client services and relevant areas of government policies and programs.

For further details on our Counsellor Advocate model, please see [here](#)

Please note: In addition to working with clients at Foundation House offices, outreach work is often required. Interventions can be conducted in client homes, community and educational settings or other places such as correctional settings. It may also involve providing services to people who have arrived in Australia as asylum seekers and who are held in places of detention.

Key Responsibilities

Assessment

- Conduct comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments with individuals and families to develop clear formulations and client-centred therapeutic goals.
- Conduct risk assessments and establish and implement risk management and safety plans where indicated.

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- Comprehensively review all assessments, plans and complex cases with the Team Leader.

Counselling

- Provide developmentally appropriate trauma-informed and trauma-focused counselling and therapeutic interventions using a range of evidence-based modalities.
- Provide psychoeducation in individual, family and group settings.
- Support, develop and deliver therapeutic group work programs, as appropriate.
- Regularly review and evaluate progress and goals with clients and their families, in consultation with your Team Leader
- Take on a caseload according to established organisational practices and targets.
- Deliver services in a culturally appropriate and safe manner.

Advocacy

- Identify critical issues clients experience that are affecting their sense of wellbeing, mental health and safety, and develop strategies for responding to those issues. This will include making referrals and undertaking advocacy with relevant health, community, education, legal services and government agencies.
- Provide secondary consultation to external service providers to help improve the ability of those services to respond more effectively to our clients.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with relevant services and key stakeholders to support referral pathways and strong partnerships.
- Contribute to identifying systemic issues affecting our clients and their communities to inform relevant policy.

Record keeping and report writing

- Ensure timely and appropriate completion of client health records in the electronic client information management system including case notes and all organisational record-keeping requirements.
- Provide written client reports to health, legal and government bodies that are appropriate, thorough, well-constructed and compliant with relevant Foundation House guidelines, policies and procedures.

People and Teams

- Attend and participate in all agency activities which meet Foundation House's organisational and professional development requirements. These include staff, team and agency meetings, and actively participating in supervision and ongoing learning.
- Contribute to projects or other duties that assist the agency to support the delivery of effective, safe, connected and person-centred services.
- Actively participate and ensure professional, supportive and cooperative working relationships within your own team and with other programs across the agency.
- Undertake required travel needed to properly fulfil the duties of this position.
- Perform any other duties as directed by relevant managers within the scope of the classification and position description.

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Key Selection Criteria

Experience and qualifications

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in psychology, social work, counselling, or other related discipline.
- Demonstrated experience and expertise to undertake comprehensive psychosocial assessments and risk assessments with adults and their families.
- Demonstrated expertise in trauma-informed practice and providing trauma-focused counselling interventions using a range of evidence-based modalities in a culturally appropriate and safe way.
- Good understanding of how to negotiate and advocate with multiple service systems in Victoria to support the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Ability to work in a cross-cultural context including working with interpreters.
- Ability to write professional psychosocial reports for a variety of key stakeholders including legal and government bodies.
- Experience as a member of a multidisciplinary team, working both independently and collaboratively in partnership with colleagues and external service providers.
- Medium to high level competency with IT applications such as MS Word, Excel and Outlook.

Attributes

- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills.
- Genuine interest in working with clients of refugee background who have experienced complex trauma and may be facing significant challenges
- Ability to manage competing priorities.
- Commitment to ethical practice, human rights and social justice.
- Flexibility and adaptability in meeting client and team goals.

Our Values

We aim to build trust and confidence, promote wellbeing and achieve the best possible outcomes through living our values of respect, promotion of human rights, focus on community, maintaining excellent, ethical practice and above all acting with integrity.

Organisational Expectations

Foundation House and our staff are committed to:

- Family & Child Safety
- Occupational Health & Safety
- LGBTQIA+ inclusive practices
- Culturally safe practices
- Adherence to the requirements of relevant legislation, regulation and professional ethics.

It is an expectation that all our employees actively contribute and consciously comply with Foundation House policy, procedures and practice guides during the course of their work.

This position is in accordance with the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture Inc. Enterprise Agreement.

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Approval and Acknowledgement

Date PD Template last reviewed:	20 July 2023
PD Approved by:	General Manager Direct Services (GMDS)
Date of approval:	20 July 2023