Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors
This booklet provides information and guidance to Approved Counsellors about their role and responsibilities under the Approved Counselling Service.

The practice standards set out the principles, expectations and standards of practice required to provide a high quality, ethical, professional counselling service to victims of crime. Produced by Victims Services, NSW Department of Justice

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1 Purpose

The practice standards provide information and guidance to Approved Counsellors about their role and responsibilities under the Approved Counselling Service (ACS).

They set out the principles, expectations and standards of practice required to provide a high quality, ethical, professional counselling service to victims of crime.

All approvals granted pursuant to section 31(2) of the *Victims Rights and Support Act 2013* by the Commissioner of Victims Rights (the Commissioner) are subject to the condition that a Deed of Agreement (the Agreement) for the provision of the ACS be executed by the professional counsellor and the Commissioner. In signing the Agreement, Approved Counsellors agree to adhere to the Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors.

2 Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout the practice standards:

- **Approved Counselling Service (the ACS)** provides free face-to-face counselling to victims of violent crimes that have occurred in New South Wales (NSW).
- **Approved Counsellors** are professionals appointed by the Commissioner of Victims Rights (the Commissioner) under a Deed of Agreement (the Agreement).
- **Charter of Victims Rights (the Charter)** is a collection of rights victims of crime in NSW have insofar as they are to be treated and assisted by government departments, non-government agencies and persons contracted by the State who provide them with services. The Charter is established under the *Victims Rights and Support Act 2013*.
- A **complaint** is a written or verbal statement indicating that the client or other person or an agency has concerns or dissatisfaction about a service provided by an Approved Counsellor.
- **Feedback** includes complaints, suggestions and compliments.
- **Misconduct** as defined under section 43(b) of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002* means performance of duties in such a manner as to justify the taking of disciplinary action.
- **Professional Advisory Panel (PAP)** refers to a panel of experts who provide advice to the Commissioner on clinical and professional matters.
- **Witness Assistance Service (WAS)** is an information and court support program under the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) that is available to prosecution witnesses and victims of crime involved in cases being prosecuted by the DPP, and in particular where someone has died or where a sexual or physical assault has occurred.
3 Victims Services

Victims Services is part of the NSW Department of Justice. Victims Services provide support, information and services to victims of crime committed in NSW.

Services provided by Victims Services are legislated in the *Victims Rights and Support Act 2013*. These services include financial assistance and the ACS. The object of this legislation is to provide support and rehabilitation to assist the recovery of victims of crime.

Victim Services also oversees the Charter, which outlines the rights of victims of crime. Approved Counsellors are expected to adhere to the *NSW Code of Practice for the Charter of Victims Rights*.

Further information about Victims Services can be found on the Victims Services website: [www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au)

4 Approved Counselling Service

4.1 Overview of the Approved Counselling Service

The Approved Counselling Service (the ACS) is a NSW state-wide service that provides client-focused, short-term, early intervention counselling for victims of violent crime and interpersonal violence.

The ACS aims to assist victims of crime cope with adverse symptoms arising as a direct result of the act of violence and to reduce the impact of the crime on their lives.

4.2 Approved Counsellors

Approved Counsellors are qualified social workers, psychologists, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. Approved Counsellors have a strong understanding of trauma and experience providing therapeutic services to victims of crime.

Approved Counsellors:

- are private practitioners who meet the ACS approval criteria and have been appointed by the Commissioner
- agree to abide by their own professional codes as members of their professional association
- agree to act in accordance with the Agreement and the *Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors*.

4.2.1 Specialist Counsellors

Approved Counsellors can also apply to be accredited as Specialist Counsellors if they meet the following additional criteria:

- be fully registered as a psychologist with the Psychologists Board of Australia and have the area of practice endorsed; or
- be a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers; AND
- have been an Approved Counsellor with the ACS for at least 12 months; AND
must possess a post graduate degree at or above the Masters level in an area deemed relevant by Victims Services including but not limited to:

- social work
- clinical psychology
- clinical neuropsychology
- forensic psychology.

The postgraduate degree must include components of professional training and supervised experience and be of at least two years full time duration or equivalent. Qualifications should be accredited by the appropriate body or deemed equivalent of an overseas qualification by the Australian professional body or registration body.

### 4.3 Clients – Individuals

Clients utilising Approved Counselling are victims of crime who may have directly experienced domestic or family violence, sexual assault, a physical assault, armed robbery, home invasion or any other event that involves interpersonal violence.

A person is eligible to apply for Approved Counselling if they:

- have been a direct victim of act of violence
- have witnessed an act of violence
- are a parent/guardian of a victim (aged under 18) of an act of violence
- are a relative of a homicide victim.

Clients are not required to have reported the act of violence to police and the matter does not have to have gone through the court process. However, the act of violence needs to have occurred in NSW.

Full details of eligibility for the ACS can be found on the Victims Services website: [www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au)

### 4.4 Clients – Family members of a homicide victim

The ACS is open to family members of a homicide victim who require counselling as soon as possible after the homicide.

### 4.5 Approved Counselling

Counselling available under the ACS is short-term only. Up to a total of 22 hours of counselling may be approved for individuals. Twenty hours of counselling is initially available for family members of homicide victims.

Clients that have experienced separate acts of violence may apply for blocks of Approved Counselling for each act of violence. For example, a person who becomes the victim of domestic violence in June 2012 and then the victim of a sexual assault in December 2013; may submit two applications for up to 22 hours of Approved Counselling for each of these acts of violence.

Approved Counselling aims to facilitate with clients, as far as possible, a return to their level of functioning prior to the act of violence. This may include:

- normalising reactions to an abnormal event
- assessment of presenting problems
- development of intervention plans
- provision of interventions and counselling
- referrals to other services.

Approved Counselling is event-related and not focused on other life or associated issues.

Different application processes apply to individuals and family members of homicide victims. These processes are explained in section 9 on compliance.
5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Victims Services

The Counselling Coordinator oversees the day-to-day operation of the ACS and is responsible for providing administrative and clinical support to Approved Counsellors. The Counselling Coordinator is the primary contact for Approved Counsellors and should be the first point of contact for any queries. The Counselling Coordinator can be contacted via Victims Services e-mail address: vs@justice.nsw.gov.au

Support Coordinators assist victims of crime by providing them with information and advice around the criminal justice system; and helping them to compile a package of support from the various types of assistance available through Victims Services. Support Coordinators may contact Approved Counsellors in relation to specific clients. Where appropriate, Support Coordinator’s details will be passed on to Approved Counsellors.

The Senior Manager Strategic Policy & Programs oversees policy developments and service delivery for various Victims Services programs, including the ACS. Approved Counsellors should contact the Senior Manager Strategic Policy & Programs for advice when the Counselling Coordinator is unavailable.

The Commissioner is the most senior executive within Victims Services and is responsible for all services provided by Victims Services. The Commissioner has final approval of all matters pertaining to counselling and Approved Counsellors.

5.2 Professional Advisory Panel

The Professional Advisory Panel (PAP) has been established to provide a consultative forum for reviewing the activities of Approved Counsellors and fulfils an important role as one of the quality assurance mechanisms on the ACS.

PAP representatives are selected because of their affiliation with the professional body of their particular discipline and include representatives from:

- NSW Branch of the Psychology Board of Australia
- Australian Psychological Society
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Mental Health Branch, NSW Department of Health
- Australian Association of Social Workers
- Approved Counsellors participating in the ACS.

PAP’s duties are limited to:

- having input on the suitability of prospective counsellors
- reviewing and making recommendations in relation to complaints received about Approved Counsellors
- providing advice in relation to the quality assurance aspects of the ACS
- reviewing and endorsing resources, materials and initiatives presented by Victims Services
- providing advice about clinical issues or trends that impact the ACS.
6 Overview of the principles of Approved Counselling practice

There are four foundation principles for Approved Counselling practice: Conduct, Competence, Compliance and Performance.

First principle of practice: Conduct

In addition to the codes of ethics and conduct Approved Counsellors adhere to with respect to their own profession; there are three guiding principles Approved Counsellors must consider when encountering ethical decision-making. Victims Services ascribes approaches and actions to these principles to facilitate an understanding of how they apply in practice.

The whole of the three guiding principles and professional codes of conduct and ethics provide a basis for adjudicating any complaints or concerns arising in Approved Counsellors’ practice.

Second principle of practice: Competence

Competence relates to Approved Counsellors main functions. Guidance is provided around how Approved Counsellors can ensure clinical intervention plans are appropriate to clients’ needs and in line with current professional practices.

Third principle of practice: Compliance

Compliance regards the specific business rules and processes Approved Counsellors are required to abide by.

Fourth principle of practice: Performance

Performance establishes the standards of work expected from all Approved Counsellors to ensure clients are provided with consistently high quality service.

7 Conduct

The ACS is founded upon an active concern for the wellbeing and recovery of victims of crime and their support networks. The provision of counselling services to clients requires a diligent and considered approach from all professionals involved in the ACS to ensure the service caters to client’s therapeutic needs.

The clients Approved Counsellors work with have ranging needs and are often in difficult circumstances in their lives. In this context, exercising good judgement with respect to professional boundaries is essential to avoid ineffective counselling and mental harm for clients. Approved Counsellors should be mindful of how they manage their relationships with clients in all manners of conduct and not just in applying different counselling approaches.

7.1 Adherence to professional codes of ethics

It is expected that Approved Counsellors adhere to their own professions code of ethics and conduct, including: APS Code of Ethics, AASW Code of Ethics and the RANZCP Code of Ethics.

7.2 Principles of ethical practice for Approved Counsellors

Approved Counsellors must adhere to the Victims Services’ Principles of Ethical Practice for Approved Counsellors, namely:

1. Respect for persons
2. Responsible service delivery
3. Professional integrity

Table 1 (see page 10) provides more details of the obligations.
Table 1: Victims Service’ Principles of Ethical Practice for Approved Counsellors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect for persons</td>
<td>Be aware of and support the provisions of the Charter and the NSW Code of Practice for the Charter of Victims Rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims rights</td>
<td>Have respect for the humanity, self-determination, individuality and dignity of victims of crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Acknowledge that Approved Counselling is voluntary and clients are choosing to participate in counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed consent</td>
<td>Ensure sufficient information is provided to enable clients to make informed decisions. Ensure clients demonstrate capacity to give informed consent of service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client-centred approach</td>
<td>Prioritise the needs of clients on an on-going basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Act sensitively and respectfully towards the cultural background of clients and provide services that are culturally appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>Strive to protect the confidentiality of victims of crime in all aspects of services provided to them, while being mindful of the limits of confidentiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Do not invade the privacy of clients and only elicit information necessary for the provision of Approved Counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible service delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma informed practice</td>
<td>Be sensitive to the impact of trauma for clients and how this may affect their engagement in counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely service</td>
<td>Provide a timely response to clients and queries/requests from Victims Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Engage in professional development opportunities and maintain and develop professional competence, especially in optimising services for victims of crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of information</td>
<td>Inform clients about other services provided by Victims Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record keeping</td>
<td>Maintain legible records that accurately reflect presenting issues, therapeutic approaches and hours of client contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with others for the benefit of clients</td>
<td>With client’s consent, work cooperatively with other agencies involved with victims of crime to promote clients best interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional integrity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional conduct</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors must adhere to the standard of professional conduct required by their own professional body. Approved Counsellors have a duty of care to victims of crime and must engage in ethical practice at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional responsibility</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors have a responsibility to provide services in a manner that contributes to the health, welfare and peace of the community and reflects the standard of professionalism expected of any competent and responsible practitioner in their field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputable behaviour</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors must not have a personal or sexual relationship with clients at any time during the professional relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of interest</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors must identify and inform Victims Services if there is a conflict of interest (actual or perceived) in relation to the service that the provider is the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-exploitation</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors must not exploit victims of crime (physical, sexual, emotional, financial). This includes not exploiting referrals for victims of crime from other paid work settings for personal gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics investigations and concerns</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors must inform Victims Services immediately if they become the subject of allegations that he or she is not a fit and proper Approved Counsellor or has been deregistered by their professional body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Approved Counsellors must not make any statements to the media about clients without prior approval from the Commissioner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 Competence

The principle of competence imposes that Approved Counsellors ensure their clinical practice and service delivery is in line with best practice, legislative requirements and meets client’s needs.

8.1 Clinical and professional competence

8.1.1 Applicable counselling approaches

Approved Counselling is short term (up to 22 hours). Counselling should allow clients to talk about their reactions to the act of violence and assist clients develop appropriate coping strategies.

Approaches to counselling vary, however the following approaches fit within the short-term focus of the ACS:

- crisis intervention models
- cognitive behavioural therapy
- brief solution focused therapy
- narrative approaches
- supportive counselling.

While the following approaches may have positive impacts for persons, they should not be included in clients Approved Counselling interventions:

- eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR)
- hypnosis
- emotional freedom technique (EFT)
- thought field therapy
- therapies that do not have a strong evidence base.

Please refer to the DPP’s Prosecution Guidelines for further information on the limited use of evidence obtained through hypnosis or EMDR. The relevant chapter from the DPP’s Prosecution Guidelines has been extracted (see Appendix 3 – DPP Prosecution Guidelines on page 31).

Approved Counsellors should consult with the Counselling Coordinator if unsure about the use of a particular counselling approach.

8.1.2 Duty of care to clients in crisis

Clients may be in crisis at the commencement of or at some stage during Approved Counselling. Approved Counsellors must exercise their Duty of Care by referring clients to appropriate clinical services (for example, local Community Mental Health Teams, general practitioner, hospital emergency departments) and/or other services (for example, police, Homeless Persons Information Line, Rape Crisis Centres, local refuges, domestic violence services). Following initial referrals, Approved Counsellors should advise the Counselling Coordinator who can then refer the client to the Support Coordination Team for further assistance.

Counselling clients in crisis may continue only where clients continue to be receptive and responsive. Where the Approved Counsellor assesses a client is not responsive to counselling, Approved Counsellors need to determine whether counselling should be put on hold or terminated.

8.1.3 Child protection and mandatory reporting

Obligations arise under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 for Approved Counsellors to report any child protection issues to NSW Department of Family & Community Services, Community Services via their helpline on 132 111. Clients who are children or young people are considered “children” for these purposes.
Approved Counsellors must also act in accordance with their professional association’s requirements for mandatory reporting.

Approved Counsellors must document child protection concerns in reports submitted to Victims Services. This includes noting information relating to clients contact with alleged offenders.

8.1.4 Confidentiality and privacy

Approved Counsellors have an obligation to protect a client’s rights to privacy and confidentiality.

When discussing confidentiality and privacy with clients, Approved Counsellors should:

- inform clients that information is not made available to third parties outside of Victims Services, unless it is: subpoenaed; the subject of restitution proceedings; or unless the client provided informed consent to its release
- be aware that under no circumstances can Approved Counsellors release information about a client to a party other than the client or their representative without the client’s informed consent
- ensure that client-informed consent is obtained in situations where the client wishes for a Counselling Report to be released to a third party
- bear in mind that notes made during counselling sessions, counselling files or reports may be subject to subpoena
- discuss the limits of confidentiality in relation to risk of harm to self and others.

8.1.5 Responding to subpoenas

Approved Counsellors may have their client records, files and counselling notes subpoenaed if their client has a court matter. Counsellors may have concerns about providing counselling communications to courts, given the uncertainty of whether doing this: could destabilise their relationship with a client, would be in the client’s wellbeing and legal interests, and may not add any material value to the matters at hand in court.

A real concern is also attached to the perception of information contained in counselling notes being taken as fact where in fact, the counsellor has encouraged their client to discuss emotional responses in relation to an event, which may not be an accurate representation of that event.

A subpoena will always include the name and address of the court, be authenticated by the court through signature or seal, and contain a last date for service of that document. Letters written by solicitors to Approved Counsellors requesting copies of documents are not equivalent to subpoenas and may not be enforceable. If Approved Counsellors receive such a solicitor’s request, Approved Counsellors should seek clarification from the solicitor of the purpose of the request and details of who will be accessing the reports.

Approved Counsellors should seek independent legal advice whenever the terms of a subpoena are unclear, a solicitor’s request references legislation to support the request, they are unclear of their legal obligations. Law Access NSW and Legal Aid NSW are good first port of call services for general enquiries surrounding legislation.

Victims of sexual assault have a legal privilege under the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 and Evidence Act 1995 to limit the disclosure and use of “sexual assault communications” in criminal and apprehended violence order proceedings. “Sexual assault communications” are communications made in the course of a confidential relationship between the victim of a sexual assault and a counsellor. Where Approved Counsellors receive requests for the release of information or subpoenas in relation to clients involved in such proceedings, they should:
1. advise the client of their privilege;
2. advise clients to obtain advice from a legal professional before deciding whether to release counselling notes, files and other reports obtained in the course of counselling; and
3. NOT release any material without clients having made an informed decision about exercising their privilege and extent of the release of information.

In NSW, the Women’s Legal Service provides free advice on the Sexual Assault Communications Privilege and Legal Aid operates a Sexual Assault Communications Privilege Service to help victims claim their privilege. Other Australian state and territories have similar protections and services (see Appendix 4 – Responding to subpoenas on page 32).

8.2 Competence with service delivery

8.2.1 Maintaining a safe environment and professional boundaries where counselling is conducted on home premises

Approved Counsellors are normally expected to undertake counselling with clients of the ACS in their private practice rooms. Where counselling occurs on a home premises, Approved Counsellors need to be mindful how this impacts client’s privacy (or their sense thereof), as well as the safety of clients and themselves.

Approved Counsellors using home offices are responsible for establishing boundaries between private and professional spaces. To reduce uncertainty for clients, it is recommended Approved Counsellors advise clients they operate via a home office prior to conducting clients’ initial assessments and that Approved Counsellors provide information to help clients anticipate this experience, such as whether clients can expect to:

- be greeted by a receptionist upon arrival
- access the home office via a separate or common entry to the home;
- utilise a supervised children’s playroom if they need to attend with children
- use visitor parking.

Logistical, physical or psychological issues can sometimes make it impractical for a client to attend counselling at an Approved Counsellor’s practice. Careful consideration of how counselling is to be carried out is required in these circumstances, including whether there is scope for the Approved Counsellor to negotiate telephone counselling with clients.

Approved Counsellors MUST seek approval from the Counselling Coordinator before undertaking visits to clients’ homes.

If planning a home visit, Approved Counsellors need to assess their safety. Contingencies to consider include; who else may be present in the home; knowledge of any possible threats by a third party; the client’s mental state or access to weapons in the home; and boundary issues. Steps to take in preparation include alerting colleagues of your whereabouts and expected finish time. Access to a mobile phone during home visits is an essential precaution.

Approved Counsellors have a right to decline home visits on the basis of any concerns for their safety. Approved Counsellors with a home office should discuss any safety concerns in relation to a client with the Counselling Coordinator.
8.2.2 Referrals for clients requiring other counselling options

Approved Counselling is one response for victims of crime and may not meet the counselling needs of all clients. Where other issues not directly related to the traumatic event are identified, the Approved Counsellor can discuss these issues with the Counselling Coordinator who will refer the matter to the Support Coordination Team for follow-up. The Support Coordination Team provides case management to clients and are able to make referrals to other agencies.

Examples could include referrals to:
- an alcohol/drug rehabilitation service
- a relationship counselling service
- a GP for referral and assessment by a psychiatrist
- a GP for assessment of medical issues.

8.2.3 Telephone counselling

No telephone counselling should be provided without prior approval from the Counselling Coordinator. Approved Counselling should primarily be delivered face-to-face to clients. However, there are times when face-to-face counselling may not be possible. For example, when client’s circumstances mean they are unable to attend an Approved Counsellors office and the Approved Counsellor is not able to provide a home visit. In these circumstances, limited telephone counselling or counselling by Skype may be provided.

This should only occur:
- with approval from the Counselling Coordinator
- when counselling is already established
- the client clearly states their agreement to using approved hours in this way.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from Victims Services, initial assessments should not be undertaken by telephone/Skype.

8.2.4 Other supports provided during Approved Counselling

There will be times when Approved Counsellors may want to provide a service or a client may require assistance that does not strictly fall within the scope of Approved Counselling. The Counselling Coordinator has some discretionary ability to approve assistance outside of the parameters of Approved Counselling.

For example, the Counselling Coordinator may agree that an Approved Counsellor can:
- provide court support to a client who has to attend court as a witness
- assist a client in preparing a Victim Impact Statement as part of the sentencing process at court
- liaise with other practitioners/schools/agencies in complex matters; this may include case-conferencing or making referrals to other practitioners or agencies.

The Approved Counsellor must consult with and seek approval from the Counselling Coordinator for all activities outside the scope of the ACS prior to undertaking these activities.

8.3 Working with specific groups

8.3.1 Family members of a homicide victim

In order to address the impact of a sudden unexpected and violent death of a family member, an initial period of up to 20 hours Approved Counselling may be provided for family members of homicide victims.
The purpose of this Approved Counselling is to assist family members to address loss and grief and other issues as required. In light of this, on-going counselling for family members is not dependent on Approved Counselling reports or further hour requests.

### 8.3.2 Aboriginal clients

For most Approved Counsellors, counselling Aboriginal clients will be a cross-cultural experience in which the values, perceptions and expectations of counselling may differ greatly between counsellor and client. Conceptualisations of mental health, treatment models and service provision tend to be underpinned by values and assumptions that reflect norms of Western culture. Imposing these concepts on Aboriginal clients may create barriers for Aboriginal clients to have their therapeutic needs met, and may unintentionally cause Aboriginal clients to experience alienation and disempowerment.

Working with Aboriginal clients requires Approved Counsellors to reflect on whether their counselling approaches, skills and behaviours are sensitive to and affirming of Aboriginal identity and cultural diversity. An understanding of the historical contexts and events that have occurred in Australia post-colonisation is important, as are their continued impacts on social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Reflecting this understanding within the context of a counselling session with an Aboriginal client may create a counselling environment that is empathic, respectful and engaging.

Some principals to guide Approved Counsellors practice with Aboriginal clients include:

- Acknowledge the diversity within and among Aboriginal cultures taking into account individual, family and community needs.
- Recognise potential difficulties in client engagement caused by the assessment of Aboriginal clients outside of their own cultural context. This includes respecting clients who need time to develop trust and rapport with Approved Counsellors, and who need to voice any cynicism or scepticism held in view of the socio-political contexts surrounding the lives of both counsellor and client.
- Discuss culturally appropriate goals with Aboriginal clients and work towards a shared framework for counselling goals.
- Foster an understanding of Aboriginal cultures, and the impacts of cyclical patterns and intergenerational issues on Aboriginal lifestyle, such as lateral violence and systemic racism by dominant culture.
- Appreciate differences in Aboriginal conceptualisations of mental health & psychological distress. These tend to be more holistic incorporating mental, physical, cultural and spiritual aspects of health.
- Recognise the impact of cultural and milieu factors on Aboriginal mental ill health.
- Recognise traditional practices for managing mental ill health.
- Acknowledge the importance of using cultural consultants and respecting protocols such as “vouching” and allowing time for a relationship to develop.
- Seek to understand clients’ terminology and communication attributes. Some clients may prefer to take time to relay feelings through story telling or by explaining similarities of their feelings to those experienced by others. Be mindful that Aboriginal cultures vary in terms of protocols for eye contact, hand gestures and direct/indirect use of language.
Guidelines for providing services to Aboriginal people are advocated by Reconciliation Australia and APS and can be found on their respective websites.

Victims Services considers counselling of Aboriginal clients to be a specialty area. Approved Counsellors should provide updating information to Victims Services about any developments to their training and practice with Aboriginal persons.

8.3.3 Family members of an individual client

Approved Counselling is based on assessment and provision of counselling for individual victims of crime. From time to time, clients may benefit from having family members attend a shared appointment. This applies particularly to situations where the client is a child or adolescent and supportive family members (who are also eligible for Approved Counselling) are encouraged to be involved in the client’s recovery.

Approved Counselling must not include a family member who is the alleged offender. Approved Counsellors are responsible for establishing and maintaining safety for all clients participating in counselling. Client’s safety cannot be ensured where counsellors give alleged offenders an active role in influencing client’s therapeutic interventions.

Approved Counsellors can only see family members who have approved hours under the ACS. Counselling provided to families should be focused on the impact of the index crime. It should not be a more general marriage or couples counselling approach.

When shared appointments occur, invoicing must be split evenly between family members. For example, if two siblings attend a shared one-hour appointment, the Approved Counsellor would invoice 30 minutes for each client. Reports must be for each individual not for a family group.

Approved Counsellors should be alert for potential conflicts of interest, complex power dynamics and also issues of confidentiality when working with families. If a complex scenario arises where Approved Counsellors detect a conflict of interest or possible abuse of power between family members during counselling sessions, Approved Counsellors should contact the Counselling Coordinator for advice on working with the individuals involved.

8.3.4 Children (up to 12 years old) and young people (aged 13-18)

Referrals of children and young people will only be made to Approved Counsellors who have been assessed as having the skills, qualifications and experience to provide appropriate counselling to these client groups.

Approved Counsellors must have counselling rooms that are appropriate for working with children.

8.3.4.1 Assessment and interventions

When the client is a child or young person, Approved Counsellors must assess the family context. Where appropriate for children, family assessments and counselling can be undertaken with a non-offending parent/s or caregiver.

Approved Counsellors should work systemically by liaising with non-offending parent/s or caregivers, pre-school, primary and high schools if this is necessary to implement any intervention plans. With young people it is important to consider whether or not to discuss intervention plans with clients and the potential need for non-offending parent/s or caregivers to be involved with implementing plans, before involving non-offending parent/s or caregivers.
Approved Counsellors must ensure children and young people are not exposed to interventions that might cause them to re-experience the event unnecessarily.

Children and young person’s evidence may be used in legal proceedings. Counselling approaches that seek to revisit past incidents may be inappropriate and potentially damaging to clients in these circumstances.

8.3.5 Group work

Approved Counsellors who offer group therapy must have prior permission from the Counselling Coordinator before allowing clients to use Approved Counselling hours to attend a group as part of their recovery.

8.3.6 Clients requiring interpreters

Approved Counsellors must identify when a client requires an interpreting service to access counselling, such as for clients who speak a language other than English or who are hearing or speech impaired.

 Victims Services expects Approved Counsellors to adopt an approach that ensures the client remains their focus when interpreters are involved, and that prior consideration is given to interpreter’s sensitivity and orientation towards the issues to be discussed during counselling. For example, consideration of whether the interpreter should explain when they are providing a literal translation from the client’s mother language to English or whether they are translating meaning in a cultural context; as well as suitable terminology for sessions in relation to persons from minority backgrounds.

The process for arranging an interpreter is described at 9.12 – Interpreter services (see page 24).

8.3.7 Clients going through a court process

Clients may be going through the court process relating to the matter in which they became a victim, concurrent to their counselling sessions. To address concerns and alleviate stress, clients may benefit from the provision of information, court preparation and support around their court experiences. Clients may ask Approved Counsellors to support them with any or all of these aspects. In these events, Approved Counsellors are better able to assist their clients by having a good understanding of: the functions of other support services; available information surrounding the court process; and what courts expect from people acting as a “support person” to witnesses in criminal matters.

Through Victims Services’ Justice Journey website, clients can access information about the various stages of court processes, contact details of support agencies and information sheets on specific court-related issues. The Justice Journey: Information for victims of crime in NSW (DVD/booklet) provides alternate mediums for conveying information about the court process to victims.

Police, prosecutors and court staff can assist clients to understand court processes and/or the status of matters where they are the victims.

Some support agencies noted on the Justice Journey website deal with victims of specific crimes such as sexual assault and domestic violence. Approved Counsellors should support clients with referrals to these services if the client requires this. The Counselling Coordinator should also be notified, in case follow-up is required in relation to the referral.
Victims of crime can have one or more “support person/s” assist them when they are a witness in a court matter. A “support person” cannot be another person giving evidence in the case. He or she can be a friend or family member of the witness, counsellor, a person from the DPP’s WAS, or a person from a community-based court support group.

Victims Services has developed a court preparation guide (Justice Journey Court Preparation Guide: Supporting victims and witnesses of crime through the court process) for professionals supporting a person who is a witness or victim of crime. The guide includes information on the limits of the “support person” role.

Depending on the type of crime committed, a victim of crime may submit a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) to the court where an offender has been convicted of that crime and is awaiting sentencing. Victims are entitled to ask someone to support them to write the VIS, or ask their counsellor with whom they have had contact as a result of the offence, to write it on their behalf.

Where clients request assistance from Approved Counsellors to accompany them to court or prepare a VIS, this support would be in addition to the Approved Counselling hours. Clients and/or Approved Counsellors should raise requests for approval for additional support with the Counselling Coordinator.

8.3.8 Managing relationships with alleged offenders

Perpetrators may harm victims by using an array of behaviours and tactics to control and manipulate victims. While some alleged offenders might require support and could try and influence a client attending Approved Counselling sessions to be included in these sessions; it is not the role of Victims Services or the Approved Counsellors to provide this support. Under no circumstances are Approved Counselling hours to be used with an alleged offender.

If Approved Counsellors are confronted by such situations and are having difficulty dealing with this, contact the Counselling Coordinator to discuss this or address it in supervision.

8.3.9 Working with prisoners

Approved Counselling for prisoners is subject to a protocol agreement between Victims Services and the Corrective Services NSW. Currently Approved Counsellors may not provide Approved Counselling services to prisoners. The exception to this is a 2011-2013 pilot program at Dillwynia and Wellington Correctional Centres in NSW.

Prisoners can become clients of the ACS in relation to acts of violence in which they were victims prior to their incarceration. These clients access their Approved Counselling hours on release from prison.
9 Compliance

Specific business rules and administrative processes under the ACS are set out in this section.

9.1 Applications and approvals for Approved Counselling hours

Victims of crime apply for Approved Counselling by submitting an application for counselling under the victims support scheme to Victims Services. The application is assessed and if the client is eligible, 10 hours of counselling are approved and an Approved Counsellor is allocated. Most victims of crime require an average of six to eight hours of counselling to assist them in their recovery.

After the initial 10 hours has been used there is capacity for Approved Counsellors to request up to an additional 12 hours (that is, a maximum of 22 hours in total).

Approved Counsellors cannot see clients for further hours until they have been requested and approved. Payments may not be made to Approved Counsellors who see clients without approval.

Timeframes for Victims Services to process applications are:

- two business days for initial applications
- five business days for requests of further hours.

Where clients are in crisis and need urgent counselling support, Approved Counsellors may contact Victims Services to discuss and request urgent approval for further hours.

9.2 Allocation

Clients can be allocated to Approved Counsellors in several different ways:

- a client may request a specific Approved Counsellor
- a client may request to attend a specific location
- a client may request an Approved Counsellor to meet preferences, such as a female counsellor or a counsellor from a particular discipline.

When a client has no preference, Victims Services will match clients to the Approved Counsellor based on geographical location and/or counselling specialties.

In practices where there is more than one Approved Counsellor, only one will be allocated to an individual client. There should be no sharing of referrals or change of counsellors without prior approval from Victims Services.

Victims Services is not able to guarantee referrals of clients to Approved Counsellors.

9.3 Appointments

Once a client is allocated to an Approved Counsellor, Victims Services will send the Approved Counsellor a referral letter that includes the client’s name, how many counselling hours the client has, and date of approval. The client will also receive a referral letter. The client is expected to initiate the first appointment with their Approved Counsellor.

Victims Services requires Approved Counsellors offer clients their initial appointment within five days of being contacted by the client, unless the client clearly requests otherwise. Approved Counsellors must ensure their administrative staff are aware of these guidelines, so they can facilitate appointments for clients accordingly.

Approved Counsellors should have an intake process that gathers relevant information to inform themselves of client’s needs (for example, contact details, any interpreter needs, disability access, requirements for an early or late hours appointment).
A client may decide not to contact Approved Counsellors immediately after receiving their referral letter. There is no expiry date on referrals to Approved Counselling.

9.4 Length of counselling sessions

Psychological literature supports the view that clients have limited capacity to absorb information when the counselling session extends beyond one hour. This is particularly the case for clients with significant trauma presentations.

There are some circumstances where it may be beneficial or practical for the counselling session to be more than one hour, for example, if an interpreter is being used or if the client has to travel a long distance to attend counselling.

Approved Counsellors are required to seek approval from Victims Services via the Counselling Coordinator before undertaking counselling sessions longer than one hour.

9.5 Initial assessment and report

Approved Counsellors must conduct an initial face-to-face assessment with clients to identify client’s presenting issues and explore client’s options for referral. The initial assessment can also be used to:

- normalise clients reactions
- provide clients information about trauma
- explain the purpose of Approved Counselling to clients
- discuss the appropriateness of the ACS for the client.

During the initial assessment, Approved Counsellors may provide clients with the Approved Counselling Service Client Feedback form. Clients are at liberty to submit feedback to Victims Services about the services they are receiving at any time over the course of their counselling sessions (see Appendix 11 – Approved Counselling Service Client Feedback form on page 46).

There are occasions when it may be unclear from clients’ applications whether they are victims of crime. In such circumstances in the referral letter, Victims Services will ask Approved Counsellors to gather further information about the act of violence during the initial assessment.

Two hours are allocated to Approved Counsellors to consult clients, assess their needs and produce a report (that is, up to 90 minutes with the client and 30 minutes for report writing). Approved Counsellors may adjust the timing and structure of an initial assessment as best meets the needs of clients, that is, two shorter sessions of 45 minutes, which may work better for children and young adults; or one long session of 90 minutes for clients, which may suit clients that require an interpreter.

Approved Counsellors must complete this report in the Initial Report Template (see Appendix 7 – Initial Report template on page 37). All fields in the Initial Report template should be addressed to cover:

- the client’s relevant background and the alleged act/s of violence
- the client’s current mental state
- presenting complaints, symptoms and risks
- counselling intervention planned for the sessions
- prognosis for client and expected outcomes from counselling interventions
- any alternate responses to counselling suggested to the client.

Approved Counsellors must submit this report to Victims Services within four weeks of completing the initial assessment.

9.6 Progress report

If Approved Counsellors consider clients would benefit from further counselling after the first 10 hours of counselling has been used, Approved Counsellors must submit a progress report to Victims Services outlining this request. At the same
time, clients must submit a request for further hours of counselling to Victims Services. Victims Services can grant a maximum of 12 further hours to clients under the ACS.

Approved Counsellors must complete this report in the Progress Report template (see Appendix 8 – Progress Report template on page 41). All fields in the Progress Report template should be addressed.

9.7 Varied guidelines for family members of a homicide victim

Approved Counsellors should be aware that some ACS guidelines vary for the provision of Approved Counselling to family members of a homicide victim as follows:

- family members of a homicide victim will be approved for 20 hours of counselling from their commencement with the ACS
- Approved Counsellors are required to submit a progress report on each family member after 20 hours of counselling
- After the initial 20 hours has been used, Approved Counsellors can request more hours for family members of homicide victims
- Counselling hours are not capped.

Approved Counsellors cannot see clients for further hours until these hours have been requested and then approved by Victims Services. Payments may not be made to Approved Counsellors who see clients without approval of hours.

9.8 Process overviews – Individuals v family members of a homicide victim

9.8.1 Processes applicable to individual clients

Figure 1 (see page 22) summarises the process applicable to individual clients.

9.8.2 Processes applicable to clients who are family members of homicide victims

Figure 2 (see page 23) summarises the process applicable to clients who are family members of homicide victims.

9.9 Clients access to reports

Clients have a right to receive copies of Approved Counsellors reports.

Approved Counsellors must release copies of reports to clients upon request. An exception to this is where Approved Counsellors are concerned a client’s safety may be jeopardised by reading or holding these reports. These concerns should be resolved with Victims Services prior to releasing reports to clients. Please bring such concerns forward to the Counselling Coordinator at the earliest possible juncture.

9.10 Non-cancelled appointments

There may be occasions where a client does not attend a pre-arranged appointment or give Approved Counsellors sufficient notice (minimum of 24 hours) to reschedule an appointment.

Clients are allowed two paid non-cancelled appointments regardless of whether they have changed counsellors. Irrespective of the length of time set aside for the appointment, if a client misses the appointment it counts as one non-cancelled appointment. Payments for non-cancelled appointments are at the rate of 30 minutes of
Figure 1: Processes applicable to individual clients

Client
- Applies to Approved Counselling
- Contacts Approved Counsellor for initial appointment

Victims Services
- Processes application
- Approves 10 hours of Approved Counselling, if client is eligible for the scheme
- Allocates client to an Approved Counsellor
- Sends referral letters to client & Approved Counsellor
- Reviews initial assessment
- Processes payment to Approved Counsellors
- Submits initial assessment using the first 2 hours to consult with the client and prepare the report
- Submits progressive invoices for counselling hours used

Approved Counsellor
- Counsels client
- Further hours request considered against progress report
- Approves up to a further 12 hours of Approved Counselling
- Advises client and Approved Counsellor by letter of Approved Counselling Hours
- Submits progress report
- Counsels client
- Refers client to other services as required

Counselling continues. Once 20 hours of counselling are used, further hours can be requested.

Counselling is terminated before or once additional hours are used.

Accesses other services as required
counselling irrespective of the time scheduled for the session.

Approved Counsellors are encouraged to contact clients after a non-cancelled appointment and use discretion as to whether these appointments are charged for, that is if a client has a legitimate reason for non-attendance and the cost can be absorbed by the Approved Counsellor.

Approved Counsellors should note the session as an unkept or non-cancelled appointment on the related invoice.

Approved Counsellors are not permitted to charge clients a separate missed appointment fee.

Figure 3 (see page 24) summarises the steps Approved Counsellors must follow if they wish to receive payment for the non-cancelled appointment.
Figure 3: Process for Approved Counsellors to receive payment for a non-cancelled appointment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>1st non-cancelled appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Client does not attend scheduled appointment nor informs Approved Counsellor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved Counsellor</th>
<th>(Attempts to) contact client by phone or in writing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informs Victims Services in writing of 1st non-cancelled appointment. <strong>These steps are required for payment of non-cancelled appointments.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victims Services</th>
<th>Support Coordinator contacts client about missed appointment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>2nd non-cancelled appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes to client acknowledging 2nd non-cancelled appointment noting Victims Services will contact client to discuss the non-cancelled appointment. Informs Victims Services in writing of 2nd non-cancelled appointment noting reason for non-attendance, if known. <strong>These steps are required for payment of non-cancelled appointments</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved Counsellor</th>
<th>Support Coordinator contacts client to discuss non-attendance. If the client has concerns or is facing barriers to attend counselling, the Support Coordinator will assist to resolve these, possibly in liaison with Approved Counsellor.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victims Services</td>
<td>Support Coordinator contacts client to discuss non-attendance. If the client has concerns or is facing barriers to attend counselling, the Support Coordinator will assist to resolve these, possibly in liaison with Approved Counsellor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**9.11 Change of counsellors**

A client or Approved Counsellor can initiate a change in counsellor. Several reasons could exist for this request, for example:

- the client may move location
- there may not be a good fit between the client and the Approved Counsellor
- there may be a conflict of interest, that is, the Approved Counsellor may be already seeing a family member of the client
- the client may have a particular preference, such as wanting a counsellor with a specific gender or from a specific discipline
- the client may require a counsellor with specialised experience

A letter will inform Approved Counsellors that a client is being transferred from them. Approved Counsellors receiving the transferred client, will also be advised in a letter which will include details of the client’s remaining counselling hours and any accrued non-cancelled appointments.

It is expected that Approved Counsellors will inform Victims Services in writing if they want to request a change of Counsellor including the reason for the request, how many counselling hours and how many missed appointments the client has used.

Victims Services reserves the right to initiate a change of counsellor if there are grounds for a change to occur.

Figure 4 (see page 25) summarises the steps Approved Counsellors must follow for the change of counsellor process.

**9.12 Availability and change of details**

Approved Counsellors must let Victims Services know when any of their circumstances change to ensure information used for client referrals is accurate.

Approved Counsellors should inform Victims Services when they:

- are at capacity and cannot take new referrals
- have relocated or changed any contact details
- are taking leave
- are unable to provide new clients with appointments within five working days from the client’s request.
9.13 Termination of counselling

There are many reasons why Approved Counselling may end, including:

- the client utilises the maximum 22 hours of Approved Counselling
- the client recovers to a point where Approved Counselling is no longer necessary
- an Approved Counsellor assesses there is no longer a need for Approved Counselling to continue
- the client or Approved Counsellor requests a change of counsellor
- an Approved Counsellor assesses another service is more appropriate for the client.

Approved Counsellors should terminate counselling appropriately with adequate discussion with the client. If further support is required for the client, the Approved Counsellor should make referrals to appropriate agencies. Approved Counsellors can also contact the Counselling Coordinator, who will refer the client to the Support Coordination Team for further assistance.

9.14 Interpreter services

If an interpreter is required, the Approved Counsellor should provide a written request to Victims Services to arrange for an interpreter as early as possible and at least five working days prior to a booked counselling session. This request should specify the date, time and address and language required for each counselling session as required.

Victims Services will confirm interpreter service bookings and the booking number with Approved Counsellors by fax, email or phone. Approved Counsellors may also confirm interpreter service bookings 24 hours prior to the counselling session, with the Victim Services Counselling Admin Team.

Victims Services will meet interpreting services costs only if services are booked and confirmed with Victims Services prior to Approved Counselling being undertaken.

Approved Counsellors should relay any concerns with respect to interpreters to Victims Services, such as if the interpreter is late for a session, fails to attend or any other difficulties experienced in relation to interpreting provided.
9.15 Travel expenses

Approved Counsellors may incur travel expenses when accompanying clients to court or when undertaking a counselling session in clients’ homes (see 8.2.1 on page 13 for information about service delivery considerations pertaining to home visits). Victims Services will reimburse Approved Counsellors for travel costs where approval for these costs is obtained prior to Approved Counsellors undertaking travel.

Approved Counsellors undertaking travel by car must use vehicles that are comprehensively insured. Travel costs refer to the payment of pre-approved mileage costs for the counsellor to travel from their usual practice address to a location negotiated with the client. Mileage costs take into account the use of petrol, wear and tear on the vehicle and are paid at the prevailing rates set out by the Australian Tax Office, plus 10 per cent GST if applicable. See Appendix 9 on page 44 for an application for payment of travel expenses.

All GST registered counsellors must submit a tax invoice to Victims Services for payment of mileage. Travel costs do not include reimbursement of petrol receipts. See Appendix 10 on page 45 for a sample application for GST payment of travel expenses.

Victims Services considers requests for travel expenses, but reserves the right to refuse approval. This includes retrospective requests for costs Approved Counsellors may incur when parking vehicles and using public transport.

9.16 Payments for services rendered

Table 2 (see page 27) shows what Victims Services pay Approved Counsellors according to the following hourly rates:

Table 3 (see page 27) summarises the payments Victims Services provides Approved Counsellors for services and costs related to services. The requirements in relation to making claims for these services are also set out in the following table.

Generally, payments will be made to Approved Counsellors within our service standards of 28 working days from receipt of your completed invoice. Completed means that you must obtain the client’s signature on the invoice, all fields to be completed, to submit reports at required intervals and to provide us with any information we may need to know in the ‘comments’ section of the invoice so that we can pay you.

You must send Victims Services your initial assessment report and progress report at the required intervals as outlined in Section 9.5 (see page 20). You can only claim a maximum of 30 minutes for writing reports. If Victims Services does not receive reports at the required times, this may delay your payment.

Only a maximum of two ‘no shows’ for the same client will be paid for by Victims Services.

9.16.1 Fees from clients

Under no circumstances are Approved Counsellors permitted to charge clients additional fees. Victims Services will meet costs for services rendered by Approved Counsellors as per the Agreement and the practice standards.

9.16.2 Taxation obligations

As per the Agreement Approved Counsellors must have a registered Australian Business Number (ABN). Please refer to the Agreement for information regarding the GST (see Appendix 10 on page 45).
### Table 2: Hourly rates for Approved Counsellors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hourly rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved Counsellor</td>
<td>$120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Counsellor</td>
<td>$144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatrist</td>
<td>$258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Summary of payments to Approved Counsellors for their services and costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Documents to be submitted</th>
<th>Timeframe for submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling session</td>
<td>As per rates set out in 9.16</td>
<td>Invoice for sessions, including clients signature</td>
<td>Within 4 weeks of completed sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial assessment report</td>
<td>30 minutes, as per rates set out in 9.16</td>
<td>Invoice for report, including clients signature and initial assessment report</td>
<td>Within 4 weeks of initial appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress report</td>
<td>30 minutes, as per rates set out in 9.16</td>
<td>Invoice for report, including clients signature and Progress report</td>
<td>Within 4 weeks of last appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cancelled appointment</td>
<td>30 minutes, as per rates set out in 9.16</td>
<td>Invoice for report and Copy of letter regarding non-cancelled appointment</td>
<td>Within 4 weeks of non-cancelled appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel expenses</td>
<td>Pre-approved mileage</td>
<td>Application for Payment of Travel Expenses and If GST registered, a tax invoice</td>
<td>Form – prior to travel and Invoice – within 4 weeks of travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10 Performance

Approved Counsellors should aim for high standards in all aspects of their work. Working with victims of crime is a specialist area of counselling, requiring on-going professional development on the part of Approved Counsellors.

Approved Counsellors should be aware that their performance is one aspect of the ACS quality assurance checks.

#### 10.1 Impacts of trauma on clients

Traumatised clients can vary greatly in their presentation. In some cases, clients might experience on-going fluctuations in their readiness to participate in counselling; where others may desire their relationships with Approved Counsellors takes on multiple forms. It is always the responsibility of the Approved Counsellor to maintain a clinical focus and apply practices that enable individual clients to experience therapeutic interventions.

Clients are likely to experience better outcomes through counselling with Approved Counsellors that have a clear therapeutic frame. Research indicates the implications of counsellors who have a clear view of the characteristics of a therapeutic relationship are better able to move treatment beyond establishing a good working relationship with clients.

#### 10.2 Client contact with the criminal justice system

Some exploration by Approved Counsellors as to whether the client could be best served by aligning their counselling sessions at different points of contact with the criminal justice system might be beneficial to both Approved Counsellors and clients. Those events include: reporting a crime to police, going to court as a witness, sentencing of an offender, and anniversary dates of the violent event.
10.3 Professional development

Professional development is an essential activity for Approved Counsellors to maintain their professional competence and be up-to-date with current and emerging research. Ways through which Approved Counsellors may achieve this include participating in conferences, workshops, online learning activities, reading journal articles and books.

Victims Services will host professional development opportunities for Approved Counsellors throughout the year. Approved Counsellors are encouraged to suggest possible topics for their development to Victims Services at any time.

Victims Services expects Approved Counsellors will seek out development opportunities relating to trauma and other impacts of crime on victims. Approved Counsellors should advise Victims Services as their specialties expand to ensure they receive appropriate client referrals.

Approved Counsellors must keep an accurate record of professional development undertaken for review by Victims Services, if requested.

10.4 Supervision

The challenging nature of client’s circumstances demands that Approved Counsellors undertake supervision. Professional support can be a great tool for Approved Counsellors to address their own needs, such as maintaining wellbeing and finding different ways to self-assess skills and competence.

Supervision should be a place for skills development, knowledge building, assistance with complex cases, opportunity for reflective practice and support. Supervision may include peer review, group supervision, individual supervision and any other professional consultation.

Approved Counsellors must keep an accurate record of supervision undertaken for review by Victims Services if requested.

On the rare occasion where a client makes a serious complaint against an Approved Counsellor, PAP may recommend possible suspension of the Approved Counsellor on provision of further information or support from the Approved Counsellor’s supervisor. Failure to meet these recommendations may result in an Approved Counsellor being terminated from the ACS.

10.5 Reports

Reports provided to Victims Services will be taken as a marker of the standard and quality of work provided by Approved Counsellors to clients. Reports should clearly inform Victims Services of a client’s presentation, treatment and progress. Reports are required to be prepared in the relevant report templates; the Initial Report template and the Progress Report template (see Appendix 9 and 10 on pages 37-43). Victims Services can provide an electronic copy of these templates upon request.

Approved Counsellors should be aware that Victims Services may consider reports when reviewing client’s claims for financial assistance. This is due to reports containing information about the impacts of the violent acts on clients.

There may be occasions where clients have been victims of multiple acts of violence. Approved Counsellors may be required to provide Victims Services with a short addendum to reports if the initial/progress reports do not mention all the acts of the violence.

Victims Services reviews Approved Counsellors reports as part of quality assurance checks related to the ACS.
Appendix 1 – Charter of Victims Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Courtesy, compassion and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Information about services and remedies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Access to services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information about investigation of the crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Information about prosecution of accused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Information about trial process and role as witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Protection from contact with accused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Protection of identity of victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Attendance at preliminary hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Return of property held by State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Protection from accused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Information about special bail conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Information about outcome of bail application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Victim impact statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Information about impending release, escape nor eligibility for absence from custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Submissions on parole and eligibility for absence from custody of serious offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Financial assistance for victims of personal violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Information about complaint procedure where Charter is breached</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are a victim of crime, you have the following rights under the Charter of Victims Rights.

- **Courtesy, compassion and respect**: You will be treated with courtesy, compassion, cultural sensitivity and respect for the victim’s rights and dignity.
- **Information about services and remedies**: You will be told as soon as possible about the different services that can help you, including counselling and legal services.
- **Access to services**: If you need medical, counselling, and legal help you will be able to get it if it is available.
- **Information about investigation of the crime**: If you ask, you will be told about how the police investigation is going. But in some cases there may be some things the police can’t tell you.
- **Information about prosecution of accused**: Prosecution is about taking the accused to court for the crime. This is done by the police or, in serious cases, the Director of Public Prosecutions.
  - As a victim, you will be told:
    - what the charges are or why the accused has not been charged;
    - any decision of the prosecution to change or drop charges;
    - the date and place of the court hearing;
    - the final court result, including any appeal or gaol sentence given.
  - If the prosecution is thinking about changing or dropping the charges they will have a talk to you about this if the crime:
    - was a serious sex crime, or
    - caused you physical harm, psychological or psychiatric harm.
  - But the prosecution don’t have to talk to you if:
    - you don’t want to talk about it, or
    - they can’t find you.
- **Information about trial process and role as witness**: If you have to give evidence as a witness in a trial you will be told about how the trial works and what you have to do.
- **Protection from contact with accused**: While your case is in court you will be protected from contact with the accused and the defence witnesses.
- **Protection of identity of victim**: You can keep your address and phone numbers private unless the court says different.
- **Attendance at preliminary hearings**: You do not have to go to any committal hearing (like a mini trial) or other court business before the trial unless the court says you must.
- **Return of property held by State**: If the police or prosecution took any of your goods as evidence you have the right to get it back as soon as possible.
- **Protection from accused**: If you need protection tell the police or prosecution when the accused applies for bail.
- **Information about special bail conditions**: You will be told about any special bail conditions the accused is given, which are meant to protect you or your family, like a condition which says the accused must not contact you.
- **Information about outcome of bail application**: If you were the victim of sexual assault or other serious assault you will be told if the accused gets bail or not.
- **Victim impact statement**: In some cases you may be able to tell the court about how the crime has affected you and you will be given help and support to do this. This is called giving a ‘victim impact statement’.
- **Information about impending release, escape nor eligibility for absence from custody**: If the offender is in gaol you can be told if the offender is going to be released from gaol soon, has escaped gaol or is on day release.
- **Submissions on parole and eligibility for absence from custody of serious offenders**: You can have a say if the offender applies for parole.
- **Financial assistance for victims of personal violence**: If you have been injured as a result of serious personal violence, you may be eligible for financial assistance under the Victims Support Scheme.
- **Information about complaint procedure where Charter is breached**: You can make a complaint if you think your rights under the Charter have not been met. You can ask for information about how to do this.
If you are a victim of crime you have rights
Call the Victims Access Line on 1800 633 063 for information and support.

Charter of Victims Rights
In New South Wales there is a Charter of Victims Rights to protect and promote your rights if you are a victim of crime. The Charter applies to all NSW government departments. It also applies to any non-government agencies and contractors (excluding private legal officers and medical practitioners), funded by the State who provide support to victims. The Charter states how you should be treated and assisted if you are a victim of crime. The Charter is contained in the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013.

Who is a victim of crime?
In the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013, a victim is a person who suffers harm as a direct result of a criminal offence.

What can I do if I think my rights under the Charter are not being met?
1. You should talk to the person you are dealing with about the problem. Usually the problem can be fixed that way.

2. If you are still not satisfied, you have the right to ask the person to tell you how to make a complaint to their department. The department should be able to arrange interpreters or other assistance if required. You can get a support person to help you make the complaint. This can be a friend or worker.

3. If you are still not satisfied after the complaint has been looked at by the department you can contact the Victims Services. Their job is to help you with your complaint and tell you what can be done about it.

Contact details
Phone ................................................................................................................................. 1800 633 063
Sydney metropolitan area ............................................................................................... (02) 8688 5511
Aboriginal Contact Line ............................................................................................... 1800 019 123
Hours ....................................................................................................................... 8am to 6pm, Mon to Fri (exc public holidays)
Fax ............................................................................................................................... (02) 8688 9632
Email ......................................................................................................................... vs@justice.nsw.gov.au
Website .................................................................................................................... www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au
Street address ............................................................................................................. Level 1, Justice Precinct Offices
................................................................................................................................. 160 Marsden Street, Parramatta
Address all mail to ..................................................................................................... The Commissioner of Victims Rights
Victims Services
Locked Bag 5118
Parramatta NSW 2124
Appendix 2 – DPP Prosecution Guidelines

27 Evidence
[Furnished 20 October 2003]

Disputed evidence
Especially where the defence advises that the admission of evidence is to be challenged, care should be taken in opening a case to a jury to ensure that nothing is said that may lead to a subsequent discharge of the jury.

Illegally or Improperly obtained evidence
Where evidence intended to be led appears on reasonable grounds to have been illegally or improperly obtained, the prosecutor must inform the accused within a reasonable time (and see Barristers’ and Solicitors’ Rule 67 – Appendix B.)

Hypnosis or EMDR evidence
The following guidelines apply to evidence obtained by either hypnosis or EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) and should be read accordingly. Failure to comply with them will give rise to a high probability that the court will decline to admit such evidence, whether tendered by the prosecution or the defence.

Prosecutors will have regard to these guidelines when determining whether or not such evidence should be tendered on behalf of the prosecution.

(1) Hypnotically induced evidence (to be read for present purposes as including reference to evidence obtained by EMDR) must be limited to matters which the witness has recalled and related prior to the hypnosis (or EMDR) – referred to as “the original recollection”. In other words, evidence will not be tendered by the prosecution where its subject matter was recalled for the first time under hypnosis or thereafter. The effect of that restriction is that only detail recalled for the first time under hypnosis or thereafter may be advanced as evidence in support of the original recollection.

(2) The substance of the original recollection must have been preserved in written, audio or video recorded form.

(3) The hypnosis must have been conducted in accordance with the following procedures:
   (a) the witness gave informed consent to the hypnosis;
   (b) the hypnosis was performed by a person who is experienced in its use and who is independent of the police, the prosecution and the accused person;
   (c) the witness’s original recollection and other information supplied to the hypnotist concerning the subject matter of the hypnosis was recorded in writing or by audio or video recording in advance of the hypnosis; and
   (d) the hypnosis was performed in the absence of police, the prosecution and the accused person, but was video recorded.
Appendix 3 – Responding to subpoenas

**Resources**


**Professional advice**

Australian Psychological Society: http://www.psychology.org.au/

Australian Association of Social Workers: http://www.aasw.asn.au/

Victims Services - Counselling Coordinator or Registrar: (02) 8688 5511

**Legal advice**


Legal Aid NSW: http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Women’s Legal Service: http://www.womenslegalnsw.asn.au
Appendix 4 – Client consent to release/obtain information (sample form)

Consent to release information form

(Counsellor’s letterhead)

Client consent to obtain/release information

I, ............................................................................ hereby authorise ...........................................................................................................(Counsellor) to obtain information in relation to ...............................................................................................................................
from the following persons/agencies ..............................................................................................................................................

I, ............................................................................ hereby authorise ...............................................................................................................................
to release information in relation to ..............................................................................................................................................
to the following persons/agencies .......................................................................................................................................................

This consent is valid for ............... months from ...... / ...... / ......

Client/guardian signature ..............................................................................................................................................................

Counselor signature .................................................................................................................................................................

Please return the signed form to:
The Commissioner of Victims Rights
Victims Services
Locked Bag 5118
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Appendix 5: Application for counselling under the Victims Support Scheme (for clients)

All victims of violent crime can use this form to apply for counselling. Further information and our online application can be found at www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1: Personal details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Full name Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First/Given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Any other names used by the victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Address (Note: all correspondence will be sent to this address)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country (if applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal address (if different)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Contacts Phone Mobile Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? (Optional – for statistical purposes only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PART 2: Details of the person/organisation applying on behalf of the above victim |
| (Parents/guardians or other persons who have an interest in the welfare of a person may apply on behalf of the victim) |
| Note: Parents/guardians and representatives will receive correspondence while a friend/family member assisting with form lodgement only – will not receive correspondence. |
| 8. Relationship to victim Parent/guardian Representative Friend/family member Other |
| 9. Full name Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms) | Surname/Family |
| First/Given | Middle |
| 10. Name of organisation (if applicable) | |
| 11. Address | Postcode |
| Postal address (if different) | Postcode |
| 12. Contacts Phone Mobile Email |
| 13. Reason for applying on behalf of the victim Age Disability Overseas |
| Parental responsibility – FACS Counselling in prison Other |
|  | Please specify |  |
PART 3: Details of the act(s) of violence

14. When did the act of violence occur?
   (a) Date (dd/mm/yyyy)
   or, (b) over a period of time From (dd/mm/yyyy) to (dd/mm/yyyy)

15. Where in NSW did the act(s) of violence happen? (If full address is not known, suburb/town must be provided)
   Address
   Suburb/town
   Postcode

16. What was the nature of the act of violence? (Please choose the closest match)
   - Assault
   - Sexual assault
   - Robbery
   - Home invasion
   - Domestic/family violence
   - Other
     Please specify

   Briefly describe what happened. For example I was walking home and was assaulted by two men who held a knife to my throat and stole my wallet. Or, I was sexually assaulted between 2002 and 2005. Do not just write: See police statement.

17. What is the offender’s name? Surname/Family
   First/Given

18. Relationship to the offender?

PART 4: Details of counsellor

19. Would you like Victims Services to allocate an Approved Counsellor on your behalf?
   Yes Continue
   No Go to Q.21

20. Please let us know of any counselling preference you have (if required)
   Gender
   - No preference
   - Female
   - Male

   Suburb(s)/town(s) to attend counselling
   Type of disability access
   Language for counselling
   Other requirements

21. Please provide the name of the Approved Counsellor of your choice

22. Please provide the preferred location of your choice

Note: If you do not have an Approved Counsellor you may select one from the list available on the Victims Services website (go to How to find an Approved Counsellor on home page) Note: All efforts will be made to meet your preferences.

PART 5: Applicant’s declaration

I hereby apply for initial counselling pursuant to Schedule 4, Part 2, Victims Rights and Support Act 2013. I am aware that the contents of my counselling session may be used in the preparation of a report to Victims Services for the purposes of subsequent counselling and/or financial assistance applications.

Applicant’s signature
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Further information and help completing the application

Contact Victims Services (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (exc. public holidays):
• Phone: 1800 633 063 / (02) 8688 5511  • Aboriginal Contact Line: 1800 019 123
• Email: vs@justice.nsw.gov.au  • Website: www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au

You can send your completed form by email to vs@justice.nsw.gov.au or by fax to (02) 8688 9632.
Or, post it to The Commissioner of Victims Rights, Victims Services Locked Bag 5118, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Appendix 6 – Request for further hours of Approved Counselling (for clients)

Application

Further hours of Approved Counselling

This form should only be used by applicants who have already received their initial hours of counselling.

Reference Number ............................................................................................................

I, ...........................................................................................................................................(name of applicant in full)

wish to apply for further hours of counselling.

Signed .................................................................(by the applicant)

Date..................................................................................................................(dd/mm/yyyy)

Please return the signed form to:
The Commissioner of Victims Rights
Victims Services
Locked Bag 5118
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Appendix 7 – Initial Report template

**Initial Report template**

This template is designed to capture counsellor’s initial assessment of clients. It covers multiple facets relevant to counsellors comprehensive evaluation of clients’ treatment needs.

An Initial Report in this format is to be provided to Victims Services once counsellors have provided clients with up to 2 hours of counselling.

Initial Reports usually take 30 minutes to prepare. 30 minutes from the initial 2 counselling hours maybe used to complete this report.

Counsellors should apply professional judgement with respect to writing style, description of clients’ backgrounds and presentations, breadth of recommendations and length of Initial Reports.

Content prompts appear throughout the template in red font. These are included as a guide only.

Please ensure the Initial Report includes information relevant to clients’ situations only, and routinely indicate sources of information.

Please e-mail completed reports to Victims Services via vs@justice.nsw.gov.au To assist with legibility, please ensure Initial Reports are typed and not handwritten.

Please contact the Counselling Coordinator on 8688 2527 if you require further information or guidance.

**Information for clients**

Counsellors must inform clients of the purpose of the initial assessment and the limits of confidentiality. Clients must be advised this report will include their personal information as well as the counsellor’s clinical impressions and treatment recommendations.

Clients have the right to request a copy of counselling reports required to be produced under the Approved Counselling Scheme (ACS). Clients may wish to share their reports with their solicitors or other government departments in support of applications for public services/schemes. Clients MUST give their informed consent before counsellors release counselling reports to a third party.

Clients may lodge financial assistance applications with Victims Services. Victims Services may use counselling reports produced under the ACS among other information to assess the effect so facts of violence on clients.

Clients should be encouraged to contact Victims Services directly to discuss any questions related to this assessment.

The Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors contains additional information on confidentiality and privacy.

The Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors includes guidance to counsellors with respect to cout subpoenas for counselling reports and other counselling communications. Counsellors MUST refer to this guidance before responding to subpoenas.
## Initial Report

Report date

### Section 1: Client details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth</td>
<td>VS Reference No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 2: Approved Counsellor’s details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact No.</td>
<td>Email address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>Generalist Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Specialist Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatrist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 3: Initial Counselling hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of sessions completed to date</th>
<th>Total No. of hours used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were any counselling sessions provided to date funded from another source?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, please provide details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date __ / __ / __</td>
<td>No. of hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date __ / __ / __</td>
<td>No. of hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, please provide details of funding source</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Workcover □ Medicare □ Better Access Benefits Scheme □ Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 4A: Alleged act(s) of violence client seeks counselling for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date(s) of alleged act(s) of violence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>Historic sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Domest</td>
<td>□ Sexu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Phys</td>
<td>□ Eler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Physa</td>
<td>□ Elda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Physical assault</td>
<td>□ Elder abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of alleged act(s) of violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(This section should include information on:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The relationship between the alleged offender and the client (if any)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If the matter has been reported to police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If the client has sought medical treatment or intends to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The impact of the act of violence to the client</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 4B: Details of other alleged act(s) of violence (if applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date(s) of alleged act(s) of violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of violence: (check more than one box if several types of violence occurred during the act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Physical assault</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of other alleged act(s) of violence

### Section 5: Background information

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Relationship status
- Occupation
- Prior psychological assessments (include source of assessment where known)
- Communication needs
- Disability status
- Pre-morbid function

### Section 6: Current mental health status/behavioural observations

**Points of consideration include:**
- thought processes
- memory
- mood or affect

### Section 7: Presenting complaint and symptoms (diagnosis)

**This section should include information regarding:**
- History of the presenting complaint including onset, duration and course
- Client’s conceptualisation of the problem
- Prior treatment efforts and success of these
- Other factors relevant to the client’s presenting complaint (i.e. substance abuse, health status, medication use, financial issues, relationships, housing concerns, ongoing contact with offender, other social or environmental issues)
- Other psychological/psychiatric problems in the family (note: Do not name family members. Refer to them by relationship only. E.g., “Mr. X’s uncle” versus, “John Smith, Mr. X’s uncle”; “older brother” versus “Tom Smith”, Mr. X’s older brother.”)
**Section 8: Risk assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any presenting suicidal risk factors?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Indicate presence of: source of risk, level of risk and imminence of harm to the client, and any other information</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any presenting child protection risk factors?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(Indicate presence of: source of risk, level of risk and imminence of harm to the client, and any other information)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any presenting serious domestic violence risk factors?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(Indicate presence of: source of risk, level of risk and imminence of harm to the client, and any other information)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 9: Counselling/treatment plan**

For clients with less than 10 initial Approved Counselling hours, how many additional hours of counselling are you recommending for the client?

- ☐ No further hours
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 8

**Proposed interventions**

*Please outline the proposed interventions for the client and specify:*

- The modality/modalities to be taken: e.g. CBT, narrative therapy, ACT, trauma informed counselling
- Frequency and estimated duration of the interventions
- Clinical objectives

**Request for proposed group work**

*Prior approval from Victims Services is required before undertaking any proposed group-work. If group-work is being proposed, as a starting point for the request, please advise:*

1. The type of group-work proposed; and
2. The program for the group-work (including any relevant start dates and venue)
3. The benefit of group-work to the client in relation to the overall proposed interventions

**Prognosis and expected outcomes**

*Please document factors that influence a positive or poor prognosis.*

**Section 10: Alternate response(s) to counselling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the client require another response to address his/her needs?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*If yes, is this: ☐ in addition to counselling? ☐ instead of counselling?*

*Please specify your reasoning and any actions to support the client to access alternate services/support:*

**Section 11: Approved Counsellor comments**
Appendix 8 – Progress Report template

Progress Report template

This template has been developed to ensure Victims Services clients receive a thorough and comprehensive evaluation of their treatment needs throughout counselling.

Counsellors are to submit a Progress Report to Victims Services when:

- 10 hours of counselling has been provided to a client and the counsellor is requesting further Approved Counselling hours for that client
- 20 hours of counselling has been provided to a client who is a family member of a homicide victim.

Counsellors should apply professional judgement with respect to writing style, description of clients’ backgrounds and presentations, breadth of recommendations and length of Progress Reports.

Please ensure Progress Reports includes information relevant to clients’ situations only, and routinely indicate sources of information.

Please e-mail completed reports to Victims Services via vs@justice.nsw.gov.au. To assist with legibility, please ensure Progress Reports are typed and not handwritten.

Please ensure clients are aware to submit a Request for Further Hours of Approved Counselling form, which is available on Victims Services website.

Please contact the Counselling Coordinator on 8688 2527 if you require further information or guidance.

Information for clients

Counsellors must inform clients of the purpose of the assessment and the limits of confidentiality. Clients must be advised this report will include their personal information as well as the counsellor’s clinical impressions and treatment recommendations.

Clients have the right to request a copy of counselling reports required to be produced under the Approved Counselling Scheme (ACS). Clients may wish to share their reports with their solicitors or other government departments in support of applications for public services/schemes. Clients MUST give their informed consent before counsellors release counselling reports to a third party.

Clients may lodge financial assistance applications with Victims Services. Victims Services may use counselling reports produced under the ACS among other information to assess the effects of acts of violence on clients.

Clients should be encouraged to contact Victims Services directly to discuss any questions related to this assessment.

The Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors contains additional information on confidentiality and privacy.

The Practice Standards for Approved Counsellors includes guidance to counsellors with respect to court subpoenas for counselling reports and other counselling communications. Counsellors MUST refer to this guidance before responding to subpoenas.
Progress Report

Report date

Section 1: Client details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Date of birth</th>
<th>VS Reference No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Section 2: Approved Counsellor’s details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Practice address</th>
<th>Contact No.</th>
<th>Email address</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Psychologist</td>
<td>☐ Generalist Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Social Worker</td>
<td>☐ Specialist Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Psychiatrist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3: Counselling hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of sessions completed to date</th>
<th>Total No. of hours used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Are you recommending the additional counselling hours for the client? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Note: Counsellors cannot see clients for further counselling until the additional hours requested have been approved by Victims Services. Payments may not be made to counsellors who see clients without approval of hours.

Section 4: Further details regarding alleged act(s) of violence recorded in the Initial Report (if applicable)

Updated description of of alleged act(s) of violence included in the Initial Report.

Note: Please note whether the updated information relates to the act(s) of violence the client is seeking counselling for or historic act(s) of violence.

Section 5: Further background information (if applicable)

Please update the description provided in the Initial Assessment if further information has become available

Section 6: Current mental health status/behavioural observations

Please update the description provided in the Initial Assessment with any changes in the client’s mental health status or observed behaviours. Points of consideration include: thought processes, memory, mood or affect
### Section 7: Risk assessment

| Are there any presenting suicidal risk factors? | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Indicate presence of: suicidal ideation, plan, imminence of suicide attempt, and any other information |

| Are there any presenting child protection risk factors? | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Indicate presence of: suicidal ideation, plan, imminence of suicide attempt, and any other information |

| Are there any presenting serious domestic violence risk factors? | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| Indicate presence of: suicidal ideation, plan, imminence of suicide attempt, and any other information |

### Section 8: Counselling/treatment plan

<p>| Outcomes of interventions used to date |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Proposed interventions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please outline the proposed interventions for the client and specify:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The modality/modalities to be taken: e.g. CBT, narrative therapy, ACT, trauma informed counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequency and estimated duration of the interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clinical objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Have any psychometric assessments been administered since the Initial Assessment? | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| If yes, please specify the type of assessment and relevant results: |

| Remaining interventions |
| Prognosis and expected outcomes *(Please document factors that influence a positive or poor prognosis)* |

### Section 9: Alternate response(s) to counselling

| Does the client require another response to address his/her needs? | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| If yes, is this: ☐ in addition to counselling? ☐ instead of counselling? |
| Please specify your reasoning and any actions to support the client to access alternate services/support: |

### Section 10: Approved Counsellor comments
Appendix 9 – Application for payment of travel expenses

Application for payment of travel expenses

Claim for payment for mileage by approved counsellors pursuant to the *Victims Rights and Support Act 2013*

Approved Counsellor’s details

Name ..........................................................................................................................................................................

Address ...................................................................................................................................................................

...........................................................................................................................................Post code

Accreditation number ..................................................................................................................................................

Record of services provided for the month of .................................................................

Travel request granted approved by Victims services (name/date) ........................................................................

Type of vehicle used for travel (year, make, model) ............................................................................................

Engine capacity (in cc’s) ...............................................................................................................................

Applicant Reference Number (Approval Ref. No.) ...............................................................................................

Applicant’s name .............................................................................................................................................

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Speedometer reading (commencement of trip)</th>
<th>Speedometer reading (completion of trip)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>kms used</th>
<th>total kms</th>
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<td>Total kms:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counsellor’s signature .................................................................................................................................

Date....../......../ .......

ACCOUNTS USE ONLY

Rate per km................................

kms verified................................
Appendix 10 – Application for GST payment of travel expenses (sample)

Application for GST payment of travel expenses

Tax invoices where the total price is less than $1000

TAX INVOICE
ABC Counselling Services Pty Ltd
50 Main Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
ABN 83 747 243 645

TO: Victims Services
Locked Bag 5118
Parramatta NSW 2124

DATE: 1 August 2015

DESCRIPTION
Travel to see client J. Smith to provide counselling

$55.00

TOTAL PRICE (including GST)
$55.00

The words “tax invoice” stated prominently
Date of issue of the tax invoice
GST – Inclusive price of the taxable supply
A brief description of each item supplied
A statement that the total price includes GST or the GST amount
Appendix 11 – Approved Counselling Service client feedback form

As a victim of crime who has received counselling under the Approved Counselling Scheme, Victims Services would like your feedback on the counselling you received.

What is counselling claim no? ..........................................................................................................................................

What is your name *(optional)*? ....................................................................................................................................

What is the name of your counsellor? .....................................................................................................................................

How many sessions of counselling have you had?

- [ ] 1-2
- [ ] 3-5
- [ ] 6-10
- [ ] 11-15
- [ ] 16-20
- [ ] More than 20

Are you continuing with counselling?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, I have finished
- [ ] I haven’t decided/may return in the future
- [ ] I am continuing counselling privately

Comments ..................................................................................................................................................................
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Was the counselling worthwhile and helped you to cope better?

- [ ] very helpful
- [ ] helpful
- [ ] I am not sure
- [ ] a little helpful
- [ ] not helpful

What have you found helpful about counselling? *(Please tick as many as you want)*

- [ ] My counsellor provided me with options and tools
- [ ] I was able to talk about my problems
- [ ] My counsellor did not judge me
- [ ] My problems felt more manageable
- [ ] My counsellor was a supportive listener
- [ ] My counsellor understood what I was going through
- [ ] My symptoms improved
- [ ] Other *(Please specify)*

Comments ..................................................................................................................................................................
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What didn’t you like about counselling? *(Please tick as many as you want)*

- [ ] I didn’t feel that my counsellor understood what I was going through
- [ ] I had problems making appointments
- [ ] My counsellor did not listen to me
- [ ] I didn’t like talking about what has happened
- [ ] My family hasn’t supported me going to counselling
- [ ] Other *(Please specify)*

Comments ..................................................................................................................................................................
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Would you recommend counselling for other victims of crime?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Where did you hear about the Approved Counselling Service? *(Please tick)*

- Counsellor
- Police
- Family/friend
- Solicitor
- Doctor
- Hospital
- Caseworker
- Internet
- Work
- School
- Victims Access Line (VAL) / Support Coordination Team (SCT)
- Prosecutor (Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP)
- Other (please indicate)

Do you want to talk to someone at Victims Services about your counselling? For example, talk about a change of counsellor or any concerns you might have?

- No
- Yes *(please provide your phone number and best time to call)*

What is your age?

- Under 18 years
- 18-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- Over 70 years

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Type of violence you experienced

- Assault
- Sexual assault
- Domestic/family violence
- Home invasion
- Robbery
- Other *(please specify)*

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Approved Counselling Service?

- No
- Yes *(Please specify)*

Comments

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Thank you for completing this survey on your experience of the Approved Counselling Service. 
*We will use your feedback to continue to improve our service.*