

## What is counselling?

Counselling is one of the ways that you can get support for yourself following a rape or sexual assault. Counselling at Yarrow Place is provided by workers who have been trained and have experience in helping and supporting people. Some people decide they want to talk to someone straight away, others leave it for months or even years after a rape or sexual assault. Other people don't want to talk about it at all.

### Counselling may help you when:

- you feel confused and the more you think about things, the more confused you get
- an issue is seriously impacting on your day to day life
- you feel alone and as if nobody understands you
- most days, life seems really hard and you can't cope any more
- you have strong feelings like anger, self blame or depression and nothing seems to help.

### The role of the counsellor is to:

- provide a safe place away from other demands in your life to think about issues in your life
- enable you to explore your thoughts and feelings at your own pace
- focus on your needs
- assist you in exploring options/solutions regarding difficulties you may be experiencing
- assist you to monitor how things are going.

### The main aims of counselling are to help you to:

- feel more in control of your life
- find solutions you haven't tried yet
- become clearer about your strengths and supports and how to use them to your best advantage.

## Do I need counselling after a rape or sexual assault?

Help and support can be really important after a rape or sexual assault. Whether or not you want counselling may depend on:

- how you are feeling
- how things are going for you
- what you need to know in relation to what happened
- whether there is a trusted person who will listen, understand and support you
- whether you feel "stuck" on a certain issue or on a thought that's always there

## Do I need to talk about details of the rape or sexual assault in counselling?

That depends on what works for you. Some people find it helpful to talk about what happened, others don't. If you don't want to talk about the details, that's okay. What's important to talk about is how the rape or sexual assault is affecting you and what you would like to do to manage those impacts.

## Is there a cost for counselling?

At Yarrow Place, counselling services are free of charge.

## When attending counselling at Yarrow Place we ask that you:

- be considerate of the rights of others using the service - especially their right to confidentiality
- let us know if you have any special needs such as childcare, interpreter or disability requirements
- attend appointments without being under the influence of drugs and alcohol that affect your thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- let us know if you are unable to keep an appointment.

## What are my rights when seeing a Yarrow Place counsellor?

When using Yarrow Place services you have a range of rights that are outlined in the Yarrow Place pamphlet .

### In relation to counselling, your rights include the right to:

- be treated with respect and in a sympathetic, constructive and reassuring way
- have your culture, ethnic background, beliefs and sexuality respected
- receive relevant and accurate information
- make your own decisions
- be counselled in a way that empowers you
- decide when to begin and end counselling
- request to change to another counsellor
- confidentiality (see also Yarrow Place pamphlet 'CASE NOTES')
- complain if you are not satisfied with the service you receive.

## What about group work at Yarrow Place?

Yarrow Place offers a range of groups and information seminars. Please talk to your counsellor or the duty worker about what groups are available.

Group work means getting together with facilitators and a group of people who have had similar experiences. Benefits from becoming a member of a group may include:

- support, companionship, encouragement
- a safe place to meet others who have experienced similar things
- realising that you are not the only one
- opportunities to explore some things you find difficult to talk about. It's likely that someone in the group will be talking about the thing you couldn't
- new ways of doing things: you may wonder how to cope with something in your life right now and another group member may have gone through the same thing and offer good strategies.

## Significant Other Counselling

Support for those close to the survivor of rape and sexual assault is very important for healing. Support persons such as family members, partners and friends are offered a limited number of counselling sessions at Yarrow Place. This provides an opportunity for support persons to express their reactions to what happened, to explore coping strategies and to discuss how to support the survivor.

## Yarrow Place Services

A range of counselling and medical services which may be accessed according to individual need:

- 24 hour crisis response for recent assault which can include counselling and/or medical
- Counselling support for recent victims of rape
- Long term counselling if requested or required
- Support for those close to the survivor of rape and sexual assault is very important for healing. Support persons such as family members, partners and friends are offered a limited number of counselling sessions at Yarrow Place. This provides an opportunity for support people to express their reactions to what happened, to explore coping strategies and to discuss how to support the survivor.
- Specialised medical care and follow-up
- Collection of forensic evidence as requested by those people who have made, or may wish to make, a complaint to police
- Group programs offered throughout the year
- Education, training and consultation for workers
- Community Education to increase knowledge and awareness

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## Counselling at Yarrow Place

