

Referral process

Children's counselling services are free to children in the west who have witnessed or experienced family violence. Counselling is only available during business hours from Monday to Friday.

Mothers' and carers' involvement in children's counselling is crucial to a child's recovery. It can help a mother or carer understand what their child's behaviours may be communicating about their emotional experiences.

We ask mothers and carers to attend parent sessions and, where appropriate, to join the counselling sessions with their child. Please consider this when referring.

It is helpful for the children's counsellors to talk with other people in the child's life, such as school teachers or other professionals supporting the family. We do this only with the consent of the mother/carer. This enables a team approach to working together to support the child's recovery.

Referrals

To make a referral please call Women's Health West intake on (03) 9689 9588

Waiting periods

Depending on demand, there may be a waiting period for these services. Please contact us to find out the current waiting period.



Ruby Roo the Kangaroo

Ruby is a therapy puppet who plays and talks with children in counselling and groups. She is an important part of our team. Ruby has big ears that are great for listening to children's worries!



Women's Health West
317-319 Barkly Street
FOOTSCRAY
VICTORIA 3011

Phone: 03 9689 9588
Fax: 03 9689 3861
TTY: 133 677
Email: info@whwest.org.au
Web: whwest.org.au

Office hours

9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Translating and interpreting service (TIS)

If you need an interpreter, call 131 450

CHILDREN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE



www.whwest.org.au

About the service

The children's counselling team at Women's Health West offers counselling and therapeutic groups for children in the western metropolitan region who have experienced family violence.

We use child-focused therapeutic approaches that include creative arts therapy, music, play and sensory-based activities.

Children's counselling

Counselling is for children between the ages of 0 and 18 who have experienced family violence.

Counselling is most beneficial when the child is:

- No longer living with the person using violence
- Having safe contact arrangements that suit the child's needs
- In relatively stable, safe housing

When a child is referred for counselling, we prefer that the mother/carer is also accessing or is in the process of being linked with counselling for herself.

We are unable to provide assessments or reports for the family court.

Single session	One-off therapy session (further sessions available if required)
Short term	3–6 sessions
Medium term	3–6 months
Long term	Up to a year
Locations	Melton, Hoppers Crossing, Footscray

Benefits of counselling

Children's counselling aims to provide children with opportunities to:

- Express emotions
- Make sense of their experiences of family violence
- Strengthen relationships with their mother or carer
- Strengthen relationships with siblings

We assist adults to create a supportive environment for the child, to understand and respond to the child's behaviours, which may be resulting from trauma.

Child-centred single sessions

A child-centred single session may be offered for both the child/ren and mother to attend.

These sessions are suitable for families who are in crisis, are unable to attend long-term therapy, or who are on a waiting list for counselling.

Child-centred single sessions can:

- Provide more timely support
- Give an intensive experience of what counselling can involve
- Increase the understanding and connection between mother and child
- Collaboratively develop strategies and suggestions for recovery

Sessions last up to two hours and are available as a one-off session or with follow up. Some families may be linked to ongoing counselling after a single session.

SPLASH

Safe Place for Laughter, Arts and Sharing

SPLASH is a therapeutic creative arts group for children aged between 8-12 years who have experienced family violence.

SPLASH encourages children to:

- Identify and express emotions through art making, play and talking
- Build relationships with peers and practice social skills
- Connect with other children who have also experienced family violence
- Have opportunities to strengthen their relationship with their mother or carer

SPLASH is an 8-week program run during school terms 2 and 4. Groups have a maximum of eight participants.

Mothers or carers are expected to participate to support their child through the group process.

Most children who attend SPLASH have already completed counselling sessions but it may suit your child better to start with group therapy.

Contact us to discuss.

