

How do I get counselling?

To get counselling you need to apply for two hours of counselling so a counsellor can assess how much the crime has affected you and how many counselling hours you may need.

If you want further counselling you need to complete a form requesting further counselling and the Tribunal will obtain a report from your counsellor.

Counselling needs to be approved by the Tribunal. If your counselling is refused and you want information about other counselling and support available for victims of crime, you may contact the Victims of Crime Bureau on (02) 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063 (Toll Free) or TTY (02) 9374 3175.

For further information and application forms you can ring the Tribunal on (02) 9374 3111 or 1800 054 069 (Toll Free) or TTY (02) 9374 3175.

Can I discuss my counselling?

If your request for counselling is approved, you will receive a Client Evaluation Form with your approval letter. You are encouraged to complete the form and return it to the Victims of Crime Bureau.

You may also discuss your counselling by contacting a Bureau staff member on (02) 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063 (Toll Free) or TTY (02) 9374 3175.

For further information, see our website:

www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/vs

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Counselling can assist you to recover from the emotional effects of a crime. Some victims of crime who have received counselling have made these comments:

“...Counselling helped me feel I wasn't going crazy after all...”

“With counselling I realised how much my partner and children were affected as well.”

Information about counselling

Approved
Counselling
Scheme



Victims Services
Attorney General's
department of nsw

How can counselling help me?

As a victim of violent crime, counselling can allow you to:

- Talk about what happened
- Understand what you are feeling
- Find ways to cope in the weeks and months after the crime
- Help you gain the supports you need
- Deal with symptoms such as not sleeping, poor concentration, avoiding socialising or being unable to work
- Reduce the extent to which your life is changed by the crime

Who are the Counsellors?

Counsellors who are approved under the Approved Counselling Scheme (ACS) are Social Workers, Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists or Psychiatrists in private practice who have particular expertise in helping to deal with the trauma resulting from a violent crime. They are paid by Victims Services for the counselling hours they provide.

What happens in counselling?

In counselling, your counsellor should:

- Explain the ACS to you
- Listen carefully and respect your point of view
- Ask you details about what is causing you the most difficulty in a way that is sensitive but deals with the effect of the crime

- Explain any psychological testing they may be doing
- Offer useful suggestions for you to manage problems you are experiencing
- Explain why they feel further counselling would, or would not, be helpful for you
- Discuss with you what would be a plan for any further counselling
- Discuss how you are progressing with counselling
- Offer you ideas and referral for any other help you may need
- Prepare a report and may use up to 20-30mins of your counselling hours to do this

What are some things in counselling that should not happen?

Your counsellor should not:

- Change you to another counsellor, unless you request it from the Tribunal
- Miss appointments you have made with them
- Charge you for counselling - unless you agree the approved hours are completed and you wish to continue counselling on a private basis
- Pressure you to apply for further counselling when you do not want it
- Ask you questions or talk to you in a way that makes you personally uncomfortable or is not helping you
- Have any kind of personal or sexual relationship with you

Problems with Counselling

What do I do if I have a problem with my counsellor?

If you have difficulty contacting your counsellor, or your counsellor does not provide an appointment within 48hrs of you getting in contact with your counsellor, then you should ring the Tribunal on (02) 9374 3111 or 1800 069 054 (Toll Free) or TTY (02) 9374 3175 so staff can follow up.

If you find you are not making progress in your counselling, or you feel the counsellor is not the right one for you, you may request a change of counsellor. You should write to the Tribunal and give your reasons why you wish to request another counsellor.

If your counsellor has done something you feel is wrong, for example, wants to charge you for counselling, or asks you questions in a way that makes you personally uncomfortable, you may wish to make a complaint.

Making a complaint

How do I make a complaint about my counsellor?

You can make a complaint by writing to the Director, Victims Services, Locked Bag A5010, Sydney South NSW 1235. If you would like to discuss the problem, you can ring the Bureau on (02) 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063 (Toll Free) or TTY (02) 9374 3175.

What happens if I make a complaint?

Your complaint will be considered by the Director and, depending on her decision, she may send a copy of your complaint to your counsellor and ask them for an explanation. The Director may also refer your complaint to the counsellor's professional body for consideration.

You will be notified in writing of the outcome of your complaint. One outcome can be that the counsellor is removed from the list of Approved Counsellors.