

Children and Youth Counselling Service

About the service

The child and youth counselling team at GenWest offer counselling and therapeutic groups for children and young people in Melbourne's west who have experienced family violence.

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

Children and youth counselling

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

Counselling is most beneficial when the child or young person is:

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

When a child or young person is referred for counselling, we prefer that the parent/carer is able to support their child in engaging in counselling. For example, by bringing them to sessions, participating in parent/carer feedback, being open to accessing counselling support for themselves if needed.

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

Single session:	One-off intensive counselling session
Short term:	3-6 sessions
Medium term:	3-6 months
Long term:	Up to a year
Locations:	Melton, Wyndham, Footscray and Teletherapy



Benefits of counselling

Counselling aims to provide children and young people with opportunities to:

- Express emotions
- Make sense of their experiences of family violence
- Strengthen relationships with their parent/carer and siblings

We support primary carers to understand and respond to the child's experience and behaviour.

Child/youth-centred single sessions

A child/youth-centred single session may be offered for both the child/ren and their primary carer to attend.

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

Child/youth-centred single sessions can:

- Provide more timely support
- Give an intensive experience of what counselling can involve
- Increase the understanding and connection between parent/carer 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 parent/carer

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

The primary carer is expected to participate to support their child through the group process.

Contact us to discuss.

Referral process

Children and youth counselling services are free to children and young people in the west of Melbourne who have witnessed or experienced family violence. Counselling is only available during business hours from Monday to Friday.

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

We ask primary carers to attend parent/carer 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 parent/carer. This enables a team approach to working together to support the child or young person's recovery.

Referrals

To make a referral please call GenWest on 1800 436 937.

Referrals can be sent to:

counselling@genwest.org.au

Waiting periods

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



If you need an interpreter, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 13 14 50.

