



## Senior Counsellor, Family and Couples Job Description

Position Title: Senior Counsellor, Family and Couples  
Location: Ballarat Centre  
Salary: \$60 000 - \$64 000 + 9% Super  
Tenure: .8 to full time, negotiable

### OUR ORGANISATION

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) is a leading provider of relationship support services. Our aim is to help Victorians achieve positive and respectful relationships. As a community-based not-for-profit organisation, we have no religious affiliations, and aim to help all members of the community, regardless of their religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background or economic circumstances. RAV provides client services from 12 locations in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. We employ about 250 professional and support staff.

### POSITION SUMMARY

RAV's counsellors are responsible for the provision of effective, high quality, culturally sensitive relationship counselling/therapy to individuals, couples and families under the Commonwealth Family Law Act through the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP). They are also responsible for dealing with family violence within a risk assessment framework privileging the safety of women and children. Counsellors may also deliver relationship education programs. RAV's counsellors work with a diverse range of clients and issues: including violence and abuse; poor conflict management; poor intimacy; affairs; parenting concerns; the effects of mental health problems and addictions on relationships; sexual difficulties; managing stress; separation and divorce; role conflict, re-partnering; and preparation for marriage.

RAV's counsellors need to work systemically with relationships and be able to work effectively with two or more people at the one time. Counsellors need to be guided by good theory and research, able to choose interventions that are most likely to bring about sustained positive change. When children are part of the family, counselling should also maintain a child-focus. Complex cases may require some case management. **Senior counsellors need to be highly experienced in such work, able to demonstrate mature clinical judgement and effective practice with complex cases.**

All counsellors in RAV operate within a framework of

- Valuing and measuring client outcomes client satisfaction and counselling effectiveness;
- Openness and accountability for one's counselling practice;
- A teamwork approach to service delivery with the necessity of providing support and expertise to team members to enhance each other's clinical practice and deal with the stresses that accompany the work;
- Active participation in clinical supervision, professional development and performance management; and

Senior Counsellors have particular responsibilities for:

- Supervision of counsellors and students
- Managing client allocation to counsellors in special circumstances;
- Advising staff and managers in clinical issues within the Centre, together with the Counselling and Family Violence Practice Leaders;
- Consulting to Centre staff around difficult cases;
- Supporting counsellors in their clinical work
- Overseeing outcomes research and client evaluations
- Carrying out clinical reviews as part of performance management.

In some cases, senior counsellors may also facilitate educational and therapeutic group work.

It is expected that senior counsellors will work under the discipline and ethics of their professional association and participate regularly in professional development activities, including PD in Supervision to the level set by RAV and their professional association.

## **REPORTING**

Reports to:	Centre Manager
Manages:	Nil
Key liaison:	Counsellors, Counselling Practice Leader, other senior clinicians, administrative staff
External Liaison:	Clients, external stakeholders including other service providers

## **FOCUS ON VALUES**

Relationships Australia is a voice for relationships in the community. We believe that relationships can grow and change. We promote the ideal of equitable, safe, cooperative and nurturing relationships in families, workplaces and social organisations.

As a values driven organisation, RAV aims to have organisational values embedded in the functions and systems of the organisation. All RAV employees are required to understand these organisational values, integrate the values into their work and demonstrate behaviours, which reflect the values.

At RAV the following values inform the work we do:

- **Respect**

We respect diversity in its various personal, cultural and gender expressions. We advocate relationships free from judgement, blame and abuse.

- **Integrity**

We promote justice and equity; endeavour to live our ethical standards consistently within our practice; and make our services as accessible as possible without discrimination or judgement.

- **Transparency**

We promote open, safe, effective and honest communication at organisational and client levels.

- **Responsibility**

We value the responsible use of resources – people, money, time and technology. All individuals and the organisation have rights, responsibilities and authority, which need to be clearly articulated and respected.

- **High Quality**

We aim to provide high quality service and maintain the highest professional standards in all aspects of our work. As a part of this process, we foster self-reflection, creativity, innovation and improvement. Keeping an eye on the future, we energetically embrace positive change.

- **Enrichment and Celebration**

We seek to enrich our lives and the lives of our clients. We celebrate contributions, achievements and courageous acts of change in relationships.

## KEY RESULT AREAS

1. Model the organisation's values and associated behaviours across the organisation and within the counselling and supervision relationship.
2. Provide high quality, ethical and effective assessment, counselling/therapy interventions, and relationships skills training to individuals, couples and families in order to stabilise and improve their relationships or assist them to end relationships with fewer negative consequences. This will include:
  - Delivering the agreed number of sessions at the times negotiated;
  - Ensuring case load and case mix are following agreed guidelines;
  - Maintaining accurate records of client attendance, appropriate case notes and necessary forms;
  - Ensuring that service delivery complies with the appropriate policies and procedures as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual and legislative requirements such as mandatory reporting, Intervention Orders and Parenting Orders;
  - Consistently and effectively engaging clients and maintaining good working alliances – with consistently positive evaluations from clients;
  - Consistent participation in team meetings, session observations, research projects, and practice quality processes as required;
  - Effective management of an appointments diary.

- 3 Follow reasonable instructions and requests in accordance with RAV's values.
- 4 Receive regular evaluations from clients on their counselling and group work and use them to improve practice and achieve better outcomes.
- 5 Increase their professional competence and skills in the relevant field of work through active participation in supervision, professional development, and clinical review.
- 6 Maintain positive and supportive relationships with Centre Manager, colleagues, and administrative staff, and report or actively address issues that interfere with work conditions and team functioning.
- 7 Provide regular one-on one and group supervision to counsellors, educators/group workers, students and interns as required following supervision policies and procedures.
- 8 Provide support and informal debriefing to other practitioners as appropriate.
- 9 Participate in RAV's supervisors group which will meet regularly for its own supervision and professional development.
- 10 Contribute to the effective planning, implementation and management of RAV counselling and education services.
11. Encourage, facilitate and participate in the regular observation and/or recording of sessions by counsellors to develop clinical expertise and allow for good clinical review processes.
- 12 Maintain up-to-date knowledge of RAV's services other services in the region.
- 13 Maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant research, government policy and legislative changes affecting RAV's couple and family relationships and counselling practice;
- 14 Assist administrative staff and centre managers with client intake and assessment processes.

## **KEY SELECTION CRITERIA**

The recruiting panel will need to feel confident that the successful candidate has the professional competence and leadership capabilities to operate as a senior counsellor in couples and family work, and that s/he supports the organisation's values and will integrate them into their dealings with others.

Candidates are thus asked to respond to the following key selection criteria, preferably offering evidence from previous roles.

- *Visibly ethical* - acting in accordance with professional ethics and the organisation's values.
- *Professional expertise* –able to demonstrate advanced skills in helping individuals, couples and families change problematic relationship behaviours, including where violence and abuse are present. A senior clinician should have advanced skills in assessment and case conceptualisation, contracting and goal-setting, using appropriate evidence-based or professionally acceptable interventions. S/he should understand the professional issues involved in writing appropriate case notes and following good clinical procedures.
- *Communication* – able to communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, to develop and maintain professional relationships, and share ideas successfully, including reporting succinctly and accurately. Able also to de-escalate strong negative emotion when necessary

- *Self awareness* – able to understand self, to appreciate difference, to be culturally sensitive and to build sustainable professional relationships with stakeholders at various levels, encouraging and supporting workplace harmony.
- *Visibly ethical* - acting in accordance with professional ethics and the organisation's values.
- *Leadership* – drawing on professional expertise, able to influence and encourage others to conceptualise and embrace creative solutions to clinical issues. Able to work independently, whilst contributing strongly as a team member.
- *Organisational awareness* – able to understand the sector, funding bodies, contractual obligations and the organisational strategic direction, and contribute to linking professional practice with organisational outcomes and client satisfaction.
  - *Client Service* – having an ethic of equitable, responsive and appropriate professional service to all clients and an egalitarian approach to male/female relationships as reflected in Australian law.
- *Cultural awareness* – Having a considered appreciation of differences in culture, religion, and sexual orientation and a willingness to work respectfully and flexibly with such differences.
  - *Flexibility* – able to continuously develop and work successfully in a changing environment, accept new challenges and continually strive for improvement.

#### **Mandatory KSC:**

- Post graduate qualifications in Psychology, Social Work, Family Therapy or Counselling.
- Specialised training in relationship counselling or family therapy (with a significant skills-based component);
- The equivalent of three years full time supervised experience (i.e. 2640 hours direct counselling) in relationship/couples counselling/therapy or family therapy;
- Experience in working with partner and family violence;
- Eligibility for membership of a professional body (e.g. the APS, AASW, or an appropriate PACFA organisation).
  - Successful completion of police check and a current Working with Children Clearance.
  - Excellent self awareness and interpersonal and self management skills.
  - Ability to work flexible hours with some evening or Saturday morning work.
  - Short listed applicants will be asked to provide evidence of high quality clinical practice following their initial interview with RAV.

#### **Highly desired:**

- Supervision training
- Experience as a supervisor within an agency setting
- Completion of the 'No to Violence' Graduate Certificate in Men's Behaviour Change Group Facilitation and Supervision.
- Familiarity with the legal context of marriage and family life, including recent changes to the Family Law Act;
- A considered appreciation of differences in culture, religion and sexual orientation and a willingness to work respectfully with such differences.