

# Who we are

Relationships Australia (Victoria) – RAV – is a leading provider of relationship support services.

Our aim is to help Victorians achieve positive and respectful relationships.

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.

We provide services from 12 centres in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Structurally, RAV is part of a national federation of Relationships Australia organisations that operate independently, yet share common objectives.

The majority of our funding comes from the Australian Government, with additional funding received from state and local government grants, and client fees.

Many services are provided free or at a modest charge, depending on the client's ability to pay.

# Our purpose

Our purpose is to enhance the lives of individuals, couples, families and communities by helping them build strong relationships through the provision of specialist relationship services.

# Our values

RAV believes in the core values of:

- respect
- integrity
- transparency
- responsibility
- high quality
- enrichment/celebration

# Our services

RAV offers a diverse range of relationship support services.

## Counselling

Our specialised counselling covers relationships in all their aspects, for example thinking about how to nurture and improve an existing relationship, or reflecting on what's not working well. It includes:

- family counselling
- men's and women's counselling
- pre-marriage program
- relationship counselling
- drought counselling
- telephone counselling.

## Family Dispute Resolution

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) services assist separating parents to reach agreements that are in the best interests of their children, and encourage separating couples to parent cooperatively.

Parenting plans or agreements are used in this process.

## Family Violence Prevention

We provide sensitive, supportive and professional family violence services, including counselling and dispute resolution services, group programs and referral options to support people who have experienced violence and abuse.

We also offer group programs and courses to assist people who commit violence in the family to take responsibility for their behaviour, and to encourage respectful ways of relating.

## Relationship skills

RAV offers a variety of relationship education courses, run in small groups.

The courses connect participants with others who may be facing similar issues and challenges.

This can help people to feel less alone in their concerns and problems, as they learn new skills to help improve their own situation.

## Gambler's Help

RAV runs a Gambler's Help program from our Ballarat Centre for communities in the Grampians Region.

An integral part of the program is a free counselling service for those who have been affected by out-of-control gambling behaviour.

## Post-Separation Parenting

In addition to Family Dispute Resolution (FDR), we provide assistance to separating couples through ordinary counselling sessions.

Counsellors can support people to work through the best arrangements for their children and address any emotional conflicts, separate from the more technical aspects of FDR.

We also offer group work and post-separation parenting courses at which individual mums and dads come together with others in similar situations to share their experiences and learn skills.

## Men and Family Relationships

Our services for men include counselling, groups, family dispute resolution, assistance on relationship and parenting matters, and education courses on relationship issues and personal growth.

# Family Relationship Centres

RAV is the lead agency in four Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) established by the Australian Government.

The centres aim to strengthen families, help them stay together and assist with separation. They encourage separating parents to focus strongly on the needs of their children.

FRCs offer individual and joint sessions to assist separating families create workable parenting arrangements. They also host group information sessions and workshops on a range of practical topics to assist families.

The centres offer three hours of free joint Family Dispute Resolution (FDR).

They work collaboratively with, and provide referrals to, a variety of other services, matching the needs of the family or individuals.

## Professional training

RAV's professional training is undertaken by Training Ground - a Registered Training Organisation since 2007.

Training Ground provides accredited training in relationship management and family dispute resolution for clinicians and other professionals who work in human services. It also provides clinical supervision and consultancy services.

Training Ground offers the Vocational Graduate Diploma in Family Dispute Resolution, a step now required for Australia's FDR workers.

Its Specialist Course in Couple Therapy is an accredited component of the:

- Masters in Couple & Relationship Counselling (La Trobe University)
- Masters in Counselling and Human Services (La Trobe University)
- Master of Social Work Clinical Degree (University of Melbourne).

## Our history

RAV has its roots in the marriage guidance movement that was developed in Melbourne in 1948.

Victoria was one of three states to establish a marriage guidance council, the others being New South Wales and South Australia.

The move was driven by deep concern at the impact of the Second World War on marriages, and the potential threat that marriage breakdown would have on Australia's ability to rebuild a stable society.

The early organisers were community-spirited people, clergy, doctors, professionals and 'some persons of high social rank' in the philanthropic and charitable areas.

The late 1970s and early eighties saw increased professionalisation of services, resulting in the recruitment of paid professional staff and the phasing out of trained volunteer counsellors.

Growth continued in the eighties and nineties thanks to the organisation's ability to secure government funding for new programs, including family dispute resolution services, specialist family violence services and counselling services for problem gambling.

During this period the name was changed from Marriage Guidance Council to Relationships Australia, reflecting social shifts which brought more fluid arrangements into couple and family life.

Family law reform in 2005 had a significant impact on RAV's services. We are now involved in operating eight Family Relationship Centres - four as the lead agency and four as consortium members.

The organisation has adapted to meet the diverse and often complex needs of our clients and the community.

## Our people

RAV employs a dedicated team of highly skilled and qualified professionals with expertise in counselling, family dispute resolution, skills development and training.

Our frontline staff are supported by corporate services in a range of areas, including human resources, communications, information technology and financial administration.

Together, we focus on ensuring our clients' needs are at the forefront of everything we do.

## More information

For general enquiries, call 1300 364 277 for the cost of a local call or visit our website: [www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au](http://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au)

For appointments, telephone your nearest centre.

Funded by the Australian Government.

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