

Transforming Trauma



Information Booklet



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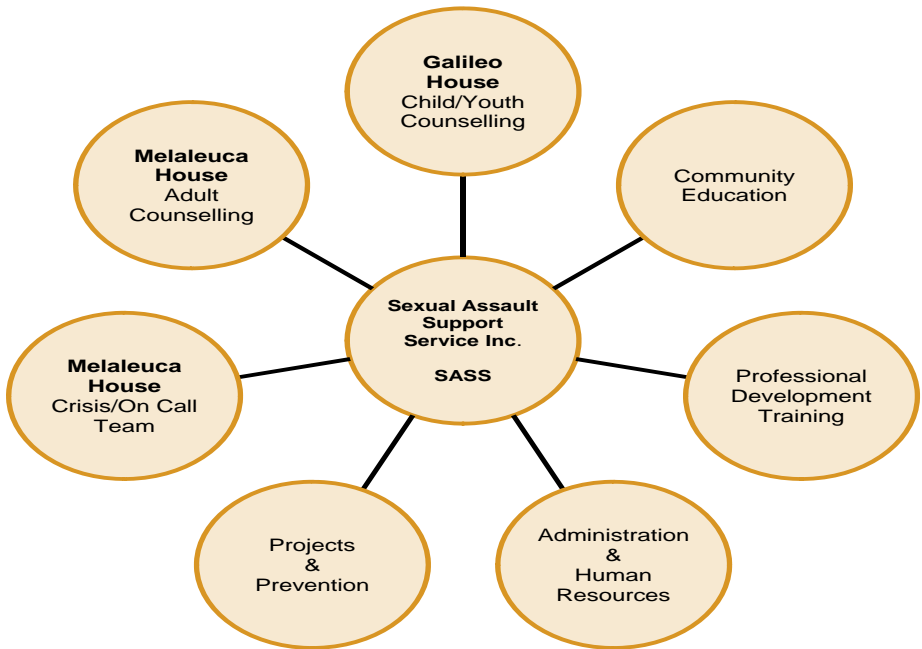
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Structure

SASS is the governing body of Galileo House and Melaleuca House. These two services operate from two separate locations.



Mission Statement

The Sexual Assault Support Service Inc. provides counselling, education, advocacy and preventative strategies, honouring individual resilience, while striving to achieve a community free of sexualised violence based on justice, equity and respect.

Vision

An organisation dedicated to eliminating sexual violence, which is an abuse of power by:

- Leading and stimulating change in community structures, values and attitudes
- Removing barriers to participation and inclusion
- Recognising and supporting those that have been sexually assaulted, including children with Problem sexualised behaviour
- Celebrating courage and uniqueness

Values

- Personal responsibility and integrity
- Safe and genuine respectful therapeutic relationships
- Continuous improvement in client support and organisational development
- Ongoing development of networks, partnerships and alliances

Core Business

- Crisis intervention
- Counselling and group work
- Advocacy and support
- Community education
- Professional training and support



Philosophy

- Individuals can work towards and create their own meaningful recovery from sexualised trauma.
- Addressing sexual violence is a community responsibility which requires education, increasing awareness, changing systems and attitudes.

Definition

Sexual Assault Support Service defines sexual assault as any sexualised behaviour that is uninvited, unwelcome, or unwanted.

Commitments

SASS is passionate in its commitment to:

- Education and advocacy that has the capacity to minimise and/or prevent sexualised trauma.
- Provision of outreach programs, special projects, training and information for the general community.
- Professional development in response to sexualised trauma for workers in Government and community services such as social workers, police, ambulance officers, teachers etc.

- Resourcing the Sexual Assault Medical Service Unit (SAMS Unit) and offering appropriate training to the staff of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- Maintaining highest quality standards in service delivery.
- Proactively identifying and responding to community needs through research and community consultation.
- Actively engaging clients in governance and service delivery.
- Lobbying for change in Government and departmental policy and input into legislation.
- Seeking ongoing and broad ranging funding from Government and private agencies.
- Offering professional support and debriefing to other agency workers who work with sexual assault survivors.

Our services also provide free, current and relevant information about sexual assault and its ramifications to members of the community through printed resources and the website, www.sass.org.au

About our services

Our services are free and confidential for all individuals impacted by sexualised trauma. Self referrals are welcome.

All services have male and female counsellors who are professionally trained in the fields of counselling, psychology and social work with specialist training in sexualised trauma.

Counsellors use a range of counselling methods, both individually and in groups, which are all client centred and age appropriate including:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Play therapy
- Psycho-education
- Solution focused therapy
- Narrative therapy
- Family therapy



Galileo House provides counselling and support for children and young people who have been subjected to sexual abuse. Counselling and support is also provided to family members and

other support people. Galileo House also provides counselling and support to children (under 13 years) and their families for problem sexualised behaviour issues.

Galileo House is located at 73 Federal St., North Hobart.

Open Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

Please phone (03) 6231 0044 for information and appointments.

Melaleuca House provides:

- Crisis counselling for all survivors of sexual assault as well as parents and carers. The crisis service also offers support with police statements, and coordinates medical and/or forensic examinations if required by victims of recent sexual assault. This is provided 24 hours 7 days a week (03) 6231 1817
- Individual counselling and group programs for any survivors of sexual assault 18 years and older, also family members and support people.

Melaleuca House is located at 95–97 Campbell St. Hobart

Open Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

Please phone (03) 6231 1811 for information and appointments.

Email: admin@sass.org.au

SASS also provides an enquiry page on our Website: www.sass.org.au where a counsellor will provide information.

Services available for professionals:

- Consultation
- Training
- Supervision
- Access to library and resources
- Information and debriefing
- Professional development and training



For more information contact the Community Education Officer via email at project@sass.org.au

Some facts about sexualised trauma/violence

Sexualised trauma affects people of all genders, cultures, ages and socio – economic backgrounds.

Sexualised trauma can be perpetrated by a person of any gender, age or sexual orientation.

Sexualised violence is most likely to happen in a private home.

Sexualised violence is more likely to be committed by some one known and trusted by the person.

Sexualised violence is a violent act as opposed to a sexual act.

Sexualised violence is any behaviour that is carried out without consent of, or against the wishes of the person to whom it is directed.

Sexualised violence is an attack on a person's body, senses, emotions and sense of self.

People affected by sexualised trauma may experience feelings of shame, guilt, betrayal and distrust.

Some effects of sexualised violence

Emotional shock: I feel numb. How can I be so calm? Why do I feel like crying?

Disbelief and/or denial: Did it really happen? Why me? Maybe I just imagined it.

Embarrassment: What will people think? I can't tell my partner, family or friends.

Shame: I feel filthy, like there's something wrong with me. I can't get clean.

Guilt: I feel like it's my fault, or I should have been able to stop it. If only I had....

Depression: How can I fix this? I feel so hopeless.

Powerlessness: Will I ever feel in control again?

Disorientation: I don't know what day it is. I keep forgetting things.

Flashbacks: I keep seeing that face and feel like it's happening all over again.

Fear: What if I have some disease? I have nightmares. I'm afraid to go out. I'm afraid to be alone.

Anxiety: I'm having panic attacks. I can't breathe! I feel overwhelmed.

Anger: I feel like killing the person who attacked me. I am so angry.

Physical Stress: Parts of me ache all the time. I feel stressed.

The client needs to;

- feel believed.
- know that they are not responsible for the assault.
- have permission to feel all feelings.



CLIENT RIGHTS

SASS is committed to the principle of empowerment and believes that it is the right of each client to:

- Have access to all information about them that is held by SASS.
- Receive support, counselling and accurate easy-to-understand information regarding issues of sexualised trauma.
- Receive a best practice standard of service by specialised and trained staff. This includes being listened to and believed, a service provided in a safe manner which respects the client's dignity and independence and is responsive to the client's social, cultural and physical needs.

- Be informed of appointment changes where possible and in a reasonable time frame.
- Request a different counsellor.
- Make a complaint following the procedure in this booklet.
- Have views taken into account in the planning and evaluation of the service.
- Have rights to privacy and confidentiality protected (See SASS Confidentiality Statement in this booklet. **Note:** Limited confidentiality applies if there is a risk to the client's safety or to the safety of others).
- Be provided with information, support and advocacy to maximise choices when making decisions about legal, medical and support services.
- Have an interpreter if needed.
- Be treated in a sympathetic and constructive manner, with due regard to your personal health, rights, dignity and safety.
- Be accompanied by a support person of their choice.
- Confidentiality and privacy.
- Make their own choices about having or refusing any form of care or treatment.
- Give informed consent for any procedure.



CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

While a client is using the Service, SASS believes it is a clients responsibility to:

- Act in ways which respect the rights of other clients and SASS staff.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of others, including SASS staff.

- Contact SASS if unable to keep an appointment.
- Enhance the positive effects of the counselling process by limiting the influence of drugs or alcohol while attending an appointment.
- Inform SASS if there is a grievance/complaint and to follow the grievance procedure.

It is preferred that clients provide SASS with a safe current contact phone number in case of appointment changes or emergencies.

Cancelling appointments

Clients can cancel and reschedule appointments by phoning before their appointment time.

Interpreters

If English is not a clients first language and there is anxiety about understanding any part of what may occur as a result of the sexual assault, an interpreter can be made available.

Confidentiality

The Sexual Assault Support Service Inc policy states that the Board of Governance members and staff members must not disclose, divulge, or make accessible confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with SASS to any person, including relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, other than to persons who have a legitimate need for such information and to whom SASS has authorised disclosure.

This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law.



Confidentiality of staff

All information about staff including their phone numbers, addresses and personal lives remains confidential to the service.

Confidentiality of Clients

The client is always given the option of using a false name or to remain anonymous.

Confidentiality will only be breached under the following specific circumstances:

- There is written permission to do otherwise.
- There is risk to a clients safety or the safety of others.
- SASS is mandated to report to the Department of Health & Human Services when a person under the age of 18 has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

Client files

SASS maintains client personal files and stores them in keeping with Confidentiality Principles and the Privacy Act (1988)

Clients have the right to access their files on request.

The Evidence Act of 2001 gives counselling notes privilege. This means that counselling notes cannot be subpoenaed. However if your counsellor has been requested to give an Affidavit, this privilege is waived.

Clients may request that information not be recorded in their file. Clients may choose to email their counsellor with confidential information which would be stored in their file. However SASS staff will not offer return counselling via email. Clients may also access counselling via phone.



Making a Complaint

SASS welcomes information and feedback from those who have accessed the service as it enables the quality of its services to be improved. If a client is unhappy with the quality of service they have received at SASS, they have a right to say so. It is important to know that:

1. Making a complaint in no way means that they lose the right to use this service. If someone implies this, complain to someone else.
2. Where possible a client should talk about a complaint in their own words and not allow somebody else's interpretation of the problem.
3. We welcome the use of an advocate or support person to speak on a clients behalf, if this is preferred.

The following steps are recommended for making a complaint. Be clear about what the problem is. It may help to write it down. Clients can either:

- A. Talk directly with the staff member concerned. They can explain to them why they feel there is a problem, be able to answer any of their questions and find that, through this process, the issue may be able to be dealt with.

or

- B. Contact Chief Executive Officer on 6231 0044 to discuss the issue. If necessary, a complaint form can be requested. Return completed form to SASS, P.O. Box 217, North Hobart, TAS. 7002. The CEO will arrange a mutually agreeable meeting time.

or

- C. If the complaint concerns the CEO, return completed form to the Chairperson, SASS, Board of Governance at the above address. The Chairperson will be in contact to organise a meeting.

If, after approaching SASS the issue remains unresolved, clients may contact the Department of Health & Human Services, Community Sector Relations section on (03) 6233 4931.

Clients will be informed of the outcome of their complaint and have the opportunity to provide feedback on the complaint procedure.

The fact that a client has lodged a complaint and the details of the complaint will be kept confidential amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution. The clients permission will be obtained prior to any information being given to other parties who it may be desirable to involve in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.

Evaluation

We are always keen to receive feedback regarding the services we provide. This way we can be sure we are offering the best possible information and services available.

We would really appreciate it if you were to spare a minute and fill the evaluation in this booklet for us. (It is confidential)

You can fill it out and post to

SASS PO Box 217 North Hobart 7002 *or drop it off at*
73 Federal St North Hobart *or at*
97 Campbell St Hobart.

Please add your name and contact details if you would like to receive further information or to become a member of the 'Friends of Galileo House' or 'Melaleuca House' Association.

Remember all your comments are valuable.



Our service is called Galileo House because Galileo Galilei, the famous Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer and philosopher was not silenced.

Galileo followed his truth and displayed courage, conviction and resilience.

Trauma survivors are like Galileo in that they demonstrate resilience and strength to overcome many of the myths and beliefs about sexual assault.



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