



**Rape &
Domestic Violence**
Services Australia

Annual Report

2016/17

Our Vision

A Full Stop to Sexual Assault,
Domestic and Family Violence

Table of Contents

Chairperson's Report	2
Executive Officer's Report	3
Our Work	4
Trauma Specialist Counseling Services	4
New Projects Commencing 2017/18	5
Building Capacity	6
Training	6
Tailored Programs for Services	6
Training Locations	6
Testimonials	6
Best Practice and Evidence-Based	8
Quality	9
Full Stop Foundation	10
Testimonials	10
Community Engagement	12
Treasurer's Report	13
Client Comments	14

Chair's Report



Jane Gold
Chair

This past year has seen significant change for Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia. We made the difficult decision to withdraw from the 1800RESPECT tender. I need to recognise and sincerely thank the support and validation from many individuals and groups.

State Members of Parliament from all sides sent messages of concern, the Australian Services Union worked tirelessly supporting Workers, Media coverage was wide and questioned why R&DVSA, Australia's leading trauma specialist counselling service supporting vulnerable men and women over decades, felt compelled to withdraw. Federal Members of Parliament and Senators, led by ALP and Independent Representatives, raised their voices in Parliament in relation to various controversial requirements under the new 1800RESPECT arrangements. This culminated in a Senate Inquiry, which validated many of the concerns we raised. Time will tell whether this results in a change of approach.

Sister services, NGO's and private businesses shared our pain and wanted to help in any way possible. However, the most humbling experience the Board took courage from was the very Workers who were going to be unemployed by October. Their acceptance and understanding of the Board's decision and rationale showed great character and integrity, and ultimately that the concern they had for their clients was put above their own needs.

R&DVSA does not operate with this level of conviction and courage without great leadership from Executive Officer, Karen Willis, and her Management Team. Hundreds of additional hours were spent advocating for R&DVSA, the Workers and our clients by these dedicated women. Board Members have also shown great skill, commitment and passion, as we navigated a difficult period.

My thanks and admiration goes to Management, Workers and Board, who collectively have adjusted to and redefined the new R&DVSA. Together we will go from strength to strength in pursuing our goal of a society free of domestic and family violence, as well as supporting those who experience sexual abuse.

Watch this space for the future life of R&DVSA!

Executive Officer's Report



Karen Willis, OAM
Executive Officer

2016/17 has been a year of change and renewal for Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. It was the year we made the difficult decision to withdraw from 1800RESPECT.

This decision was supported by staff who were clear that the practices required under the new contract were in opposition to the codes of ethics of their professional associations, and against their personal ethical views. It was also the year the Commonwealth Bank engaged us to provide counselling and financial support for bank customers who were escaping domestic violence.

Demand for our training and consultancy programs, especially in Universities, massively increased and the Full Stop Foundation raised more to support the work of Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia than ever before.

Throughout the year we engaged in a thorough review of all aspects of our service with the outcome being a leaner, efficient, multi-skilled organisation. Of course, our commitment to client-centred work, to integrating a feminist and gendered analysis in all that we do, and always operating from an evidence base, has remained unwavering.

In the coming year we will continue to work to reduce and eventually eliminate sexual assault, family and domestic violence. We will also continue to ensure the support we provide to those who experience such violence is of the highest quality, which is of course no less than they have every right to expect.

We will continue to accept our democratic obligation to give voice to those made vulnerable by their circumstances. Without those voices being equal in public debate only the voices of the powerful will be heard. Any such imbalance will weaken our democracy. We, like other NGO's, will continue to engage in systems advocacy so that our client's voices and their right to a life free of violence will always be heard.

Our Work

Rape & Domestic Violence Services
Australia operates 24/7 and provides specialist trauma counselling services via telephone, online and face-to-face for anyone in Australia whose life has been impacted by sexual assault, family and domestic violence.

Trauma Specialist Counselling Services

NSW Rape Crisis

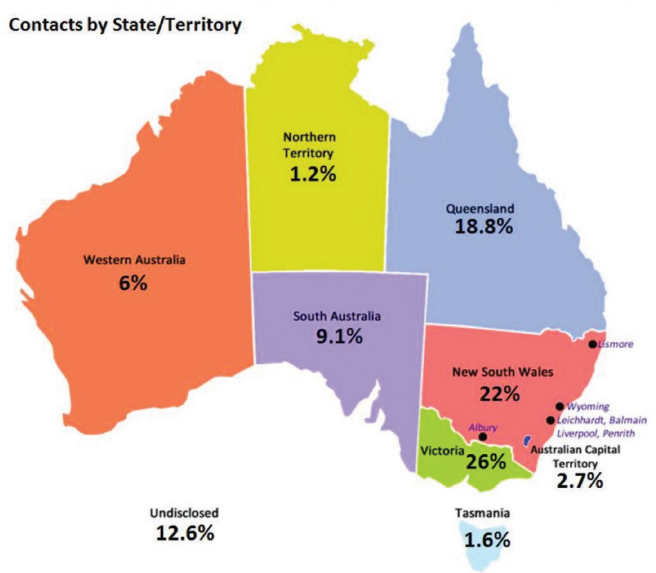
For over 45 years NSW Rape Crisis has provided telephone and, more recently, online counselling, to anyone in NSW whose life has been impacted by sexual assault. This service, funded by the NSW Department of Health, provided 11,957 occasions of service in 2016-17. 2,851 of those contacting were first-time users. This is a 63% increase from 2015-16.

Community Based Counselling

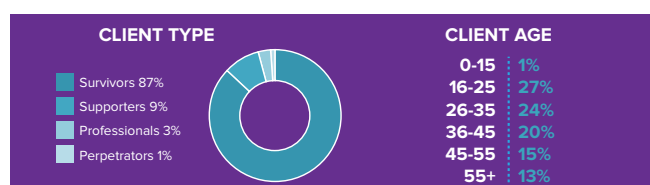
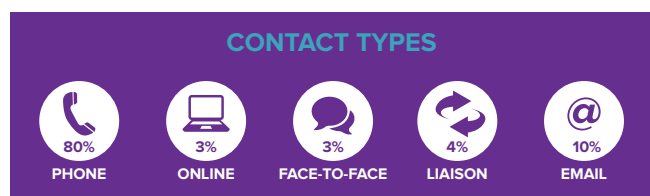
Established in 2009 and funded through NSW Department of Health, this service provides face-to-face trauma specialist counselling for women who experienced sexual assault in childhood. The service is provided from, and in partnership with, six NSW Women's Health Centres. In 2016/17, 1,089 counselling sessions were provided to 178 women.

Sexual Assault Counselling Australia

This service, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, provides telephone, online and face-to-face counselling for adults who experienced sexual assault in childhood and who have been impacted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In 2016/17, 4,256 occasions of service were provided to 313 clients.



Over the past year the organisation has worked with 15,375 clients providing 46,543 occasions of service



1800RESPECT

Since 2010, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia had been the clinical service provider of this national 24/7 telephone and online counselling service for anyone in Australia whose life has been impacted by sexual assault, family or domestic violence. The funding arrangement was via a sub-contract with Medibank Health Solutions. In 2016/17 we provided 28,086 occasions of service, with 11,108 of those being to new clients to the service. Due to ethical concerns about the service, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia withdrew from 1800RESPECT in October 2017.

Yarrow Place

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia provides after hours counselling and support for Yarrow Place clients. Yarrow Place is the South Australia sexual assault service. 551 occasions of service were provided and 296 callers were new to the service.

Secondary Prevention and Behaviour Change

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is contracted by a private organisation to provide behaviour change counselling to employees who have used, or fear they may use, violence in their relationships. Critical to this work is ensuring the safety of current, or past, partners of the client.

Queensland Police Referral Coordination Service

Queensland Police have engaged Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to be a referral point for those who have experienced domestic and family violence.

New Projects Commencing 2017/18

Universities Australia

A 24/7 trauma counselling service will be established for those in the University community who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment. Counselling support will also be provided for those who are impacted by the Australian Human Rights Commission 'Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017)'.

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia has engaged Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to provide trauma counselling and financial support to bank customers who are escaping domestic violence.



Building Capacity

Training

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia offers prevention, workplace and practitioner development training.

The **Prevention** training program *Sex, Safety and Respect* was developed by Professor Moira Carmody with the support of the Hunting Ground Project, for the University environment. This year, training was delivered to the universities of NSW, Melbourne, Wollongong, Sydney and Bond University. Sex Safety and Respect offers:

For staff *‘Ethical Leadership to Prevent Gender Based Violence’ and ‘Sex Safety and Respect; Educators Training’.*

For students *‘Understanding Sexual Consent’ and ‘Sex, Safety and Respect for Student Leaders’.*

Workplace *Responses to Gender Based Violence* assists workplaces to develop their domestic violence policy and trains HR Managers and Team Leaders to respond to disclosures of domestic and family violence. This year clients have included REA Group, Herbert Smith Freehills, KPMG, LionCo and Castle Hill RSL.

For **Practitioners**, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia training offers a range of trauma focused options. Our training programs primarily focus on Vicarious Trauma Management, Specialist Counselling Skills, and supporting people who have experienced trauma.

Over the past year, 123 sessions have been delivered to 2,140 participants across Australia.

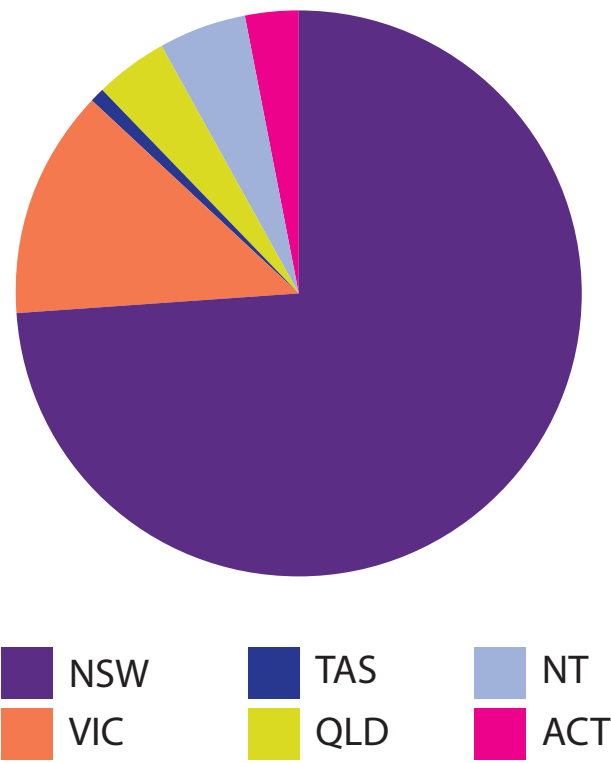
Tailored Programs for Services

This year Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia provided 30 comprehensive and tailored solutions for effectively managing vicarious trauma for client organisations. A further 47 external clinical supervision sessions were provided to practitioners who offer trauma counselling.

All training offered by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is practical, provided by trauma counsellors, is evidence-based and incorporates adult education principles.

Revenue generated supports the organisation’s counselling and other services.

Training Locations



Testimonials:

“Thank you for an informative and thought provoking presentation. It forces you as an individual, and as part of a work culture, to normalise this, rather than think it’s a sign of weakness to voice out your concerns and thoughts”

“Great presenter, very reassuring and motivating to incorporate good self care and recognising VT in myself.”

“Thank you, you were so thorough. The session was so informative and will definitely equip me to do my job better.”

“I have been to a few sessions on DV so knew a bit about this. This was definitely the most thought provoking and informative. The case study examples were really excellent and useful to help our organisation plan for these difficult situations.”

"I found this sessions informative and valuable. A very disturbing topic, but the tone was appropriate and I felt the conversations in case studies provided practical dialogue and I feel more prepared to respond if required."

"The expertise and support from Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia in both consultation and training services is second to none and grounded in evidence-based and best practice solutions. They are a valuable resource to us and have tailored the consultation to meet our needs to effectively support our staff's wellbeing and quality service. The Vicarious Trauma Management Program we have developed together has produced a consistent significant impact on reducing the levels of vicarious trauma in staff, as well as demonstrated positive outcomes on organisational bottom lines, such as productivity, satisfaction and attrition. We value the achievements we have made with R&DVSA and our work together".

- Romaine Moss, Catholic Care – Broken Bay

"Our service engaged Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to improve data collection and analysis of clinical outcomes, and reporting effectively to funding bodies.

The consultation provided empowered our staff to use appropriately researched evaluation tools to more effectively collect, analyse and report on the clinical outcomes that best reflected our service's goals and key performance indicators. As a result, our service is better able to communicate the scope of our impact and our value to the community we serve, and to share this information with Government and other funding bodies where required.

Our Counsellors also access external supervision provided by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, and this has been an invaluable part of our organisation's vicarious trauma management strategy".

- Gail Meyer, Wagga Women's Health Centre



Best Practice & Evidence-Based

All Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia work is underpinned by evidence-based research. This year the following projects were completed:

VT manual

An evidence-based best practice Vicarious Trauma management manual, which integrated previous research, theory, and organisational expertise based on over 12 years of practice.

Group work with survivors of sexual violence

Rape & Domestic Violence Service Australia conducted research on the availability of sexual assault group work programs in NSW. The results were presented at a clinical masterclass hosted by the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS).



■ Services operating group work to people who have experienced sexual violence



Quality

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is committed to continuous quality improvement and maintains the Quality Improvement Council Standards for Health and Community Services accreditation. In the organisation's Mid-Cycle Assessment Report, in September 2016, the Council's comments included:

R&DVSA has made substantial achievements against the quality work plan. The organisation has taken a systems approach to ensure that where changes are required they are documented, implemented and evaluated.

R&DVSA is to be congratulated on their achievements to date against the quality work plan, and their ongoing commitment to drive the continuation of a quality culture within the organisation and contribute to the achievement of effective governance, operations, service delivery and outcomes.

Organisational quality improvements during the year include policy and database development and business continuity planning. In the Counselling Service:

- self-care activities to reduce fatigue were introduced;
- sensorimotor and somatic techniques to reduce heightened sympathetic arousal states in counsellors were trialled;
- clinical supervision was reviewed to increase reflective practice; and
- counsellor consultation meetings were introduced to increase counsellor input.



Full Stop Foundation

The Full Stop Foundation raises money to support the work of Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. The Foundation holds events, promotes appeals and accepts donations. Many people who are passionate about responding to and preventing sexual assault, family and domestic violence have been very generous in their support of the Foundation.

Examples include:

City2Surf August 2016	130 supporters led by patron Tara Moss raised over \$36,000.
Hays and Candid October 2016	Hays Jewellery Manly hosted a fundraising night with the fantastic support of the Candid brand to raise over \$4,600.
International Day to Eliminate Violence November 2016	Developed and shared infographics and social media updates created by Nine Ounces PR.
Get Hairy February February 2017	Peer-to-peer initiative that raised \$40,000, with over 400 women signing up to participate.
Valentine's Day February 2017	Campaign by Hotwire PR urging supporters to share a poem on social media, hashtag #IGotFlowersToday.
#MakeltStop April 2017	Enero Group, advertising agency BMF and PR firm Hotwire developed a video and PR about domestic violence. The #MakeltStop video was viewed 34,582 times on social media sites and countless more through online sharing. The campaign was featured on online sites with a combined Australian readership of over 4 million.
FSF fundraising lunch June 2017	The inaugural fundraising lunch 'Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History', raised over \$36,000.

Testimonials

"As someone who has worked for many years researching these issues, I am proud to be associated with an organisation that is at the forefront of best practice approaches to counselling and prevention. In Karen Willis, the Executive Officer of Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, we have an outstanding and experienced advocate of change in an area where so much remains to be done."

- Professor Catharine Lumby,
Department of Media, Music, Communication
and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University
& Ambassador for the Full Stop Foundation

"Violence against women and children is completely unacceptable in any context. Unfortunately, we still live in a world where gendered violence is still a problem our society is dealing with."

As a person who is passionate about gender equality and who truly believes in the importance of respect, I am so proud to work with an organisation like the Full Stop Foundation, which has such a vital role in raising awareness about violence against women, and educating and supporting our communities until sexual assault and domestic violence are completely eradicated."

We all have a role to play and I stand with the Full Stop Foundation to help create a more equal and tolerant world."

- Mary Konstantopoulos, Founder of Ladies Who League & Ambassador for the Full Stop Foundation

As a community, we all have an obligation to come together to put a full stop to sexual assault and domestic violence. Having spent many years speaking out and reporting on these issues, it is a tremendous privilege to be invited to be an ambassador to the Full Stop Foundation."

The Full Stop Foundation does vital work in funding research and prevention efforts which stop the violence at its source, while also providing support to those whose lives have been impacted by sexual assault and domestic violence. If we are serious about addressing this issue and supporting survivors, then we must stand united in declaring that such violence is absolutely unacceptable."

- Nina Funnell, Author,
Walkley Award-winning Journalist, Sexual Assault
Advocate & Ambassador for the Full Stop Foundation



Community Engagement

Visit from Hon Tanya Plibersek MP and Hon Anthony Albanese MP

R&DVSA were proud to host an official visit from Hon Tanya Plibersek MP and Hon Anthony Albanese MP.



"This morning I visited Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia and 1800RESPECT with Anthony Albanese MP. The work that they do is invaluable – including, vital trauma counselling and advice on emergency accommodation and other services for victims of violence. 1800RESPECT also offers advice on supporting victims of violence to family members or friends who want to help. 1800RESPECT is one of three services that were funded out of the National Plan on Violence Against Women and their Children. Before the last election, Labor committed to funding these services to the end of the current national plan. The idea that services like 1800RESPECT should be forced to re-tender for work that they're doing so well just doesn't make sense.

The Government have also cut tens of millions of dollars from legal services and emergency accommodation for victims of violence.

I don't doubt for one second that all members of our Parliament want to see an end to violence against women and their children. But it takes more than goodwill to make this happen. It takes resources too."

– Tanya Plibersek 28.7.16

CFMEU

The CFMEU includes Domestic Violence Leave in all their Award negotiations. As part of their commitment to being part of the solution to domestic violence they organised 'tool box talks' across worksites in Sydney during November and December 2016. Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia presented to over 2,000 men across 7 worksites.

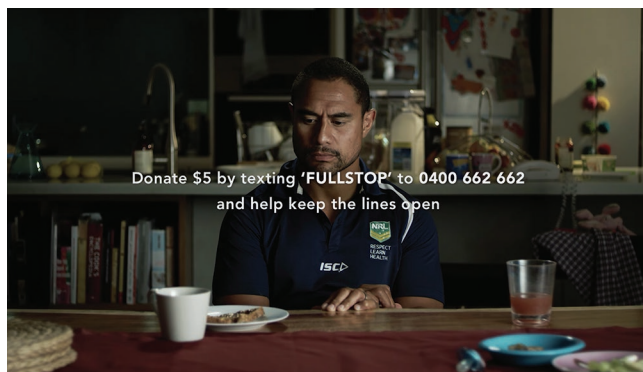


Supporting Refugees

This year Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia created two paid internships, which hosted two interns who are skilled asylum seekers but who had struggled to gain employment in Australia. It was an honour to assist these young women in their quest to live a safe life in Australia.

#MakeltStop - April 2017

In collaboration with the Enero Group, advertising agency [BMF](#) and PR firm [Hotwire](#) we developed a video and PR campaign about the less well known forms of domestic violence such as financial and emotional abuse. The #MakeltStop video received 34,582 views across Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter – and countless more through the Full Stop online community.



Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet as at 30.06.2017

ASSETS

Current	1,666,492
Non Current	-

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,666,492
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LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities	1,342,120
Non Current Liabilities	91,541

TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,433,661
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NET ASSETS	232,831
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Income and expenditure 2016/17

INCOME

Grants	10,363,095
Social Enterprise	274,158
Donations	318,315
Interest	70,276
Membership	4,063
Other	28,096

TOTAL INCOME	11,058,003
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EXPENDITURE

Employee Expenses	9,854,532
Operating	397,749
Equipment	2,508
IT	405,317
Resources	95,758
Travel	97,187
Other	129,209

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	10,982,260
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BALANCE	75,743
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Client Comments

"I don't know how I would have got through hearings with the Royal Commission, and the impacts of CSA without the counsellors. You are "actual angels", thank you."

A first response worker contacted to say "I have a client who called specifically to ask me to say thank you for your service. The client has recovered from a severe DV relationship and is now 'thriving'. She attributes her recovery to Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia."

"I have recently spoken with three counsellors who were fantastic, really helpful and great counsellors-helping me with my historical child sexual assault and complex PTSD."

"Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia are my lifeline, I have never had a call that wasn't very helpful. I think you are 'brilliant'."

"I have contacted about 10 times. I am now feeling peaceful and moving forward with my career in a way that I hadn't thought possible in many years. I want to thank the counsellors for understanding the complexity of my situation, and always respecting me. I have been to counsellors face-to-face a few times, but had never come close to feeling as heard and unconditionally supported as I have by you."

"I am really grateful that your service exists. For the first time I feel supported. Your non - judgemental way of providing support, the choice of words you use, are very helpful for me. Thank you to everyone I have spoken to, as well as counsellors that I have not spoken to yet."

"The counsellors helped me reconnect with my own strengths at times when I needed it."

"You have been very helpful at a "horror time" in my life. While a previous notification by the organisation to child protective services scared me due to potential actions by child protection, it also made me realise I had to act. It was a good catalyst for taking steps towards safety for me and my son. My ex is no longer in a position to harm me or my boy."

"I am slowly regaining control of my life after traumatic childhood experiences. Thank you."

"You have saved my life on many occasions".

"What you women do has possibly saved my life. Having this service has been such a godsend."

"I have called other phone lines, but I get so much more out of you guys as you have trauma understanding and that makes a huge difference." "...one thing I find helpful is that you're open to hearing what works for me...this has always been very respectful and really appreciated."

"Knowledge is power. You guys have the knowledge and training about this and talking to you has been awesome. I've been trying to educate myself alot about this sort of stuff...You guys are amazing I cannot stress that enough."

"You counsellors are gold." "You ladies are the only ones who speak sense." "Thank you for staying at my pace."

"You have no idea how important it was for me to feel heard and validated"

Letter from client: Dear [Counsellor] I would like to take a quick opportunity to thank you for your care, empathy, concern and support over the past 12 months, the worst year of my life. It is difficult to explain in words how much I appreciate all your efforts, but I will try to. I feel I need to thank you not only for saving my life, but for giving me reasons to want to live. While I still reside in a world of shame, I find that not every day is a bad day, I have learnt from you to take some positives wherever I can find them, and once in a while give myself a break. I hope that in time, I will be able to put the worst behind me and move forward. Time will tell. I know you are not religious, but I should tell you that I often imagine you sitting during our sessions with wings behind your back, as you truly are a guardian angel sent to help me. One of the few positives I can take from this terrible past year was the good fortune of meeting you, and receiving your help. I truly look forward to a day in the future, where I can send you a letter of progress when I am in a better place - reunited with the family I love and yearn for, and am finally at a place of inner peace. God bless you, thank you so much.

"I'd be dead without your service. Seriously, you've saved my life."

"Whenever I call I get someone who can give me a new idea, or a new strategy I've never thought of before. I call when I'm destroyed and broken - You make me realise that I am not alone in this, even when I feel like I am, and that there are people who understand. I wonder what the next counsellor I speak to will introduce me to! Thank you all so much"

"This is the first call to a service where I have not ended up lying and saying I will watch a TV show but actually will cry myself to sleep. I am actually going to sleep tonight knowing that someone has listened to me and that I am going to continue my studies because of this call".



#IGOTFLOWERSTODAY

Full Stop Foundation





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