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## Personal and relationship services

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### Summary

- Personal issues can affect your work, your relationships and your family life.
  - If you are having personal or relationship problems, there is a range of services and support that can help you.
  - If you are affected by a family relationship or separation issue, you can call the Family Relationship Advice Line for information and advice.
  - If you are in a same-sex relationship and would like help from a gay-friendly practitioner to work through relationship or parenting issues, you can contact Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria.
  - Family relationship centres all over Australia provide family counselling services to people from all cultural backgrounds.
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Most of us struggle with personal issues at some time, and these issues can affect our work, our relationships and our family life. If you are experiencing personal or relationship problems, there are a range of services and support to get assistance.

### Personal services

Personal issues can affect you at work, in your relationships or your day-to-day life. You might be worried about financial issues, cultural or religious tensions, or you might still be dealing with childhood trauma such as sexual abuse or family violence. You might have witnessed war or other traumatic events.

Often the best way to deal with personal issues is to talk to someone. Perhaps there is someone in your family you feel comfortable with or a friend; maybe a community leader such as a religious figure could help. For many people, speaking about their problems with someone they do not know is easier. That's where the help of a professional counsellor, social worker or psychologist can be beneficial.

Professional counsellors help people to recognise and define their emotional health, mental and lifestyle problems and to understand themselves and their behaviour better. They do this by:

- explaining options
- setting goals
- providing therapy
- supporting the person to take action.

To find a professional support person in your area, you can start by asking your local doctor for a recommendation or contact a community health service.

For more information about specialist services for people experiencing mental health issues, see the [\*\*Mental health services and programs explained\*\*](#) fact sheet.

For more information about specialist services for people experiencing drug or alcohol problems, see the [\*\*Alcohol and drug treatments and programs\*\*](#) fact sheet.

### Relationship problems

All families have disagreements from time to time. It might be a couple arguing over responsibilities for household chores, it could be a disagreement over how to raise the children or it might be a teenager arguing with their

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parents about a curfew. Disagreements are normal in healthy relationships, but it is the way these disagreements are handled that is important.

In respectful relationships, disagreements are talked out and compromises reached through two-way conversation and negotiation. But sometimes, underlying issues or other stressors such as problems at work or financial pressures can cause families to clash more often.

When couples and families reach a point where they can no longer deal with their difficulties on their own, it is a good idea to get some outside help. You might already know a counsellor or you could ask your local doctor for a recommendation. Your local community health centre can also help. It can often be better to talk to someone who is not connected to the family.

### **Relationship advice services for couples and families**

The **Family Relationship Advice Line** provides information and advice to anyone experiencing or who is affected by a family relationship or separation issues. You can call the advice line on **1800 050 321**.

If your family problems are specifically related to parenting, you can call Parentline on **13 22 89** between 8am and midnight, seven days a week.

Family Relationships Online is an Australian Government website that can help direct you into the right type of face-to-face service to meet your needs. Visit the **Family Relationships Online** website for information about how to access:

- adolescent mediation and family therapy
- family counselling
- family relationship education and skills training
- family relationship services for carers
- men and family relationship services.

**Relationships Australia** is a community-based, not-for-profit Australian organisation that offers relationship services. Their services include counselling, mediation, dispute resolution, relationship and parenting skills education, community support, employee assistance programs and professional training. Services and programs are available nationally. Call **1300 364 277** for assistance.

### **Counselling services for same-sex couples and families**

If you are in a same-sex relationship and would like help from a gay-friendly practitioner to work through relationship or parenting issues, the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard (Victoria) offers counselling, information and referrals, on **1800 184 527**.

Also, the **Australian Lesbian Medical Association** (ALMA) has a list of doctors and mental health professionals recommended by lesbian and bisexual women. The list includes general practitioners and specialists, as well as metropolitan and rural doctors.

### **Counselling services for culturally and linguistically diverse couples and families**

The Australian Government funds family relationship centres across Australia to provide information and confidential assistance for families at all stages in their lives.

Family relationship centres provide services that are relative and sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of the families in that community. Many centres have developed innovative approaches to providing family counselling services to culturally and linguistically diverse people.

For your closest family relationship centre, visit the **Family Relationships Online** website.

### **Where to get help**

- Your GP (doctor)
- **Counsellor**

- Family Relationship Advice Line, call 1800 050 321
- **Switchboard** (Gay and Lesbian) Tel. (03) 9663 2939 or 1800 184 527
- **Parentline**, call 13 22 89

**This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:**

Relationships Australia Victoria

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