

Capability framework figures

Figure 1: Structure of the *Responding to sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour capability framework*

Capabilities required for specialist sexual assault sector workers											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Understanding and applying concepts, theories and the nature of sexual violence and child sexual abuse	Working with diverse clients, communities and families	Working with First Nations communities	Engaging in sexual violence trauma-informed practice	Working with children and young people	Delivering intake and initial assessment (including responding to risk and safety)	Delivering crisis responses and therapeutic interventions	Supporting people impacted by sexual violence through the legal system	Supporting individual and systemic advocacy	Working as a part of an integrated system	Commitment to ongoing learning and evidence-informed service delivery	Working with children and young people engaging in harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
Knowledge											
Skills											
				Additional skills							

Figure 2: Capabilities for specialist sexual violence response roles

Capabilities required for specialist sexual assault sector workers					
1 Understanding and applying concepts, theories and the nature of sexual violence and child sexual abuse	2 Working with diverse clients, communities and families	3 Working with First Nations communities	4 Engaging in sexual violence trauma-informed practice	5 Working with children and young people	6 Delivering intake and initial assessment (including responding to risk and safety)
Knowledge					
Skills					
				Additional skills	
Different types of sexual violence and contexts in which sexual violence occurs.	Intersectionality and how it shapes service users' engagement with specialist sexual assault services and related organisations.	Sexual violence within First Nations communities is often experienced in the context of and compounded by historical trauma and systemic inequalities.	Concepts, principles and applications of sexual violence trauma-informed practice, and person-centred care.	Biopsychosocial stages and the ecological model of child and youth learning and development.	Current legislation, frameworks, guidelines and policies that relate to the delivery of safe, rights-based and responsive care to service users, including mandated obligations.
Impacts of sexual violence and child sexual abuse across the life course.	Impacts of multiple, overlapping identities and systemic inequalities and how they increase the risk of violence and create barriers when accessing support.	Importance of culturally safe practices for First Nations people.	Potential cumulative and compounding nature of sexual violence-related trauma, and its impact on mental health and wellbeing.	Attachment theory that supports workforce assessing information relating to children and young people's behaviours and how they relate to others.	Responsibilities associated with confidentiality, informed consent, information sharing and privacy.
Broad and diverse impacts of sexual violence on day-to-day functioning of victims and survivors and their families.	Importance of tailored and culturally responsive engagement strategies to work effectively with service users from diverse groups and communities.	Importance of self-awareness to critically reflect on one's own cultural identity, values, biases and assumptions.	How an individual's capacity to engage in recovery after sexual violence is related to a range of factors, such as socioeconomic circumstances, age, culture, background, other life stressors and previous experiences of violence. This includes the duration of the sexual violence, its frequency and extent, and resultant trauma.	Contemporary understandings of neuro-development to support children and young people.	Documentation and reporting requirements.
Dynamics, drivers and prevalence of sexual violence, child sexual abuse and other forms of gender-based violence, including the role of a patriarchal system.		Resilience, strengths, capabilities and contributions of First Nations people.	Individuals respond to and experience traumatic events differently.	Fundamental developmental and cognitive differences between children, young people and adults.	MARAM Framework and associated responsibilities and obligations.
Theories explaining child sex offending and the pathways and characteristics that lead to child sexual abuse perpetration.		History of First Nations people and the ongoing impacts of invasion, colonisation, the Stolen Generations, assimilation, institutional abuse and racism, and intergenerational trauma.	Importance of lived and living experience of sexual violence in shaping responses that empower individuals, families and communities.		
Role of technology in sexual violence, including image-based abuse and pornography and online child sexual exploitation.		Approaches undertaken by the Aboriginal sexual assault support services to provide cultural healing support to First Nations victim survivors, their families and communities.			
Sexual violence in the context of intimate partner and family violence.		Preferred language, terminology and understandings of sexual violence informed by current First Nations policy directives and persons.			

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7 Delivering crisis responses and therapeutic interventions	8 Supporting people impacted by sexual violence through the legal system	9 Supporting individual and systemic advocacy	10 Working as a part of an integrated system	11 Commitment to ongoing learning and evidence-informed service delivery	12 Working with children and young people engaging in harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
Knowledge					
Skills					
Additional skills					
Crisis and crisis intervention principles in the context of sexual violence, including the importance of victim survivors understanding their rights and options and maintaining control over the recovery process.	The justice system at both the Victorian and national levels, including the relevant procedures in the criminal and civil justice systems, and how these apply to people impacted by sexual violence.	The importance of systemic advocacy in relation to the prevention of and response to gender inequity and sexual violence. This includes law reform, social change, media coverage and awareness raising, as well as changes to policies, procedures and service improvements.	The role of the specialist sexual assault sector in relation to the wider service system that intersects with victim survivors of sexual violence.	The importance of remaining informed about current and emerging research, evidence and frameworks relevant to sexual violence.	The prevalence, drivers, protective factors and risk factors that may contribute to HSB. These include exposure to violence and other traumatising experiences, pornography, and the impacts of cognitive and intellectual disabilities.
Therapeutic interventions in alignment with professional ethical codes of conduct, practice standards, and legal and legislative requirements.	The workings of the justice system and other areas of law and procedure relevant to victim survivors of sexual violence. This includes the roles and operations of police, prosecutions, courts, civil justice processes, victim support services and the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme.	The principles and approaches of individual advocacy, including supporting service users to express their needs, access information, explore options and make informed decisions.	The purpose and benefits of integrated service responses.	The importance of engaging in continuous professional development to ensure service delivery aligns with best practice.	HSB occurs along a continuum of severity, intensity and impact within each psychosocial stage of development, and how to differentiate HSB from developmentally appropriate sexual behaviour.
Evidence base underpinning crisis intervention and therapeutic approaches to ensure safe, effective, rights-based and sexual violence trauma-informed responses in supporting service users.	The policies and procedures for complying with a subpoena in accordance with confidential communication and legal privilege laws.		How different parts of the integrated service system, including the justice, health, education, child safety, housing, aboriginal community controlled organisations and family violence service systems, work together as components of a coordinated and integrated response.	The role, purpose and function of supervision to maintain ethical, safe and effective practice.	A high proportion of children and young people engaging in HSB have complex trauma histories and have often experienced sexual violence, family violence and/or victimisation of various forms.
Responsibilities related to data collection and storage, information management and sharing, and the associated practice implications.	The tailored intermediary programs to better support service users with a range of communication needs.			The importance of data and evaluation to create an evidence base that supports continuous improvement.	HSB displayed during childhood is not necessarily a predictor of future behaviour into adulthood.
Responsibilities under the MARAM Framework within the context of delivering crisis responses and therapeutic interventions.	The prevalence and under-reporting of sexual violence, and the potential trauma and other harms of engagement with the justice system.				Legal and child protection responses for children and young people engaging in HSB, including awareness of the laws and age of criminal responsibility for minors.
	How children and young people impacted by sexual violence or who have displayed HSB may come into contact with the legal system, including through police involvement, child protection, youth justice and court processes.				Treatment options for children and young people who have displayed HSB in Victoria.
					The need to centre the rights and safety of the victim survivors of HSB in work with children and young people using HSB.

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Skills					
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Impacts of institutional sexual abuse and responses on victim survivors, their families, the wider community and society.					
Rights-based approaches prioritising safety, agency, freedom and empowerment, as well as human rights frameworks and practices.					
Apply an intersectional feminist lens, recognising the interconnections between all forms of sexual violence and how they work together to maintain and reinforce inequalities.	Demonstrate self-awareness by recognising unconscious biases and be open to new ideas that may differ from their own beliefs and values.	Recognise and critically reflect on cultural bias and its impacts on First Nations people.	Critically apply the trauma model of recovery in practice, which comprises safety, remembrance, mourning and reconnection with day-to-day life, recognising both the benefits and limits of trauma frameworks.	Adopt a child-centred and sexual violence trauma-informed approach to working with children and young people.	Engage with service users in ways that demonstrate belief, respect, and valuing lived and living experience.
Recognise the interconnections between gender inequality and other forms of injustice, and how these dynamics shape victim survivors' experiences of sexual violence.	Seek to learn about and recognise the strengths and contributions of cultures different from their own.	Practise cultural safety in day-to-day work and service delivery, ensuring service users have agency and control in decision-making, including their preferred service provider.	Create safe, supportive and enabling environments that minimise the risk of further harm and re-traumatisation.	Tailor interventions to the developmental stage, capabilities and characteristics of children and young people, while also considering culture and context.	Provide and communicate information about client rights, responsibilities, confidentiality and its limitations.
Apply an understanding of the social and structural contexts in which sexual violence occurs to support the clients to make sense of their experiences and understand that they are not to blame.	Adapt the preferred language, terminology, and culturally safe and responsive practices in line with inclusion and diversity frameworks and guidelines.	Integrate preferred language, terminology and approaches in line with First Nations guidelines and frameworks developed in collaboration with First Nations communities.	Value and integrate the lived and living experiences of victim survivors and their families impacted by violence, trauma and other adverse experiences.	Adopt an integrated and ecological approach by engaging, supporting and working with the important people in a child or young person's life, including family, kin, carers, community services, schools and broader supporting networks.	Conduct comprehensive, sexual violence trauma-informed intake and assessment.
Support clients to maintain a sense of choice and control over the counselling and recovery process.	Draw on community resources, interpreters (Auslan and languages other than English) and other support services to ensure clear and appropriate communication and respond to the diverse needs of all service users.	Adapt practices to respond to the needs of First Nations service users, families, carers and communities.	Engage in trauma-informed modalities to treat and support victim survivors through their recovery journey.	Promote respectful relationships and gender equality practices across educational environments.	Assess, identify and respond to immediate, current and ongoing safety risks in accordance with professional, organisational, legal and legislative requirements, including responsibilities under the MARAM Framework.
Apply rights-based approaches in practice, prioritising safety, agency, freedom and empowerment, and embedding human rights frameworks into their work with victim survivors.		Partner with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and engage in secondary consultation with Aboriginal sexual assault support services where required.		Provide information for parents, carers and kin to support children and young people's needs, respond to trauma and other impacts, and manage safety risks, while supporting child-centred and family-guided decision-making. This will involve children and young people where appropriate.	Apply clinical judgement and critical analysis when interpreting complex information, managing uncertainty and prioritising interventions.
				Support children and young people by using age-appropriate communication and ensuring a safe and supportive environment.	Recognise risk assessment as a dynamic and an ongoing process, which requires continuous monitoring, reviewing and updating safety plans as needed.

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Provide a sensitive, rights-based and supportive crisis care response to service users.	Maintain contemporary knowledge of laws and practices relevant to sexual violence.	Advocate to meet the individual needs of service users, including access to justice, mental health services, housing and other relevant supports.	Work collaboratively with the wider service system to deliver holistic, coordinated care and support that meets service users' needs.	Engage in reflective practice, clinical and group supervision, and translate learnings into practice.	Conduct comprehensive and dynamic assessments in the context of HSB.
Use information gathered during the initial assessment process to inform case formulation, collaboratively set treatment goals, and develop individualised crisis and therapeutic plans.	Communicate general information on legal procedure and support informed decision-making for people impacted by sexual violence.	Support service users to navigate feedback and complaints processes when services fail to meet reasonable expectations.	Collaborate with other services and organisations to identify and reduce systemic barriers and improve access.	Maintain best-practice service responses by engaging in ongoing professional development and staying current with emerging practice approaches.	Develop immediate and long-term safety plans for children and young people engaging in HSB, as well as for others who are impacted.
Maintain confidential, accurate and secure client records in compliance with ethical, legal and organisational requirements.	Assist service users to navigate support, justice, compensation and recovery options, including providing support where possible when reporting to police and dealing with related processes.	Advocate for and influence change and improvement at a local delivery and systems level.	Build strong, respectful and collaborative relationships with professionals across agencies and relevant support sectors.	Undertake training to strengthen the ability to work effectively with service users from diverse and complex backgrounds.	Contextualise children and young people's behaviour as a response to their past experiences, developmental trauma or victimisation, as appropriate.
Adhere to and apply ethical guidelines and legislative responsibilities, including but not limited to information sharing requirements.	Support service users in accessing legal resources and relevant referral agencies, and identify situations where it may be appropriate for service users to seek legal advice or representation.	Apply an intersectional framework to address overlapping systematic inequalities and barriers that individuals encounter when accessing services and supports. Identify and address systemic barriers that impact service users and actively advocate for their needs.		Engage in data collection, reporting and evaluation to strengthen the evidence base that underpins sexual violence trauma-informed practice.	Recognise the challenges for parents/ caregivers, and assess the complex family dynamics in responding to the needs of the child or young person who has displayed HSB and other family members who are impacted.
Deliver crisis and therapeutic intervention strategies that are informed by the evidence base to ensure safe, effective, rights-based and trauma responsive practice.	Work collaboratively with, but independently from, justice agencies and other professionals to progress the needs and preferences of service users.			Integrate research and evidence into practice and decision-making.	Establish accountability and responsibility of HSB in an age and developmentally appropriate way.
Incorporate the use of psychometric tools, where appropriate, for ongoing assessment as part of the therapeutic process.	Inform service users about the process of a forensic medical examination and support them to make an informed decision about participation. If they consent, provide support before, during and after the forensic medical examination.				Support children and young people engaging in HSB to develop healthy, developmentally appropriate sexual and relational behaviour and attitudes.

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					Collaborate with service users, including adults, children and young people victim survivors, to develop individualised safety plans where needed.
					Maintain confidential, accurate and secure client records in compliance with ethical, legal and organisational requirements.
					Adopt approaches that are inclusive, accessible and responsive to each client's needs in line with organisational policies.
					Adopt a rights-based approach and inform service users of their rights, options and choices throughout the intake and assessment process, promoting autonomy and control in decision-making.
				Support workforce initiatives that strengthen service capacity to respond to children and young people impacted by child sexual abuse. This includes supervision, reflective practice, and ongoing training and professional development.	Provide guidance (including professional development) and secondary consultation to colleagues and external organisations on assessment, including risk assessment and safety planning.
				Strengthen service delivery to children and young people impacted by child sexual abuse by leading sexual violence trauma-informed and child-centred practices. This includes contributing to policy development, training and continuous improvement initiatives.	Contribute to ongoing review and improvement of assessment processes and protocols.

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Facilitate appropriate referrals to relevant programs and services within the specialist sexual assault sector and other relevant sectors to ensure holistic and integrated care.	Support service users to respond to technology-facilitated sexual violence by assisting with reporting to the eSafety Commissioner and other relevant parties, and by undertaking appropriate follow-up actions.				Commit to ongoing professional development to enhance knowledge, remain informed of emerging treatment approaches and improve outcomes for service users in the HSB space.
Collaboratively review and modify crisis and therapeutic plans to be responsive to service users' changing needs and contexts.	Support children and young people to access specialised legal advice and participate meaningfully in legal processes.				Centre the rights and safety of people impacted by HSB.
Undertake family violence risk assessment and management in line with maram framework responsibilities.	Support service users and their families to understand their legal rights, responsibilities, the legal process and potential outcomes.				
	Advocate on behalf of service users to reduce trauma and other harms, and improve their experiences of the justice system.				
	Understand the rights contained in the Victorian <i>Victims' Charter Act 2006</i> and the systemic challenges in putting these rights into practice.				
Provide guidance to colleagues to support utilisation and integration of therapeutic modalities and frameworks within sexual violence trauma-informed practice.	Provide secondary consultation to justice and other professionals about sexual violence trauma-informed practice and working with service users.	Advocate and drive systems-level change to enhance service accessibility, ensure the delivery of high-quality services, and challenge unjust processes and systems.	Lead collaboration across the service system to strengthen coordination, improve referral pathways and ensure timely, holistic responses for service users.	Deliver clinical and group supervision aligned with workers' experience to enhance practice, build reflective capacity and strengthen the workforce capability.	Advocate at a systems level for improved HSB service provision.
Contribute to the ongoing translation of current and emerging therapeutic modalities and frameworks into service delivery.	Provide guidance and practice oversight to the workforce to navigate legal systems, including legal processes related to sexual violence and HSB.	Ensure service-led systemic advocacy is evidence-informed and responsive to the rights, needs and experiences of service users.	Develop and implement resources and tools that can be adopted across sectors to promote consistency and shared practice for the prevention, early intervention and response to sexual violence.	Explore and advocate for opportunities to strengthen the evidence base for service delivery.	Recognise and promote the importance of developing HSB research in the Victorian context.
	Provide oversight for subpoena requests.		Engage with lived and living experience and community voices to strengthen system responsiveness, inclusivity and accountability.	Build research capability to support evidence-informed practice, contribute to policy submissions and inform service design.	Deliver clinical and group supervision to enhance practice, build reflective capacity and strengthen the workforce's clinical skills in relation to HSB.
				Embed the lived and living experience of victim survivors into service design and delivery to ensure responsive and person-centred approaches.	Contribute to the development and delivery of HSB-specific professional development and training initiatives to strengthen service delivery and build workforce capacity.

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