The Evaluation of Services of South East Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA)

Period: January to August, 2017

Report to SECASA

By Professor Ruth Webber

October 18, 2017
REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF SECASA’S SERVICES
(January 2017 to August 2017)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dr Ruth Webber was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the services of SECASA in 2017. This was the fourth year that she has undertaken this task. She developed the evaluation form and SECASA staff members were asked by management if they would give them out to new clients to complete. In the period between 1st January, 2017 and 1st August, 2017 there were 2927 new clients registered at one or more of the main SECASA locations. Nine-seven filled out evaluation forms: fourteen males, eighty-two females and one who stated ‘I do not identify as either’. Five sites returned less than ten evaluations: Crises Care Unit (0), Pakenham (5), Hastings (7), Rosebud (3), and Seaford (9). It appears that East Bentleigh and St Kilda were the only sites that actively encouraged clients to fill out an evaluation.

There was a list containing eight categories of abuse from which clients could tick as many as applied. Most ticked more than one box. The three largest categories that related to the victims/survivors were ‘Childhood sexual assault when you were less than 18 years’ (n=55), ‘Sexual assault or family violence more than 2 years’ (n=45) and ‘Recent family violence’ (n=21).

Results of the evaluation reveal a consistent pattern of high levels of satisfaction with the service and the impact it had on addressing client issues. The client satisfaction level with the support/services provided by SECASA was extremely high with all clients being either ‘very satisfied’ (89%) or ‘fairly satisfied’ (11%) with the service. No-one was ‘fairly dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with the service. A greater proportion of people were ‘very satisfied’ with the service in 2017 than in the 2016. The counselling also impacted on clients’ level of confidence, with 96% writing that they felt more confident in managing their life now as a result of attending SECASA. The four clients who did not feel more confident were women.

There was a list containing eight statements about the ways in which clients were helped. Clients could tick as many boxes as applied to their situation. Most ticked several statements with the statement ‘I am emotionally stronger now’ (70%), ‘I understand myself better’ (58%), ‘I feel like I have some control over my life now’ (54%) and, ‘I don’t blame myself for what happened now’ (52%) applying to more than half. There were some gender differences. Clients were asked on a four-point scale from ‘very safe’ to ‘very unsafe’ how emotionally safe they felt at SECASA. All but one client indicated that they felt ‘very safe’ (82%) or ‘safe’ (17%).

Clients were asked if the way that they viewed or thought about sexual assault and/or family violence had changed as a result of the support they received from SECASA. Eighty-one percent of clients indicated they had changed their views about sexual assault or family violence.

There were seven sections where clients could write comments in response to specific questions. Almost all took the opportunity to write responses to questions. One question asked how SECASA and its staff had helped them. The main areas of support were: providing or facilitating advocacy, being effective listeners, helping them gain insight, helping them gain confidence, helping them deal with their trauma/incident and assisting them to re-establish relationships.

Clients provide suggestions about ways that the service could be improved: more services and increased opening times, improving building and reception areas, particularly at East Bentleigh, more efficient intake procedures and a larger range of counselling techniques and, more sensitive front desk staff at some sites.

Overall, this evaluation presents a picture of a highly satisfied group of clients whose lives have been positively impacted by the services provided by counsellors and the services offered by SECASA.
THE 2017 EVALUATION

SECASA offers a range of services across nine main locations. In addition it provides services at the Crisis Care unit and the outreach services at Monash Medical Centre, Clayton and Monash University – Caulfield and Clayton Campuses.

Client numbers are collected according to three geographical groups: Group 1 includes East Bentleigh, Crises Care Unit (MMC) with South Yarra an attached location. Group 2 is Dandenong with Cranbourne and Pakenham as attached locations. Group 3 includes Seaford, with Hastings and Rosebud as attached locations.

There were 2678 new clients registered at one or more of the main SECASA locations during the 2017 calendar year up to the date of this report. East Bentleigh (Group 1) had clients 540 (20%), Dandenong (Group 2) had clients 1330 (50 %) and Seaford (Group 3) 808 (30%).

SECASA expects staff members to invite clients to complete service evaluation forms. Dr Ruth Webber was commissioned in 2014 to develop an evaluation form and to analyse the results. This is the third year that she had undertaken this task. Each year the evaluation form has been modified in response to feedback by clients and staff. In addition to the multiple choice questions, there are seven open-ended questions that enabled clients to provide written feedback.

A selection of direct quotes from the open-ended questions is included under each section to provide further clarification and to support the claims made in this report. A full transcript of the quotes from clients is located in Appendix A. All returned evaluations have been given an identification number. This number system will enable a reader to track different comments from the same client.1

There were 97 evaluation forms completed by clients of SECASA during the first half of 2017. Evaluations forms were returned from eight sites, with most returns coming from St Kilda (Group 1) and the least from the Cranbourne and Rosebud (Group 2).

The analysis of survey-type questions was conducted using the SPSS 24 statistical package. The analysis of the written comments in open-ended questions was analysed using Nvivo software.

CLIENTS INFORMATION

This section provides some demographic and other details about those clients (respondents) who returned the evaluation form and the SECASA site from which a client was located.

Age and gender

There were fourteen (14%) males, 82 (85%) females and one person (1%) who ticked ‘neither gender’ (Table 1).

1 The names of counsellors have been removed from quotes and replaced with ‘my counsellor’.
Table 1: Age of clients by gender, n=96* (percentage only provided)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Males (n=16) %</th>
<th>Females (n=88) %</th>
<th>Total 2017 %</th>
<th>Total 2016 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 10</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-21</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 plus</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Person with ‘neither’ gender not included but is aged 22-30.

The responses between 2016 and 2017 are similar except that there are more clients in the 11-14 and 15-21 aged groups in 2017. It is noted that a smaller proportion of those who filled out an evaluation form were males in 2017 than in years 2014, 2015 and 2016. The reason for this drop in male clients completing the evaluation is unclear.

**Location of visit**

Table 2 details the breakdown of clients according to site attended, location grouping of site and age group. Only one client failed to provide details of the site location.

Table 2: Clients completing evaluations by SECASA site attended, location grouping and age (N=97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Age group (number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Under 10 to 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Bentleigh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranbourne</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakenham</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosebud</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaford</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site not listed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at p>.05 for age differences

In 2016 24% of clients were aged 50 years or over. In 2017 the proportion over aged 50 years had dropped slightly to 18%. Dandenong (38%) had a greater proportion of clients aged 50 or younger than those from the other sites.

The results noted in Table 2 suggest that staff members in some sites are not handing out evaluations forms and/or encouraging clients to fill them out. This is a similar pattern to 2016. Also some staff members are giving clients ‘out-of-date evaluation’ forms, which means some data that was asked in the 2017 forms is missing. An analysis of the rate of client evaluation returns based in
the three geographical groups reveals large discrepancies between the rates of return of evaluation forms.

Most evaluation forms (60%) were returned from Group 1 sites (East Bentleigh & South Yarra). There were none from CCC Unit. Clients located at Group 2 (Dandenong, Pakenham and Cranbourne) performed less well in 2017, having collected only 18 forms (19%), than in 2016 (37%) where they collected 38 forms. Pakenham and Cranbourne sites were lagging behind again. A concerted effort needs to be made to alert staff to the importance of the exercise. Group 3 (Seaford, Hastings and Rosebud) had improved significantly in the collection of evaluation forms from 2016 when only three forms (3%) were collected to 2017 where they had collected 20 (21%) forms.

Greater determination is needed to ensure that staff at sites where less than ten evaluation forms were returned pass on evaluation forms to clients and/or to encourage them to complete them.

Staff need to be reminded frequently that evaluations are part of the normal process associated with quality assurance and risk management.

Source of information.

Clients were asked the question: “How did you hear about SECASA?” There were six options in the list plus an ‘other’ category under which there was space for them to provide the details. Their responses are categorised in Table 3 according to which site they attended.

Table 3: Client source of information about SECASA by location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>East Bentleigh %</th>
<th>Dandenong %</th>
<th>Seaford %</th>
<th>St Kilda %</th>
<th>Cranbourne %</th>
<th>Pakenham %</th>
<th>Hastings %</th>
<th>Rosebud %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECASA website</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The way that people heard about SECASA in 2017 was similar to 2016. In both years most clients heard about SECASA from another professional such as a psychologist or social worker or the police. In 2017 a greater proportion of clients who were referred to SECASA by police were from Dandenong, Seaford and Cranbourne than the other locations. The numbers are too small to be statistically significant. Eighteen percent had heard about SECASA from another source than the ones listed.

Ease of access.

Clients were asked how easy it was for them to access the SECASA site they visited (Table 4). Six people did not answer this question. There are few differences between the responses in 2017 than in 2016.
### Table 4: Ease of access to the SECASA site visited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Very easy</th>
<th>Quite easy</th>
<th>Quite difficult</th>
<th>Very difficult</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to find</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical access to building</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage total less than 100% as decimals founded to whole numbers

There were differences between client responses based on which SECASA site they attended with only 45% of clients finding that transport to Dandenong was ‘very easy’. Less than two-thirds (60%) found East Bentleigh ‘very easy’ to get to by public transport.

Seventy percent of respondents found sites ‘very easy’ to locate and a further 29% found them ‘quite easy’ to access. Only 3% found sites ‘quite difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to locate.

Over 80% of people stated that physical access to SECASA buildings was ‘very easy’ but there were site variations. Fewer East Bentleigh clients found it ‘very easy’ to access (66%) One person found Seaford ‘very difficult’ to access the building, and one from Seaford found it quite difficult. No-one else found a site either ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to access.

### Type of abuse

A list of 10 survivor/victim category was included. Clients were permitted to tick any category that applied to their situation.

### Table 5: Category of victim / survivor of clients by gender (number of responses not percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survivor / victim category</th>
<th>Number who ticked category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood sexual assault when you were less than 18 years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault or family violence more than 2 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent family violence</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent sexual assault</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent / care giver of an ADULT victim / survivor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent / care giver of a CHILD victim / survivor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A partner / friend of a victim / survivor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent / care giver of a child or young person with a problematic sexual behaviours</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses (not people)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This response is similar to 2016 where there were 187 total responses from 100 people, which is a rate of 1.86 ticked boxes (categories) per person. In 2017 a total of 172 responses were submitted from 96 people, which is a rate of 1.79 per person. Figure 1 provides a visual picture which shows that most clients had experienced ‘Sexual assault or family violence more than 2 years’ (32%) or ‘Childhood sexual assault when you were less than 18 years’ (26%).
Figure 1: Category of victim / survivor of clients by male, female/ no gender by number of responses (n=172 response from 96 people)

This is a similar result to 2016 with the most frequent category of victim / survivor being ‘Sexual assault or family violence for more than 2 years’ and ‘Childhood sexual assault when you were less than 18 years’.

Many people wrote that they were a victim of more than one type of sexual assault, i.e. they ticked more than one category out the list. Two people ticked six categories as applying to their situation. Many ticked three categories indicating abuse across generations. Only two people indicated that they had experienced sexual abuse that was not covered in the categories provided.

Prior help

Clients were asked if they had attended a sexual assault or family violence counselling service before. Over a quarter of all clients (29%) had done so. A number had been to SECASA or another CASA before; the rest had seen a range of different professionals including: rehabilitation clinic, sexual health clinic, psychologist, doctor, psychiatrist and general counselling service.

Reason for choosing SECASA

Clients were invited to provide their reason(s) for choosing SECASA. They were given four options as well as providing space to write about any reason not on the list (Table 6). Even though they were asked to only tick one box, some clients ticked more than one box, hence the percentage column adds up to more than 100%.

Table 6: Reasons given by clients for choosing to attend SECASA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was recommended to me by someone</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was the closest geographically to me</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had sought help elsewhere but was not happy with the service</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had heard positive things about the services that SECASA provided</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The main motivation for clients seeking support from SECASA rather than another service was through personal endorsement and recommendation. Only six people chose SECASA for its geographical proximity.

IMPACT OF SERVICE

The next section analyses the impact on clients of SECASA’s services.

Table 7: Help received in dealing with trauma by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of help</th>
<th>Males %</th>
<th>Females %</th>
<th>Neither %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helped great deal</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped somewhat</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am less able to deal with it now</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is a credit to SECASA that 93% of the clients indicated that counsellors helped them deal with the trauma or incidents that brought them to SECASA. This result does not take into account that many clients have only been coming to SECASA for a short period of time.

Type of help received

Clients were provided with a list of eight ways that the services provided by SECASA helped them. They were asked to tick as many boxes as appropriate. Six clients did not complete any part of this question. Four clients ticked all of the first eight boxes. As Table 7 illustrates, the responses were strongest in those categories that related to an improvement in clients’ level of understanding, emotional strength and control over their lives.

Gender & age differences

There were some difference in responses between 2016 and 2017. There are also some noticeable differences in the results based on gender². More females than males indicated that felt like ‘They had more control over their lives now’, and ‘They do not blame themselves for what happened now’. This was statistically significant. Based on the results listed in Table 7, it is clear that males and females find assistance in quite different ways.

Table 7: Type of help provided by SECASA by gender and year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of help</th>
<th>2017 Males %</th>
<th>2017 Females %</th>
<th>2016 Males %</th>
<th>2016 Females %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand myself better</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I have some control over my life now*</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am emotionally stronger now</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more confident about my future e.g. work, further study</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t blame myself for what happened now*</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more socially confident now</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am in better shape physically now</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have more contact with family or friends now</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² The one person who did not identify as male or female was not included in the table
There were some statistically significantly age differences in the responses two items in the list, with a greater proportion of clients over 50 stating “I am emotionally stronger now: and “I don’t blame myself for what happened now” than those under 50.

Table 8: Type of help provided by SECASA by gender and age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of help</th>
<th>Up to 50</th>
<th>Over 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand myself better</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I have some control over my life now</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am emotionally stronger now*</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more confident about my future e.g. work, further study*</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t blame myself for what happened now*</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more socially confident now</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am in better shape physically now</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have more contact with family or friends now</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at p>.05 for age differences

The area that clients indicated that SECASA helped them the least was in response to the questions “I am in better shape physically now”.

There were a number of open-ended questions that enabled clients to provide written feedback. Clients were asked to respond to the question: “If SECASA and its staff have helped you, we would really appreciate it if you could write in the space below how it has helped you. If could give us an example or an incident that would be great too”. Two thirds of all clients (n=66) filled in this section.

Twenty-nine clients wrote comments in this section which provided them with an opportunity to describe other ways they have been helped. A number indicated that they felt much ‘better’ than when they started counselling, but felt they still had some way to go.

While always being a work in progress being a victim as a child and never being heard or acknowledged has complicated every aspect of my life. SECASA has finally helped me put these events into focus one at a time so I can finally see how damaging and impacting things have become. ID 261

Helpfulness of the Service

Advocating

People wrote a great deal of comments about how competent and caring they found the counselling staff at SECASA and wrote about how much they appreciated their support. There were many comments made about the ways in which staff had advocated for them and helped them develop and provided them with reading material and other resources.

Effective listeners

Respondents explained the ways in which they had been assisted with many commending the manners in which the counsellors supported, encouraged and validated them and their experiences. Thirteen people made comments about how much they appreciated someone listening to them and/or reducing the sense of aloneness

I have someone to listen to me and tell me that I’m doing a good enough job. I’m not better yet and that’s okay. In public everyone is always asking ‘are you better yet?’ At SECASA I get asked ‘Where are you at today?’ ID 207
It’s been the only positive experience at the moment when I laugh. I can talk about harder stuff and not have it feel overbearing or overwhelming. Great atmosphere and very comfortable. Awesome chick thumbs up. ID 267

I leave my counselling sessions laughing and smiling which is such a nice change. It makes it easier to come back each time. The ‘lady’ at reception is always super friendly and her smile always puts me at ease even if I’m running late. ID 207

Re-establishing relationships
Six people wrote about how the counselling had helped them re-establish relationships with family members and/or relate more positively to family or former friends.

It helped both me and my daughter to re-engage and having her come back to home. It has helped my daughter to re-establish a relationship with her stepmother. ID 238

It has helped me to get back a better relationship with my daughter. It has given my daughter the tools needed to move forward. ID 238

It has been the best thing – hard to describe that positive impact counselling at SECASA has had on my whole life, my relationships, everything really. Thank you. ID 256

Others wrote about the support they received from their counsellors and how this had helped them deal with difficult situations. In some cases it also helped restore fractured relationships.

The counselling and education I received from the counsellor enabled me to move through the painful events that were a constant reminder causing depressive thoughts and anxiety to well up. I had support with criminal proceedings and sentencing of the perpetrator whom had a bearing on my life and my family relationships. ID 293

Insight
There were nineteen instances when some-one wrote that the counselling had helped them gain new insights into themselves, the traumatic incident, impact of sexual abuse on their lives and the complexity of their situation.

I came here as a sexual assault from when I was a child and when I came I didn’t realise I was actually in a relationship that was very controlling and finally had the guts to leave the relationship and I am now happy. ID 260

I used to believe if I was stronger or smarter or more’ switched on’ then it wouldn’t have happened, I am starting to accept that it is an unrealistic expectation of myself or anyone else. I have a clearer understanding of what sexual assault and family violence it but I still have a lot to learn about personal boundaries and what is/isn’t ok and when/how to say no. I understand that healing is a process that takes years. I am more patient and accepting of the feelings and triggers. I understand that this is normal. ID 286

Some clients indicated that they had greater insight into sexual assault and family violence.

I used to believe if I was stronger or smarter or more’ switched on’ then it wouldn’t have happened, I am starting to accept that it is an unrealistic expectation of myself or anyone else. I have a clearer understanding of what sexual assault and family violence it but I still have a lot to learn about personal boundaries and what is/isn’t ok and when/how to say no. I understand that healing is a process that takes years. I am more patient and accepting of the feelings and triggers. I understand that this is normal. ID 286
Confidence and self worth

Clients were asked if as a result of the support / services provided by SECASA they felt more confident about managing their life. With four exceptions (women), clients (96%) said that they felt more confident in managing their life now as a result of attending SECASA. Many clients wrote that they had more confidence now.

There were eleven instances where people mentioned that they were more confident or that they self-esteem had increased since they started to received counselling at SECASA.

Everyday life self-confidence and building self-esteem to allow me to build a happier and better life in all aspects i.e. job and career. ID 253

I’m confident that with ongoing counselling my anxiety and depression will lesson and I’m hopeful that I will be able to see myself as a person and regain my self-worth. ID 280

I’ve learned that ‘it is okay to be me and that I am enough’

I’ve been empowered to live a full life because absolutely none of what append to me was OK. ID 245

Dealing with trauma or incident

Clients were asked to what extent they thought that the support / services provided to them by SECASA have helped them deal with the trauma or incident that led them to seek SECASA’s assistance. In response to this question clients could choose from four options. “It has helped me a great deal”. “It has helped me somewhat”. “I am about the same as when I came” and, “I am less able to deal with it now”. While a greater proportion of males than females said that it helped them a great deal the difference was not statistically significant. There was no age difference between clients aged over and under 50 years.

A number of comments were made about how counsellors helped them deal with the trauma

I’ve been able to return to both places of trauma with my counsellor and been able to go to the scenes of deepest trauma – I never thought I would be able to do that. From that point onwards, flashbacks have almost ceased and when they still occur, I don’t dissociate, instead I can deal with it in real time, even though it’s still traumatic to me. ID 285

My views of incidents have more clarity and are more based on reality, that than the lies I told myself to cope. I’m not alone with my trauma anymore. Have support and a wonderful SECASA counsellor. D 284

Emotional safety

Clients were asked on a four-point scale from ‘very safe’ to ‘very unsafe’ how emotionally safe they felt at SECASA. All but one client indicated that they felt ‘very safe’ (82%) or ‘safe’ (17%). The person who said she felt ‘very unsafe’ wrote that she felt this way because of concerns about confidentiality. She indicated she was ‘very satisfied’ with the support she had received.

Worried at outset about personal details will not be given out without consent. Ex-partners can be very devious even using other women as a front. ID 283

Sixteen respondents stated that it was an important factor in their satisfaction with the service that they felt ‘emotionally safe’ in the building, but more importantly during the counselling sessions.

Given me a safe space to be emotional and talk about what happened. Helping me deal with my emotions and feelings in a positive way. ID 226
Through SECASA I feel less isolated, it has provided me with a safe place to talk about the assault, Julie has provided me with productive ways of dealing with the feelings that have followed form my assault ID 230

SECASA gave me back the power. I have PTSO and when describing the incident and reliving the trauma I was asked if I was having a flashback and told that I did not have to continue talking. It made me feel safe and it matters. We also did mindfulness/meditation which brought my anxiety down to a 2 from an 8. ID 280

I never felt safe and never cared about myself, Now I feel safe, now I care. I feel a swell and I don’t blame myself anymore. ID 215

View changes - sexual assault/violence

Clients were asked if the way that they viewed or thought about sexual assault and/or family violence had changed as a result of the support they received from SECASA. Eighty-one percent of clients indicated they had changed their views about sexual assault or family violence. Only two did not answer this question. While a greater proportion of males (93%) than females (79%) indicated that their views had changed, the result was not statistically significant.

The main explanation given was that they realised that what had happened to them was not their fault and that this realisation was empowering. The open-ended questions in other section also contained comments about the change in clients’ understanding so that they no longer blamed themselves for the harm done to them. There were 22 clients (23%) who wrote comments noting that they understood that it was not their fault and they were not to blame:

I now understand that I was a victim of a violent crime committed against me. That is wasn’t my fault. It was an abuse of power by an adult against a child. ID 291

I struggled a great deal in the aftermath with shame and anger. I blamed myself a lot, I felt like I couldn’t talk about what happened to me because people don’t, they don’t know how to. Even family ID 297

I blamed myself a lot, I knew it was silly but couldn’t seem to help it. Was great to be able to work through that, It was the arseholes fault, not mine. ID 256

Several discussed how the release from blaming themselves was a great relief and empowering.

Satisfaction with support

Clients were asked on a four-point scale from ‘very satisfied’ to ‘very unsatisfied’, how satisfied they were with the support / services that SECASA provided.

The satisfaction level as shown in Figure 1 was extremely high with all clients being either ‘very satisfied’ (89%) or ‘fairly satisfied’ (11%) with the service. No-one was ‘unsatisfied’ with the service. The 2017 result is a slighter higher than in the 2016 evaluation. SECASA should be thrilled with this level of satisfaction. This result is worth reporting to funding bodies.
Figure 1: Satisfaction (%) with the support provided by SECASA

Seaford, Cranbourne, Rosebud and Pakenham sites had too few responses to make any reasonable comparison for satisfaction levels. The other sites had sufficient numbers to enable statistical comparisons. There was no statistical difference between these sites.

There were many comments made about the competence and empathy supplied by counsellors. Clients took the time to write often large amounts about their satisfaction and appreciation of their counsellor. In most instances counsellors’ names were noted but all identifiers have been removed from this report. SECASA has reason to be pleased with comments about the counsellors. Three have been selected to illustrate client’s appreciation.

*My counsellor is a perfect match!! My chaos became organised.* ID 287

*My counsellor has been like a lifeline to me over the past few months, She has been a support system, a mentor, a guide, a mirror and has helped me overcome my fear of discussion my trauma in a professional environment, while giving me different perspectives and a greater understanding of my trauma.* ID 221

*My counsellor is patient, kind, great listener, lots of wisdom from work experiences, Has helped with strategies and encouragement all the way. Nothing is ever too much or too hard for her and I have appreciated every bit. Our time is nearly over and that OK because I’m ok. Thank you.* ID 256

**Improvement or addition to services**

Clients were asked: “Was there anything you particularly disliked about the session or service?” and “Do you have any comments / suggestions for improvement?” Fifty-three clients answered this question with twenty-three indicating that they did not want any change to the service. Many of these indicated that they were grateful for the help and support:

*I have found that just talking openly with someone who is knowledgeable in this area has helped a lot so I can’t think of any suggestions to improve.* ID 230
Increased service

The request for quicker access to counselling and an extension of hours when the sites were open was mentioned several times. For people indicated that they would like SECASA to provide them with opportunities to meet and interact with other clients.

There needs to be more services for men. I’ve heard its numbers problem, but with adequate social media advertising, the numbers will happen. I have no support and would really value a men’s survivor group. ID 221

More Art work classes. More life rebuilding classes. Maybe basic handyman courses. - Change locks, fix taps, drill stuff, change tyres. ID 261


Could use more interaction with other clients in a positive environment. No necessarily focussed on sharing the experiences that brought us here. ID 254

Organisation /structural changes

People suggested improvement to buildings, reception areas and providing refreshments such as cups of tea. Others wanted changes to the manner in which their counselling sessions were organised: more efficient intake procedures, longer notification times when a worker goes in leave and a larger range of counselling techniques.

Renovation! Building looks a bit old and dodgy (Bentleigh). It needs renovating and updating, it feels old and daggy (no funding I know). People seeking recovery from DV and SA deserve modern facilities. (I know it is all about budget). I appreciate you and your excellent staff! Initial counselling was very supportive. ID 283

As a male survivor of sexual assault I feel there are a lack of support services especially within SECASA. ID 221

I felt pressured to ‘end’ after my initial six consultations (five visits was deemed Ok my needs were not acute enough (Violence) and that I did have external counselling. This was not as good as ONSAS! They were very open later and after my ex suicided and when I commenced a therapy course 7 months later. ID 283

More sensitive front-desk staff at some centres

Two clients were dissatisfied with the responses of front-desk staff over communication breakdowns. Negative comments about reception were less than in 2016.

Reception staff abrupt in the way they communicated – not kind and understanding the way the workers are. They need one-on-one training in tone and body language etc. They often don’t quite know as much about services as the workers. This part of the service is not as friendly and helpful as the others and they should be – they are the front face, they should have known about the renamed art group without seeking info about other services offered. ID 283
CONCLUSION

This 2017 evaluation of the services of SECASA demonstrates a high degree of satisfaction from clients. It also demonstrates with great clarity the effectiveness of the services provided by SECASA. It highlights the many ways in which clients acknowledge how the counselling and/or group work assists them in addressing the impact of their traumatic experiences and in finding ways to manage their lives with a degree of confidence. It also points to the value of having a service specifically designed to assist victims or survivors of sexual assault or family violence. The result of the 2017 evaluation is evidence of the skills of the staff at SECASA and their ability to provide counselling and support; a point that is highly valued by clients. This is illustrated by the high satisfaction level of clients in respect to the support they have received from SECASA.

That most clients say they are more confident in managing their lives now than they were prior to attending SECASA is evidence of the value of the work. Their written statements provide many examples of how SECASA has been able to assist them.

Clients wrote about the ways in which they would like the service to be extended, and provide suggestions on how it can be improved. These suggestions are set in the context of overall satisfaction with the service. While some of the suggestions, such as provided afternoon tea are not to be taken seriously, there are some ideas that warrant attention by SECASA.

The criticism about the poor quality of the building, especially in respect to East Bentleigh is valid. The reception of cramped and the building is old and there are no meeting rooms. This concern was mentioned in the last three evaluations of the service. Women in particularly are concerned that they can encounter male clients or males while in reception. They also feel that confidentiality is compromised because others in the waiting room can hear what they are saying to reception. The lack of privacy and space in receptions areas, particularly at the East Bentleigh site warrants attention by Monash Health.

It is clear that staff members in some sites are more vigilant about inviting their clients to fill out evaluation forms than in others. It is important that staff members who have been remiss in this task are informed strongly that it is their responsibility to get clients to fill out the forms. There are clear benefits to the organisation to get client feedback in order to improve the service and to give feedback to funding bodies.

To conclude, the results of this evaluation indicate that SECASA is doing an extraordinary job in assisting people who have been traumatised to develop a greater understanding of the issues around their experiences and to develop strategies and skills to enable them to be stronger emotionally and in a better place to develop meaningful relationship with others. SECASA should rightly proud of the way that clients appreciate the service and of the help provided.

Prepared by Dr Ruth Webber, Private Research and Evaluation Consultant
Phone 0429 142 782
Email: ruwebber@tpg.com.au 18/10/2017
ATTACHMENT A: SERVICE USER EVALUATION 2017 ANSWERS TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Note: all names of counsellors or staff have been removed

Question 9: How emotionally safe do you feel at SECASA now?
If you felt unsafe, would you describe why you felt unsafe and what could we do to improve this for you?

ID 283.
Worried at outset about personal details will not be given out without consent. Ex-partners can be very devious even using other women as a front.

Question 10: How satisfied are you with the support / services that SECASA provided
If you felt unsatisfied about any part of our service, what could we do to improve the service for you?

ID 208
As my counsellor is the sickest Dude. (Note from evaluator – Her satisfaction rating was 10, so I think this is a compliment)

ID 221
As a male survivor of sexual assault I feel there are a lack of support services especially within SECASA.

ID 280
I’m still in the early stages of counselling but in just a few sessions I’m more comfortable and hopeful than I have been with lots of other counsellors/psychologists.

ID 283
I felt pressured to ‘end’ after my initial six consultations (five visits was deemed OK my needs were not acute enough (Violence) and that I did have external counselling. This was not as good at SECASA. They were very open later and after my ex suicided and when I commenced a therapy course 7 months later.

Sometimes reception staff need training (East Bentleigh) – tone of voice and body language etc. They were abrupt in a way they communicated – not kind and understanding the way the workers are. There was a noticeable difference or gap.

Question 11: In which of the following ways have the services provided by SECASA helped you, even if it was just a little bit?

ID 201
I am already a confident / strong person

ID 203
More strength and confidence to deal with the past and future/present issues.

ID 206
My self-esteem has increased and my insight into myself.
I have someone to listen to me and tell me that I’m doing a good enough job. I’m not better yet and that’s okay. In public everyone is always asking ‘are you better yet?’ At SECASA I get asked ‘Where are you at today?’

I talk more openly.

Small steps I know I have a long way to go

Techniques to help insomnia. Better understanding of my past experience impacting my thoughts.

The best thing my counsellor has given me is perspective. Perspective about my past, my present, and my future. That’s a blessing in itself.

Too early to tell yet, this is my second session.

Work in progress.

Still early days

I can speak about it now.

I don’t feel so along anymore.

It helped both me and my daughter to re-engage and having her come back to home. It has helped my daughter to re-establish a relationship with her stepmother.

I’ve learned that ‘it is okay to be me and that I am enough’

I’ve been empowered to live a full life because absolutely none of what append to me was OK.

It is only my second session but positive feelings towards my counsellor.

It has been the best thing – hard to describe that positive impact counselling at SECASA has had on my whole life, my relationships, everything really. Thank you.
ID 257
I have got a lot out of Group Session and Social Sessions and Art therapy.

ID 258
I feel my daughters are stronger now and more confident. One daughter is particular has come a long way in healing since seeing Ali.

ID 261
While always being a work in progress being a victim as a child and never being heard or acknowledged has complicated every aspect of my life. SECASA has finally helped me put these events into focus one at a time so I can finally see how damaging and impacting things have become.

ID 267
It’s been the only positive experience at the moment when I laugh. I can talk about harder stuff and not have it feel overbearing or overwhelming. Great atmosphere and very comfortable. Awesome chick thumbs up.

ID 273
I’m not alone in this experience. I can move forward.

ID 275
Last seen 2 1/5 years ago. Reconnected, as situation has become difficult again due to criminal charges.

ID 280
I’m confident that with ongoing counselling my anxiety and depression will lesson and I’m hopeful that I will be able to see myself as a person and regain my self-worth.

ID 283
Formal naming of what I had experienced. New language to describe my experience. Excellent bout of counselling – great listener, always supportive, non-judgmental. Helped me understand my situation, male violence. Safe place not marked in street. Caring advocate (Counsellor). Formal naming of abuse as DV

Understanding male abusers. No shame of judgement. Trust with men, I had a male counsellor which I was nervous of, seeing I had domestic violence; He turned around my thinking on this. Helped me with it! I have learned to trust men and have him listen to my issues (I grew up in a fatherless home). – Options referral.

ID 284
It’s a struggle and I have no doubt I wouldn’t be alive today without the help SECASA has given me. I owe my life to those who have helped me at SECASA.

ID 286
I used to believe if I was stronger or smarter or more ‘switched on’ then it wouldn’t have happened, I am starting to accept that it is an unrealistic expectation of myself or anyone else.

I have a clearer understanding of what sexual assault and family violence but I still have a lot to learn about personal boundaries and what is/isn’t ok and when/how to say no.

I understand that healing is a process that takes years. I am more patient and accepting of the feelings and triggers. I understand that this is normal.
The counselling and education I received from the counsellor enabled me to move through the painful events that were a constant reminder causing depressive thoughts and anxiety to well up. I had support with criminal proceedings and sentencing of the perpetrator whom had a bearing on my life and my family relationships.

**Question 14:** Have the ways that you view or think about sexual assault or family violence changed are a result of the support you have received from SECASA?

If you ticked YES, could you write down in the space below how your views have changed?

**ID203**
Neven did I realise the extent of damage/hurt that can occur form events and the extent of this damage to those impacted!

**ID 205**
What happened wasn’t my fault and I can move forward.

**ID 208**
Thinking my family are somewhat cool.

**ID 214**
I no longer blame myself

**ID 217**
I am now more aware of all the actions that constitute sexual assault

**ID 220**
Feel less responsible

**ID 221**
To assign blame to the adequate party. My understanding of trauma in general. To believe in a survivor not a victim. More understanding of the effects of trauma has caused my being.

**ID 222**
Views have changed as I know now how to respect women better

**ID 225**
I am more accepting and place less blame and pressure on myself,

**ID 226**
Slowly learning to forgive myself and not blame myself.
I can identify it better

Not sure

That I am not to blame for what happened and that being a protective parent is actually okay and that I am doing the right thing contrary to court beliefs and orders.

Sexual assault is much more common than I initially thought; it is not an easy process to work through and takes a great deal of time and effort to work through the effect of assault.

I don’t blame myself anymore.

I can speak out about it now.

I have a better understanding of domestic violence

Don’t blame myself as much

The support I received made me feel like it was not my fault as the victim and that my actions did not instigate the situation.

I am not to blame for someone else’s actions.

I know that I can learn new things and ways to cope with what happened and the sense that ‘I’m doomed forever’ has gone. I have been able to see the light. X

When I started counselling I had so much sadness in me. I learnt to trust my feelings because they are real and valid.

It’s not Ok to allow people to control me.

That it’s never the victim’s fault and there is no excuse for sexual assault to happen ever.

I was completely unaware that sexual assault was happening to me.
ID 252
I have more insight into the complexities of my and my partner’s situation.

ID 253
Treatment can resolve life issues.

ID 254
Less blame on myself.

ID 255
I’ve always been aware of it being wrong.

ID 256
I blamed myself a lot, I knew it was silly but couldn’t seem to help it. Was great to be able to work through that, it was the arseholes fault, not mine.

ID 257
Still angry with the system back then not SECASA – State ward etc., I have found the Royal Commission was a great way to be heard.

ID 260
I came here as a sexual assault from when I was a child and when I came I didn’t realise I was actually in a relationship that was very controlling and finally had the guts to leave the relationship and I am now happy.

ID 261
I now know that childhood sexual assault (incest) and violence are not the result of something that I did and I am not to blame.

ID 267
Helping me understand other ways to look at things.

ID 270
I think I’ve been able to support my neighbours, kids and perhaps their mum – but no other neighbours have come forward, even when fights have spilled out onto the driveway. I’ll keep supporting the kids (and mum) as much as I can.

ID 271
Understand, not condoning. Able to express anger with restraint less judgemental of myself. Real! And feel it a lot.

ID 272
Sexual assault is not OK.

ID 273
Greater understanding of societal reactions.

ID 274
I don’t blame myself; I don’t need the support of my family.
ID 277
I now understand that the way I feel and react is a normal response to something that should not have happened. I’m allowed to feel how I feel.

ID 278
I have come to better appreciate the ways in which sexual assault can affect later life.

ID 279
Just how prevalent it is in society.

ID 281
I have come to realise that all the men in my life have abused me in one way or another.

ID 282
More understanding

ID 283
Male violence and psych issues – shame, stigma, removed and put into context of our situation. Non-judgemental and supportive, referral, tips. Learning about terminology, and language to describe how I’d suffered – formal recognition. Knowing that I am not at fault. Knowing that it is common in the community. Strategies to cope and make good changes.

ID 284
My views of incidents have more clarity and are more based on reality, than the lies I told myself to cope. I’m not alone with my trauma anymore. Have support and a wonderful SECASA counsellor.

ID 285
Most of the time I don’t blame myself anymore – it’s just the last little bit I need to get past. But I don’t blame any other survivors just me.

Always seeing the best in me and reminding me that she believes in me, even when I am not able to.

ID 287
My counsellor is a perfect match!! My chaos became organised.

ID 289
Made myself calmer.

ID 290
Not my fault.

ID 291
I now understand that I was a victim of a violent crime committed against me. That is wasn’t my fault; it was an abuse of power by an adult against a child.

ID 293
My views have changed in regard to the impact the abuse has had on all areas of my life including my family relationships. I am more aware of the psychological damage and have gained tools from CASA to help me alleviate and reduce memories and my responses to the abuse.
Because I am able to move on with my life

I am more aware of what family violence is. Behaviours that were normal for me during childhood

I struggled a great deal in the aftermath with shame and anger. I blamed myself a lot, I felt like I couldn’t talk about what happened to me because people don’t, they don’t know how to. Even family.

*Question 15: If SECASA and its staff have helped you, we would really appreciate it if you could write in the space below how it has helped you.*

I was sexually assaulted by a good friend and Rochelle has helped me to realise it’s not my fault and how can I manage my anger

Giving me someone to talk to

Gotten me to understand myself better and tear away at the shame and guilt and break it down.

Michelle has helped me gain the strength to speak up when things are awry and has been a true advocate for me the whole way through, She has helped me to get through many issues which I’m not sure I could have without support...

Helped me with finding self-defence VOCAT application. Lots of support.

She is an amazing counsellor; she facilitates a safe and warm environment which feels open and non-judgemental. She has guided me to recognise my strengths and has provided me with the courage to articulate my fears with her and my loved ones. A++

I want to single out my counsellor and name her as a fantastic counsellor, I leave my counselling sessions laughing and smiling which is such a nice change. It makes it easier to come back each time, The lady at reception is always super friendly and her smile always puts me at ease even if I’m running late. (Dandenong)

It is a safe place and it has a sick worker, that’s pretty funny... sometimes.

The ladies here have been nothing but wonderful, helpful, caring. Thank you all!
When I was seeing former counsellor I was a bit more able to cope, without her I have fallen back into my rut.

I never felt safe and never cared about myself, now I feel safe, now I care. I feel a swell and I don’t blame myself anymore.

I have come a long way to understanding that I am not to blame for what happened and that I can be a strong woman and speak up and not allow anyone to push me down and walk over me.

I now have a better understanding of how fare that abuse has impacted my life, how behaviours and through patterns that I thought were ‘just me’ are a direct result of the sexual abuse and grooming by the offender, and the condoning of behaviour by my mother, Through SECASA I have learned a great deal about how to handle this.

Feeling genuinely supportive, provided useful information provided reading material, additional support services, tips and strategies and suggestions which have assisted greatly.

My counsellor has been like a lifeline to me over the past few months. She has been a support system, a mentor, a guide, a mirror and has helped me overcome my fear of discussion my trauma in a professional environment, while giving me different perspectives and a greater understanding of my trauma.

Helped keep things in the open and keep family discussions open.

It’s good to get it off my chest.

Given me a safe space to be emotional and talk about what happened. Helping me deal with my emotions and feelings in a positive way.

Just the support and someone to talk to, especially since I have recently tried to take my own life.

Through SECASA I feel less isolated, it has provided me with a safe place to talk about the assault, Julie has provided me with productive ways of dealing with the feelings that have followed form my assault.

Lisa has made me believe there are people that do care about my health and wellbeing although it is still a struggle sometimes to not feel worthless and a burden.
ID 236
Non-judgemental and listening from (counsellor) and reassurance.

ID 237
Support services, someone to talk to, referrals and paperwork mum

ID 238
It has helped me to get back a better relationship with my daughter. It has given my daughter the tools needed to move forward.

ID 240
Depressed

ID 241
I have received amazing support from my counsellor at SECASA, I am more confident in situations that I would usually feel uncomfortable in, and I have learned to stand up for myself more. I feel much stronger as a person for going through this experience and for getting the amazing help that I did. Thank you so much (counsellor) and SECASA!!

ID 243
Manage my emotions. Learning how to be more mindful. Understanding how my trauma has affected me and how I can change or live with that.

ID 244
Counsellor is amazing; she spends time to get the best outcome for her clients. Absolutely caring and considerate.

ID 245
My counsellor is a true professional who cares deeply for her clients in a number of ways. The SECASA Art groups have been the most useful to me. They encourage us to reconnect the positive life activities that get burned with abuse.

ID 246
I came here very blank and confused, my results now has shown me so much more than I’ve ever known in my life before to now and given me clear choices.

ID 247
It has helped me to understand that what happened to me when I was younger was not my fault in any way. It also is helping me to move on with my life.

ID 250
SECASA is a very warm and welcoming group of people, if it wasn’t for the support form staff; I’m unsure how I would be at this stage in my life.

ID 252
In many and various ways, support, insight, sharing and more subtle things that I can’t easily express.
Everyday life self-confidence and building self-esteem to allow me to build a happier and better life in all aspects i.e. job and career.

Helping me with practical solutions to navigate the stressful situations in my everyday life. Offered different ideas / perspectives on how things are/ can be.

My counsellor is patient, kind, great listener, lots of wisdom from work experiences, has helped with strategies and encouragement all the way. Nothing is every too much or too hard for her and I have appreciated every bit. Our time is nearly over and that OK because I’m ok. Thank you.

My counsellor come with me to the Royal Commission (Sexual Abuse in Institutional care just great support all around***

My daughter has become stronger and more able to deal with what happened to her. She feels safe with her counsellor Ali. Ali has helped her to cope with various issues that have come up – post trauma. The healing process is being well assisted.

My counsellor is amazing and has helped me come so far in my journey and I am now dealing with things better.

By explaining trauma and the way the brain works I am aware of flashbacks and how they work. Unlocking the fear and understanding of trauma and no longer being afraid of the past is helping to rebuild my life in a healthy and positive way. Thanks (counsellor).

Haven’t been receiving counselling support for too long. But I attend an art class every week which has been really great. It’s nice to enter this building for a happy reason. The class is full of lovely people and it is a very safe place.

Still new but feels like it’s something that will be beneficial.

It gives me somewhere safe. It helps normalise things, understand what was incomprehensible.

I know I have changed hugely but something always seems to come up and shatter the serenity. They difference now is that I don’t go into meltdown. I can handle most things that come to me – I just need to be reminded of how far I’ve come.
ID 271
Couldn’t have any of that (understanding not condoning able to express anger with restraint). I am comfortable with people without acting ordinary without therapy and the patient and sympathy and knowledge of SECASA people.

ID 273
SECASA has helped me negotiate personal relationships and rebuild my sense of self.

ID 274
Always being there for me. Being a constant support throughout the ups and downs.
Having someone to talk to about my abuse, who understands. Helping me understand how abuse affects me body and soul.

ID 275
Save my life.

ID 276
It has made me very aware of my understanding of what happened to me. My counsellor has been my rock.

ID 278
My counsellor offered a very safe, empathetic, comforting and knowledgeable space for me to work through particularly issues. It was very empowering to understand that my issues had validity.

ID 279
It gave me a safe space to talk our about my issues/ SECASA especially my counsellor) also gave me great support during the legal proceedings which occurred.

ID 280
SECASA gave me back the power. I have PTSD and when describing the incident and reliving the trauma I was asked if I was having a flashback and told that I did not have to continue talking. It made me feel safe and it matters. We also did mindfulness/meditation which brought my anxiety down to a 2 from an 8.

ID 281
My counsellor has persevered with me and earnt my trust. I feel very fortunate that I feel that I can be safe and heard by her. I’ve found it very difficult in the past to trust psychologist and psychiatrists but now I feel very comfortable to bare my deepest darkest traumas to her.

ID 282
Coping with daily life tasks.

ID 283
Confidence to name the behaviour DV. Assistance to help me move out of the situation. Referral to other supports – art therapy, group work, other counselling services outside SECASA. Continued communication months later when other related issues came about. Gave me a whole new way of conceptualising myself and my future life. Name but no shame
I’ve been able to return to both places of trauma with my counsellor and been able to go to the scenes of deepest trauma – I never thought I would be able to do that. From that point onwards, flashbacks have almost ceased and when they still occur, I don’t dissociate, instead I can deal with it in real time, even though it’s still traumatic to me.

My SECASA counsellor has helped me to advocate for me needs through letters and conversations with other professionals and services that I have been involved with. She has been incredible flexible to my needs and always supportive

More focussed on myself and my needs to care for me not just others!

Strategies used. Techniques for managing PTSD – flashbacks, Triggers etc

By making me aware of me having the capacity to be assertive (desc) statements have helped me to reduce the triggering experience I feel when dealing with a huge variety of matters in my life, including interactions with Centrelink, my ex-wife, lawyers.

It lovely having someone to talk to that listens. It provided me with an understanding as to why it happened.

SECASA has helped me set boundaries around my heart and emotional life; keeping me safe. My health overall has improved; my self-esteem and dignity. My view of SECASA is that counselling alongside collaborative workshops and group therapies offered helped me connect with a range of health modalities that have enabled me to explore new tools to let go of the hurt, frustration, powerlessness and send of loss and anger that I felt. These are the best! (four counsellors named)

If I ever thought about what happened I was able to rely on my grounding techniques.

Enlightening in family violence, better ways to manage anger / stressful decisions.

Connected with support/community services. Made me more aware of my minimising behaviours in relation to my past relationship and childhood.

My counsellor agreed to have my mum sit in a session to go through me mood / anger problems related to the assault. Whilst a past event, it affects me greatly in the present day. I had battled with suicidal thoughts and was on the brink. I quit my job but at the time and sessions I’ve had in this time have given me tremendous strength and coping strategies to put the past behind me.
Question 16: It would be really helpful to SECASA if you could provide suggestions about ways to improve the service.

ID200
When you have a group support sessions offered to people you must cater for them to be able to join then or at another time.

ID201
It’s all good.

ID 201
Dandenong MOC have sufficient cups and glasses available. Bus stop closer - suggestion to petition the bus company. Front door (near lift and entrance) a little bit sterile, e.g. name on door 24 crisis line. Clearer information at reception

ID 203
Nothing, I am so happy I have sought this help.

ID 205
Longer term service for complex trauma.

ID 206
Give my counsellor a pay rise. Provide after hours and weekend appointments

ID 208
Open later (more hours)

ID 213
Social group on Tuesdays to be a permanent day. I love Game day. Lisa the volunteer is great.

ID 214
An art space out the back. Social group on Tuesday to be permanent

ID 215
There is nothing that needs changing.

ID 217
Keep doing everything you’re dong – thank you all.

ID 219
Appointment confirmation / updates. Cancellation by mobile (phone)

ID 220
Rooms could offer better sound proofing. Be in a separate (building) from ‘Launch Housing’

ID 221
There needs to be more services for men. I’ve heard its numbers problem, but with adequate social media advertising, the numbers will happen. I have no support and would really value a men’s survivor group.
Cups of tea

Super happy and impressed. Maybe an option to meet other survivors.

I see no need

Have more efficient intake procedures, it took over 6 months for us to be allocated workers.

I have found that just talking openly with someone who is knowledgeable in this area has helped a lot so I can’t think of any suggestions to improve.

Lisa is fantastic and I am so happy she is my case worker.

When changing from one worker to the next please can you have a crossover session with both counsellors, workers to be clear and give as much notice as possible when going on leave? Do what they say they will do.

None

Honestly I have been to another CASA prior to Seaford and I didn’t last. This place has brought me back to life.

None that I can think of. SECASA as an organisation do everything they can to enable clients to heal form sexual abuse.

Fantastic service

More staff to reduce the waiting list time.

None

Improve availability of services. Especially 4pm appointment times.
Could use more interaction with other clients in a positive environment. No necessarily focussed on sharing the experiences that brought us here.

Easier to access by public transport. Buses are only every hour.

I don't have experience outside SECASA so it’s difficult to think of improvements.

More colour in rooms.

More Art work classes. More life rebuilding classes. Maybe basic handyman courses. -Change locks, fix taps, drill stuff, change tyres.

More comfortable chairs

More classes and chance to engage as a community.

Nothing

Can’t think of any.

Bacon and egg 9organisc) sour dough sandwich and flat white, one sugar in winter.

You guys are amazing.

I think it is great the way it is.

At this stage cannot comment as I am very happy with their services. I need long term and frequent sessions so the ability to dos would be truly remarkable.

At this point in time I don’t feel I can comment because so far the help I have received has been wonderful.

Possible social type get togethers.
ID 283
Renovation! Building looks a bit old and dodgy (Bentleigh). It needs renovating and updating, it feels old and daggy (no funding I know).

Never shut down the VIP service. Keep wonderful staff like Donovan.

Reception staff abrupt in the way they communicated – not kind and understanding the way the workers are. They need one-on-one training in tone and body language etc. . . . They often don’t quite know as much about services as the workers. This part of the service is not as friendly and helpful as the others and they should be – they are the front face, they should have known about the renamed art group without seeking info about other services offered.

ID 284
I have no idea. Sorry I don’t feel confident I’d be able to suggest anything, it is really an awesome service and I thank you all greatly! Thank you!

ID 285
I can’t think of any at all.

ID 286
Offering a range of approaches other than just talking might be helpful, especially when shame and embarrassment can make it so difficult to speak (i.e., art therapy, figurines, sand trays, etc.

ID 287
Match people every time with the ‘right’ counsellor.

ID 290
More groups.

ID 291
Develop and connection with the Blue Knot Foundation and provide access to their training and resources for both staff and male victims of CSA.

ID 293
Victims find it hard to put their ‘hurt’ into ‘writing’, maybe they could deliver a workshop. I was reading some statistics on the CASA website that some victims felt that reporting their abuse experience was not taken seriously by authorities. I have navigated the system and feel that victims needs to ‘find their voice’ before approaching authorities e.g... Prose out the main circumstances of the offence and be detailed in their reporting. Education of the fundamentals around what constitutes specific offences”. What constitutes sexual or domestic abuse?” physical assault? Assault of a minor? Oral vaginal penetration? Object? Incest? force? Family violence? Educate victims to WRITE victim impact statements and Reports.

ID 297
Nothing really. However, when I was working times for group based therapy / activities that would enjoy / consider going to do not fit with full time working hours.