



# **Telehealth Service User Handbook**

*WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE WORK AND PAY RESPECT TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AND THEIR ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE CUSTODIANS OF THESE LANDS AND WATERS AND THEIR ENDURING SOVEREIGNTY; AND WE BEAR WITNESS TO THEIR DIVERSITY, STRENGTH, AND RESILIENCE*

## Scope

This Service User Guide provides information about what you can expect when using Blue Knot Foundation's Telehealth Services. This includes the Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service. The Redress Support Service is for people who experienced child sexual abuse in an institutional setting and access to this service is through our Helpline.

It shares your rights and responsibilities and the main policies you need to know about when you access our services. It also has information about how you can partner with us to build a better service, including how you can give us feedback or leave a complaint.

## Introduction

Blue Knot provides counselling, information and support for anyone who is affected by complex trauma. Complex trauma is repeated, ongoing, and often extreme interpersonal trauma (between people) – violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation experienced as a child, young person and adult.

## Vision, Purpose, Values

### *Vision*

To reach the more than 1 in 4 adult Australians impacted by complex trauma

### *Purpose*

Empowering adults to recover and build resilience from complex trauma

### *Values*

#### **Hope**

As human beings we all have our hopes and dreams, even if they are buried deep. Hope is a value which Blue Knot holds dear and which sometimes we hold for people, who at that time are unable to hold onto hope for themselves.

#### **Recovery**

Recovery means different things to different people and depends on where each person comes from and what they have experienced. Blue Knot embraces the knowledge that healing is absolutely possible and does what it can to support people along their own healing journey.

## Care

A trauma-informed world is one in which people care for one another with empathy, compassion and understanding. Blue Knot works to care for each person as the unique individual we each are, embracing differences, helping them to feel safe and supporting their health, their wellbeing and path to recovery.

## Empowerment

Many people who have been harmed in relationship with others have been disempowered and are left blaming themselves and feeling low. Our goal is to support each person with the respect and dignity we all need and deserve to find their own sense of self-worth and agency.

## Collaboration

Social connection and acceptance are core needs for us all. That's why Blue Knot enacts this trauma-informed principle in the way we connect with each person and work with them, sharing power and fostering each person's voice and choice.

## Professionalism

Blue Knot aspires to delivering services which are of a consistently high quality, and which efficiently, effectively, safely and compassionately meet the needs of each person seeking our support, as best we can.

## Blue Knot Helpline

### Who can use our service?

Our Helpline offers short-term counselling, support, information and referrals to anyone over the age of 18 who has experiences of complex trauma from childhood. This includes violence, abuse, neglect and other forms of trauma. We also support parents, partners, family members and friends of survivors as well as the professionals who work with them.

You can call the Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service on **1300 657 380**

This service is open from 9am–5pm AEST/AEDT 7 days a week including public holidays. You can also email [helpline@blueknot.org.au](mailto:helpline@blueknot.org.au)

You can also contact us through webchat. We use webchat to give information and support around referrals. You can access Webchat at the bottom right of this page. Blue Knot does not provide counselling over webchat. Please see our [Webchat Terms and Conditions](#) for more information.

## **What sort of service do we provide?**

Our service provides support based on trauma-informed principles. This means that when you call, we will listen carefully to what you say and support you to feel as safe as you can. We know how hard it can be to call and will work with you to find out what you need, and how we can support you.

Our clinical practice is informed by the expertise of people with lived and living experience, from practitioners and from the latest research. This knowledge and the skills which support best practice are described in Blue Knot's 2019 [Practice Guidelines for Clinical Treatment of Complex Trauma](#). These guidelines inform the way our counsellors will work with you when you call.

## **Counsellors**

Our counsellors are all professionals who are trauma-informed and experienced in working with people with experiences of complex trauma. Our counsellors work in a team, which means that a different counsellor will take your call at different times. All counsellors are trained and experienced and receive supervision from both Blue Knot and outside supervisors. They come from a range of fields including counselling, social work, psychology, and psychotherapy.

## **Lived and Living Experience Committee**

Blue Knot is committed to genuinely engaging with people with a lived and living experience of complex trauma, and their personal supporters - family members/carers to inform its work. This includes as partners in co-design processes.

The Lived and Living Experience Committee provides a forum in which a group of adult survivors regularly comes together to share their insights, knowledge and reflections around the services Blue Knot provides, its resources and activities. This approach honours the expertise of lived and living experience and influences

both what Blue Knot does and the way it does it, in supporting its purpose to empower survivors to heal.

The current Committee has diverse and inclusive representation of around thirteen people from around Australia. It includes people from different cultural and religious backgrounds, including First Nations peoples, with a disability, of differing gender and sexual orientation, from rural and remote communities and from a range of age groups. Everyone's lived and living experience is different but when the group comes together the shared passion to support others shines strong.

## **Rights of Service Users**

### **Trauma-Informed Charter of Rights**

Blue Knot is here to listen, support and respect you. We are committed to upholding your rights and have adapted the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights and its seven values into a Charter of Service users' rights for people accessing its Telehealth services to guide us. Services include phone, online, email or video call counselling, information or referral delivered through the Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service.

When I access support from Blue Knot, I have a right to:

#### **ACCESS**

- Trauma-informed culturally sensitive services that meet my needs
- Access experienced trauma counsellors
- An accessible service
- Use the National Relay Service and the Translating and Interpreting Service

#### **SAFETY**

- Receive safe high-quality care that meets national standards
- Be supported in a safe environment
- Be listened to with compassion
- Not have my call recorded if I don't want it to be recorded

#### **RESPECT**

- Be treated as an individual, with dignity and respect
- Have my culture, identity, beliefs and choices recognised and respected
- Receive a professional and ethical service
- Have my rights respected inclusive of my abilities including my right to self-determination

### *PARTNERSHIP*

- Ask questions and engage in open honest communication each time I contact the service
- Make decisions about how I use the service within the scope of what it can provide

### *PRIVACY*

- Have my privacy respected whoever I am and wherever I come from
- Have information about me and what I share kept secure and confidential within the service
- Receive clear information about any limits to confidentiality related to my own safety or the safety of someone else

### *INFORMATION*

- Receive information about the scope of the service, including about consent in a way I understand so I can make decisions about how I use it
- Access information that is stored about me
- Be supported to understand issues related to my care, safety, engagement with the service, and any potential changes to this

### *GIVE FEEDBACK*

- Make a complaint and have my concerns addressed in a transparent way without it affecting the service I receive
- Share my experiences to help improve the quality of the service

## **Responsibilities of Service Users**

Clients have the responsibility (as much as possible) to:

- Be respectful to counsellors and members of the Blue Knot team
- Respect the privacy of the service and of counsellors by not recording or disseminating material obtained during contact with a counsellor
- Use the service for the purpose for which it is intended
- Engage with services when I am able to do so; e.g. not when driving or when under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If I am not able to engage when I make contact, I will be welcome to contact the service again, when I can engage.

- Follow the reasonable instructions of a counsellor to support their safety or the safety of others.

## Key Policies

You might find reading the following Policies, Terms and Conditions, and information useful. These are listed below with a link to each one.

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy \(Plain English\)](#)

[Feedback and Complaints Policy](#)

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(Plain English\)](#)

[Service Costs and Data Usage FAQs](#)

### *Informed Consent*

When you access the Helpline and Redress Support Service, the counsellor will ask you a few questions including:

- If you have called before
- If you would prefer to be anonymous or identified
- If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- If you consent to storing your information
- If you consent to receiving the service
- Which service you are hoping to access

You can choose to be anonymous. If you do, the counsellor will still take notes about the call, but they won't be linked to your number or your name.

### *Confidentiality*

The Helpline and Redress Support Service is confidential. This means that all the information you give us stays within our service, team, and organisation . There are a few exceptions:

- The Redress Support Service will ask for your consent to share information with external parties if you choose to apply for redress
- When you express that you or someone else is in danger including at immediate risk and when there is risk to a child or young person

- In cases where the law requires us to share your information

If you have any questions about this, you can speak with the counsellor at the time of your call.

## Accessing Support and What to Expect

### Phone

#### *What Happens when you call?*

- We operate 9am–5pm AEST/AEDT 7 days a week
- If we can't answer your call straight away, it will go to voicemail
- You may choose to leave a message or not
- If you leave a message, a counsellor will return your call as soon as possible. Please include your area code
- If we can't reach you, we will leave a message on your voicemail saying that the Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service called. If you do not want us to leave a message, please tell us this when you leave your message
- Calls from the Helpline and Redress Support Service to you will show up as blocked calls
- All calls received out of hours will be returned during our opening hours
- We will aim to return all calls within 48 hours

### Webchat

You can contact us through Webchat via our website [here](#). Webchat is for information and referrals but not for counselling. When you contact us, you will be placed in a queue. The next available counsellor will respond. If you prefer not to wait, you are welcome to email us. A counsellor will respond within 48 hours.

### Email

You can receive information and referral support by sending an email to [helpline@blueknot.org.au](mailto:helpline@blueknot.org.au) This service can help find referrals in your area including different forms of support depending on your needs and/or information for yourself or a loved one.



## Making a Complaint or providing feedback

You can leave feedback, complaints, or compliments about our Telehealth services, or resources. That's because feedback tells us what we're doing well and what we can do better.

To provide feedback, please complete the online form [here](#)

If you leave your contact details and request a response, we will aim to get back to you in ten (10) working days.

You can read more about making a complaint and our policies [here](#)

## Accessing the website

### *Accessibility*

Our website is accessible and includes the following features:

- Screen Reader
- Smart Contrast
- Text Spacing
- Animation Pausing
- Dyslexia Friendly Text
- Dictionary

You can access this on the bottom right-hand side of the website using the widget.

### *Auslan Resources*

We have a number of Auslan accessible video resources on topics such as understanding trauma, support for recovery and support for people caring for an adult survivor of trauma. These can be accessed [here](#)

You will also find a number of resources in Plain English and Easy Read versions.