

## Policies & Documents

# Becoming an Identity & Cyber Security Counsellor at IDCARE

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to summarise the process, training and journey required of individuals to become Identity & Cyber Security Counsellors at IDCARE. IDCARE provides frontline counselling support to individuals of all ages across the Australian and New Zealand communities who experience identity and cyber-related risks. These risks can include the exploitation of imagery, identity credentials, bullying, and abuse directed towards an individual. As an Identity & Cyber Security Counsellor, the provision of expert advice and support is critical in building an individual's knowledge and confidence in their engagement with others (online and offline) into the future. IDCARE plays a critical role for these clients and we are often viewed as a trusted independent confidant that is available to listen, learn and support individuals as they traverse complex and at times harmful situations.

### Our Philosophy

IDCARE's underlining philosophy is to reduce harm to victims of online abuse and cybercrime through the provisioning of counselling and related behaviour support services. IDCARE's Identity & Cyber Security Counsellors provide crisis management, emotional counselling support, practical knowledge, advice and personal tailored response plans to mitigate future risk.

The successful implementation of the above-mentioned strategies may only be achieved by having a deep understanding and direct knowledge of the cybercrime eco-system. IDCARE is in a unique position in that we are the only agency that works directly with victims of cyber related crimes. IDCARE's work has made a significant difference in cutting through red-tape for clients in minimising victimisation.

### Requirements

IDCARE's Identity & Cyber Security Counsellors are trained in the areas of counselling, social work and psychology, and are paid under the Award for Allied Health. Our counsellors are well practiced at assisting people of all ages who have concerns around the online environment, having obtained a minimum of 500 supervised client contacts in this highly specialised field.

To become a fully qualified Identity & Cyber Security Counsellor requires 120 hours of supervised training over a 12-week intensive program. During this time frame our most experienced counsellors work one-on-one and in group sessions. We ensure every counsellor has a comprehensive understanding of cybercrime, the emotional impacts to confronting individuals as a result of cybercrime, and how to support the impacted individual and their family throughout the journey to recovery.

Our trainees benefit from IDCARE's knowledge base which is constantly being updated. Our information is drawn from IDCARE's extensive library of over 1000 industry response plans, which are updated on a regular basis. Our knowledge on current trends is constantly updated, primarily from having direct contact with the very people who have been targeted by online abuse. This knowledge base is not something that can be found with any other agency.

Aside from the counselling component of IDCARE's training we also instruct our trainees in the more technical aspects of youth online security. Areas such as distribution of explicit images of a child, reverse image search, website takedowns, device recovery are all covered. We also highlight the need for recognising when a client requires specialist assistance and work towards connecting the client with outside agencies if required, including relevant government response agencies.

We prepare our counsellors to 'think outside the box' and to consider each client as an individual with individual needs. Our training focuses on 'co-creating' strategies aimed at empowering clients to not only make positive changes for their own safe online practice but also aimed at educating those around them.

IDCARE's supervisors' expertise is drawn from 1000's of hours of individual counselling, working closely with victims of cyber related issues. We have a rich understanding of the journey that victims face and as such are able to work effectively with individuals to minimise the negative impacts. Our aim is to equip clients with a thorough understanding of the risks around online practice, we co-create a plan of action to extricate the client from difficult situations, and work with them to build resilience around safe online practice.

## Your Journey to Becoming an Identity & Cyber Security Counsellor

### Selection

After receiving an expression of interest IDCARE will arrange a time to meet with our staff and managers. Each potential Counsellor undergoes an organisational suitability assessment, police background check and a working with children assessment. Our organisational suitability process assesses each candidate's ability to work within the IDCARE environment, not just with our clients, but within our culture of being a supportive, professional workplace where our collective experiences and knowledge is shared and promoted for the benefit of our organisation and its services. The selection process can take up to eight weeks, including all relevant checking with external providers and referees (and non-referees). Applicants must either be degree qualified in a behavioural sciences discipline or be completed at the time of completing their training. Applicants at this time must also be registered with their relevant health professional body and be in good standing with that body.

### Induction

The initial induction program for our Counsellors takes six weeks, where each inductee is allocated a supervisor and mentor and undergoes a series of desktop, individual, group, formal and informal activities and testing. Our program covers in detail the counselling and therapy techniques utilised within our National Case Management Centre, our response plan library, including its access and updating, as well as several modules on the nature of offline and online risks, legislative and regulatory guidelines and provisions, our Code of Conduct, and relevant Codes of Practice for the Australian Counselling Association, the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Association of Social Workers. Induction modules are divided into six key components:

1. Introduction to IDCARE, our Philosophy, Performance, and Obligations – this includes an overview of our organisation, structure, key capabilities, our behavioural expectations, and codes of conduct;
2. Counselling in Identity & Cyber – why it's different and how it's different;
3. Methods, modalities and techniques for counselling via telephone, email and online chat channels (including component on engaging the individual, the perpetrator, the family, the bystander and the responder);
4. Response Plans – an overview of the systems, tools and information repositories held by IDCARE and how these contribute to tailored individual client responses;
5. Looking After Oneself – how our Counsellors manage their own feelings, emotions and health (this module includes how staff access IDCARE's employee assistance services); and
6. The Ecosystem – an in-depth focus on the key stakeholders within the identity and cyber prevention, detection and response landscape.

Induction is competency-based and inductees are required to demonstrate their knowledge of key learning outcomes through practical and theoretical exercises, including the decomposition of response cases and their outcomes with our experienced staff.

### Supervision (from Inductee to Trainee)

Each trainee is required to undertake 120 hours of supervised client engagement following their six-week induction course. Client supervision is coupled with support activities, such as the updating of IDCARE's response plan library, and is planned to take place over a 12 week period. Trainees must complete a weekly diary for their supervisor and engage in fortnightly group discussions with other trainees and staff. Each trainee also meets regularly with their nominated supervisor and mentor (usually weekly) to discuss progress, actions and their professional development needs.

### Return of Service

At present there is no return of service obligation on inductees and trainees. IDCARE's employee award recognises that our Counsellors are professional allied health practitioners and are remunerated accordingly. We have found that since 2013, our staff become highly motivated and invested in our organisation. As such, as an organisation IDCARE has not found it necessary to impose a minimum Return of Service obligation for our staff.