

Gatehouse Centre

Contact Gatehouse Centre at The Royal Children's Hospital

You are always welcome to call us if you need to.
We can be contacted on:

- (03) 9345 6391 (during business hours)
- (03) 9345 5522 (after hours). Ask switchboard staff to page the on-call Gatehouse Centre worker

Crisis Care

Information for parents and carers

Gatehouse Centre

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
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www.rch.org.au/gatehouse

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Crisis Care

Gatehouse Centre at The Royal Children's Hospital is a Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) that provides counselling and crisis intervention services to children and young people who have been affected by sexual abuse.

Gatehouse Centre's role in crisis care

Gatehouse Centre therapists are highly qualified social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists and art therapists who are very experienced with working with children and young people, sexual abuse and psychological trauma.

In the case of very recent sexual assault, a child or young person may need to undergo a forensic medical examination. It is important that children, young people and their families are supported throughout this process and beyond. That is why, along with a doctor, you will have a therapist from Gatehouse Centre with you throughout the medical process.

It is the role of the Gatehouse Centre therapist to support you and your child throughout the examination — to make sure you understand everything that is happening, and to give you information and to organise counselling for you and your child down the track if that's what you need.

After the examination

Taking in information whilst you are at the hospital can be difficult. A Gatehouse Centre therapist will call you in days after the medical examination to see how you are travelling and to answer any questions you may have.

Reactions you might expect from your child

Children and young people, like adults, respond to trauma in many different ways. They may be teary or clingy, they might be angry, they may not show any outward signs of distress at all.

The very best thing you can do for your child is to be supportive, believing and answer any questions as calmly and honestly as you can.

Also, children thrive on love and kindness, but also on structure and routine. Going about life as you normally would, whilst allowing space to talk about what's happening if and when they need to, will help your child feel safe, contained, loved and supported.

If you have concerns about how your child is coping, please call us to talk it through. Longer-term counselling is available, either here at Gatehouse Centre or through another CASA, whichever is closer to your home. We will discuss your options with you in the days following the medical examination.

Reactions you might expect in yourself

Learning or suspecting that your child has been sexually abused is a terrible thing for a parent.

Following their child's disclosure of sexual abuse, many parents and carers have expressed feelings of:

- shock
- anxiety
- numbness or nothing at all
- guilt
- sadness
- any combination of these
- anger

All of these feelings are normal and to be expected. Looking after your own well-being is important, so if you don't have family or friends you feel you can discuss your feelings with, consider having some counselling of your own.

Again, this counselling can be provided through Gatehouse Centre, or we can give you details of a CASA in your area.