

1800

SeMPRO

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
PREVENTION AND
RESPONSE OFFICE

Annual Report
2022–23



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Requests and inquiries should be addressed to:

Head of Military Personnel

Military Personnel Organisation

Defence People Group

Department of Defence

Brindabella Park Offices BP29-04-163

CANBERRA ACT 2600.

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³ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03712>

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Contents

Executive Summary	1
SeMPRO 2022–2023 in brief	3
Immediate help – 1800 SeMPRO.....	3
Educating Defence.....	3
Policy and subject matter expertise	3
Immediate Help – 1800 SeMPRO	4
1. Support clients – assistance to people directly impacted by sexual misconduct.....	6
When people seek support – recent and less recent incidents	7
Gender	12
Service to Defence.....	14
2. Advice clients – individual advice on incident management and response	15
3. Debriefing clients – mental health support to people at risk of vicarious trauma.....	16
Educating Defence	17
Sexual Misconduct Awareness Briefings	17
Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge	17
Sexual Misconduct Incident Management and Response suite.....	17
Education delivery in 2022–23	19
Policy and Expertise for Defence	20
Sexual misconduct policy review.....	20
Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct – an interactive information tool ..	20
Future Work for SeMPRO	21
1800 SeMPRO Rebrand and Communications Plan	21
Environmental Risk Assessment	21
Appendix – SeMPRO key concepts	22
Sexual misconduct	22
Disclosing, reporting, and investigating.....	22
Harm minimisation	24
Person-centred response.....	24
Trauma-informed response.....	25

List of figures

Figure 1: New clients from Financial Year 2013-14 to 2022-23 by client type	5
Figure 2: Types of misconduct disclosed by Support clients in 2022–23	6
Figure 3: Types of misconduct disclosed by Support clients from 2013–2023	7
Figure 4: Support clients who experienced sexual assault or penetrative sexual offence by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	8
Figure 5: Support clients who experienced sexual harassment by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	8
Figure 6: Support clients who experienced acts of indecency by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	9
Figure 7: Support clients who experienced technology facilitated sexual misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	9
Figure 8: Support clients who experienced other sexual misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	10
Figure 9: Support clients who did not disclose a type of sexual misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	10
Figure 10: Support clients who experienced non-sexualised misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO	11
Figure 11: Support clients – days before contacting SeMPRO, 2022–23	11
Figure 12: Support clients by gender, 2013–2023	12
Figure 13: Support clients recent and historical incidents for men and women 2013–23.....	13
Figure 14: Support clients by Service type, 2022–23.....	14
Figure 15: Types of advice provided to Advice clients, 2022–23.....	15

List of tables

Table 1: Defence personnel with current proficiency in Foundation of Knowledge, 30 June 2023 – by Service.....	19
Table 2: Person-centred versus system-centred approaches.....	25
Table 3: Trauma-informed care	26

Executive Summary

The primary objective of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) is to support individuals who are impacted by sexual misconduct, and to prevent sexual misconduct in Defence workplaces. SeMPRO does this by employing a person-centric and trauma-informed approach to all aspects of its work through various lines of effort. SeMPRO works in three key ways to do this:

- providing education and training about sexual misconduct prevention and response to Defence personnel;
- providing client support to people affected by sexual misconduct; and
- shaping Defence policy to provide accessible resources that aid those impacted by sexual misconduct, their supporters, and managers.

Sexual misconduct incidents are unwelcome and unwanted sexualised behaviours and sexual offences. These behaviours are contrary to Defence and community values. Defence continues to pursue best practice in sexual misconduct prevention, incident management, and personnel response. SeMPRO is a central resource in Defence's sexual misconduct cultural change initiatives.

SeMPRO aims to give all personnel a clear understanding of Defence's behaviour expectations, and seeks to reduce the impact of sexual misconduct, by:

- directly supporting impacted people through the 1800 SeMPRO Service,
- training others to respond appropriately to reports and disclosures,
- enhancing the skills and ability of leaders, commanders and managers to speak about sexual misconduct prevention and respond in a trauma-informed way,
- providing debriefing services to leaders, commanders and managers to manage incidents and reduce the risk of vicarious trauma,
- shaping policy and providing implementation tools to Defence.

Critically, immediate support for a person in need is provided 24/7 through the 1800 SeMPRO Service. In 2022-23, 1800 SeMPRO saw a decrease in demand from clients impacted by sexual misconduct. In Defence this decrease may be attributed to a number of factors including changes in living and work arrangements on Defence bases and concerted efforts to educate Defence personnel about behavioural standards and support options. However, the exact cause is not known.

SeMPRO's tailored education initiatives are aimed at prevention and better management of sexual misconduct behaviours in Defence. Primarily, this is achieved through the evolution and delivery of SeMPRO's comprehensive training packages for Defence commanders and personnel. In January of 2023 SeMPRO released the first module of the new Education Continuum, Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge. This new course is mandatory for all personnel to complete in the 2023 calendar year or in the first 12 months of joining Defence, whichever occurs first. At the conclusion of the financial year 2022-23, 57% of Defence personnel have completed this new course.

Engagement with SeMPRO education products reflects a commitment by Defence personnel to prevent and address sexual misconduct in the workplace and results in more Defence personnel who are appropriately prepared to respond to and support an impacted person who may disclose to them. It is indicative of positive cultural reform in the organisation.

SeMPRO acknowledges people with lived experience of sexual misconduct and the experience of those who support them. In this Annual Report, SeMPRO draws on data relating to the experiences of sexual misconduct. Statistics contribute to understanding of the issue, but figures can feel depersonalised and detached from the lived experience of the people impacted by sexual misconduct. It is important to remember that each data point reflects the experience of real people. Sexual misconduct can have wide reaching effects on impacted people, as well as their colleagues, friends, and families. SeMPRO recognises these effects and upholds SeMPRO's principles of trauma-informed and person-centred care in this report.

SeMPRO 2022–2023 in brief

Immediate help – 1800 SeMPRO

The 1800 SeMPRO Client Response Team provides support to victims of sexual misconduct and advice to those individuals around an impacted person to help them provide support to a friend or colleague, or manage an incident.

During 2022-23, the 1800 SeMPRO Service helped 346 new clients; 144 who were directly impacted by sexual misconduct, and provided advice to 197 commanders, managers, colleagues, friends, and family members to help them give their best response to a person impacted by sexual misconduct in 2022–23.

Educating Defence

SeMPRO sexual misconduct education provides a suite of products that reaffirm Defence’s behaviour expectations; encourages impacted people to seek help; and teaches response, wellbeing and incident management skills. SeMPRO education aims to standardise understanding about sexual misconduct behaviours across the enterprise and reduce the impact sexual misconduct has on all personnel.

The Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge education product was released in January 2023, which focuses on definitions of sexual misconduct, expectations of the organisation and how to access support services. As at June 2023, 57% of Defence have completed this module. The Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge module is the first of five directed by the Defence People Committee to become part of Defence’s mandatory training. The remaining four modules, making up the Sexual Misconduct Application of Knowledge will be released in 2024.

More than half of the organisation (60%) completed a SeMPRO training course in 2022–23.

Policy and subject matter expertise

Appropriate, current, and informed policy about sexual misconduct is the foundation that Defence personnel rely upon to respond to incidents of sexual misconduct. SeMPRO team members have developed a unique body of expertise and experience to assist with the issue of sexual misconduct in the workplace. In 2022-23, SeMPRO progressed Defence’s strategic objectives through:

- Updating the central policy for managing sexual misconduct in Defence;
- Development of the SeMPRO Education Continuum; and
- Providing subject matter expertise to Defence policy makers and committees.

SeMPRO also provided advice and assistance to external organisations on policy, current good practice in service provision, and education product design.

Detailed information about key concepts used in this report, and core principles used in SeMPRO operations, is provided in the Appendices.

Immediate Help – 1800 SeMPRO

The 1800 SeMPRO Service is available to all people impacted in some way by sexual misconduct in Defence. SeMPRO provides services to all current and ex-serving ADF members, Defence APS personnel, Defence contractors, ADF Cadets, Officers and Instructors of Cadets, and all of their families. 1800 SeMPRO services are available to people of all genders.

In order to facilitate safety and trustworthiness for impacted persons who contact 1800 SeMPRO, and to avoid perceived or real conflicts of interests, 1800 SeMPRO are unable to support respondents or alleged perpetrators. They will, however, be assisted to engage with appropriate support services.

Eligible clients can contact the service 24/7, any day of the year, and their call will be answered by a mental health professional. The after-hours service provides for acute needs and advice regarding issues that emerge outside normal business hours and to those working overseas.

1800 SeMPRO mental health professionals allow clients to disclose information at their own pace and in their own way.

What happens when you phone 1800 SeMPRO for help?

You can call any time. Over the weekend. At 2am. From overseas. We are a team of mental health professionals available at all hours.

The first thing is to find out how you'd like us to help. Some callers need to tell their story - to be heard. Others need to find out about services in their area or ways to get through a rough patch. We give you a person-centred response which means that, wherever you are up to in responding to what happened, this is where we start too. If you don't feel like talking, we won't make you. Our service is confidential. You don't need to share your name if you don't want to.

1800 SeMPRO mental health professionals will tell you about how 1800 SeMPRO works, check in on your personal safety and wellbeing, and discuss options with you to move forward. The service you receive is guided by your needs.

Clients of the service have a diverse range of needs. Key reasons for calling 1800 SeMPRO include: support for themselves in response to their experience of sexual misconduct; advice on how to support someone else as a friend or as a manager; and, more general emotional health concerns not directly related to a specific incident of sexual misconduct. These three groups of clients, and the way 1800 SeMPRO assists them, are described in detail in this section of the report.

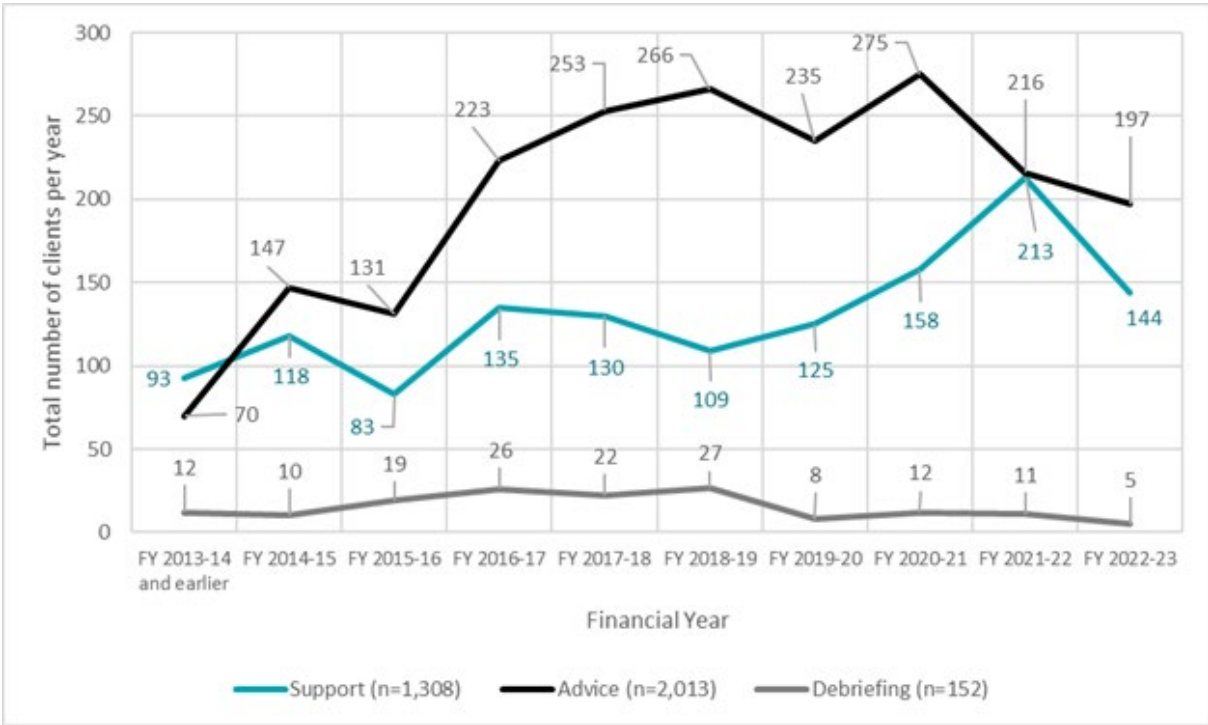
What happens when you phone for advice?

Managing sexual misconduct incidents can be hard. Knowing what to say to a friend who has disclosed to you is not always easy. Helping a team member to feel safe and navigate their options can be complicated.

1800 SeMPRO is a service Defence provides to help you respond to a person who has been impacted by sexual misconduct in the best way you can. We can help you with strategies for assisting a friend or family member who has come to you for support. We can also help you as a decision maker to understand Defence’s policies and support services and to apply them in difficult situations.

Figure 1 shows the number of clients that have contacted SeMPRO per year since 2013. Recent trends show a lower total number of clients accessed the 1800 SeMPRO Service in 2022-23 than in 2021-22.

Figure 1: New clients from Financial Year 2013-14 to 2022-23 by client type



The decreased demand seen in Support clients has taken place in the context of similar falls in call rates to national Australian call centre services⁵. For Defence, the number of Support clients have returned to levels similar to 2020-21, which is still a trend upwards overall.

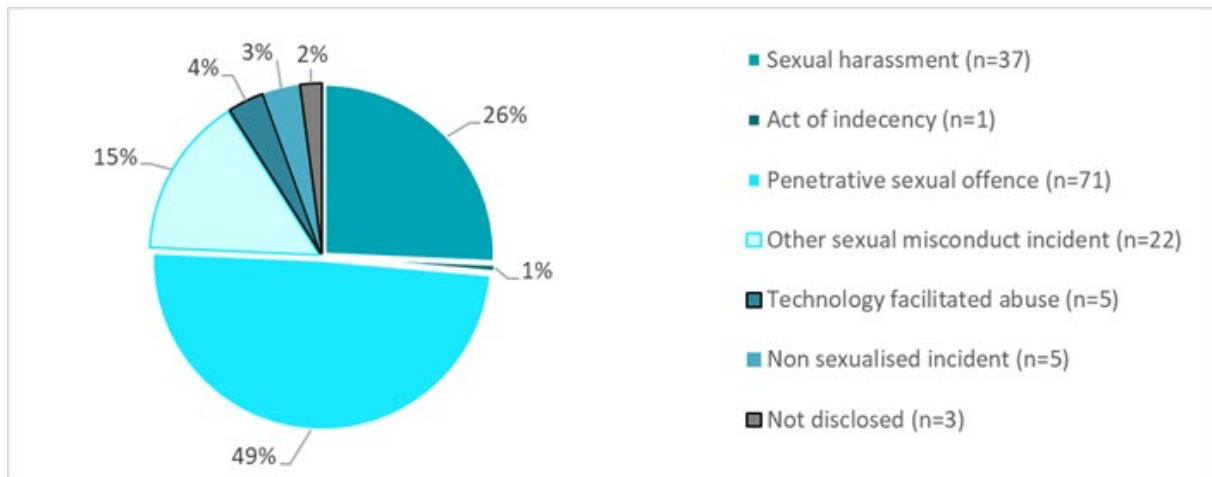
1. Support clients – assistance to people directly impacted by sexual misconduct

The 1800 SeMPRO Service is staffed by a team of mental health professionals. It was established to assist Defence personnel directly impacted by sexual misconduct. The primary objective of the service is, as much as possible, to reduce harm from sexual misconduct and to improve the wellbeing of those who are directly exposed to it. These people are *Support clients*.

1800 SeMPRO mental health professionals provide individuals with all hours support, they facilitate access to resources, assist in navigating the Defence complaints mechanisms, and offer referrals for other resources. The 1800 SeMPRO team, also known as SeMPRO’s Client Response Team, works to promote wellbeing, enhance resilience, and facilitate the development of self-management strategies and skills. Since 2013, the team has assisted 1,308 Support clients.

Defence encourages reporting of sexual misconduct incidents, and there are multiple avenues to do so. SeMPRO aids clients who wish to make a report to select the avenue that is right for them, however SeMPRO is a *supporting* not a *reporting* organisation. SeMPRO does not take reports of sexual misconduct and cannot instigate an investigation.

Figure 2: Types of misconduct disclosed by Support clients in 2022–23



The majority of incidents disclosed by Support clients in 2022–23 were sexual assaults rather than other types of sexual misconduct (49 per cent of Support clients or 71 people disclosed penetrative sexual offences⁶, Figure 2). This continues a long term trend in the type of incidents experienced by Support clients. Other types of sexual misconduct are known to be more common than sexual

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Mental health services activity monitoring: quarterly data [Mental health services activity monitoring - Mental health - AIHW](#) accessed 25 August 2023.

⁶ Penetrative sexual offences include sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault

assault.⁷ Sexual assault or penetrative sexual offence are the primary presenting issue driving support callers to 1800 SeMPRO. Advice and support about other types of sexual harassment may have been sought through other channels, such as friends at work, an immediate supervisor or commander, or non-military friends or family.⁸

Figure 3: Types of misconduct disclosed by Support clients from 2013–2023

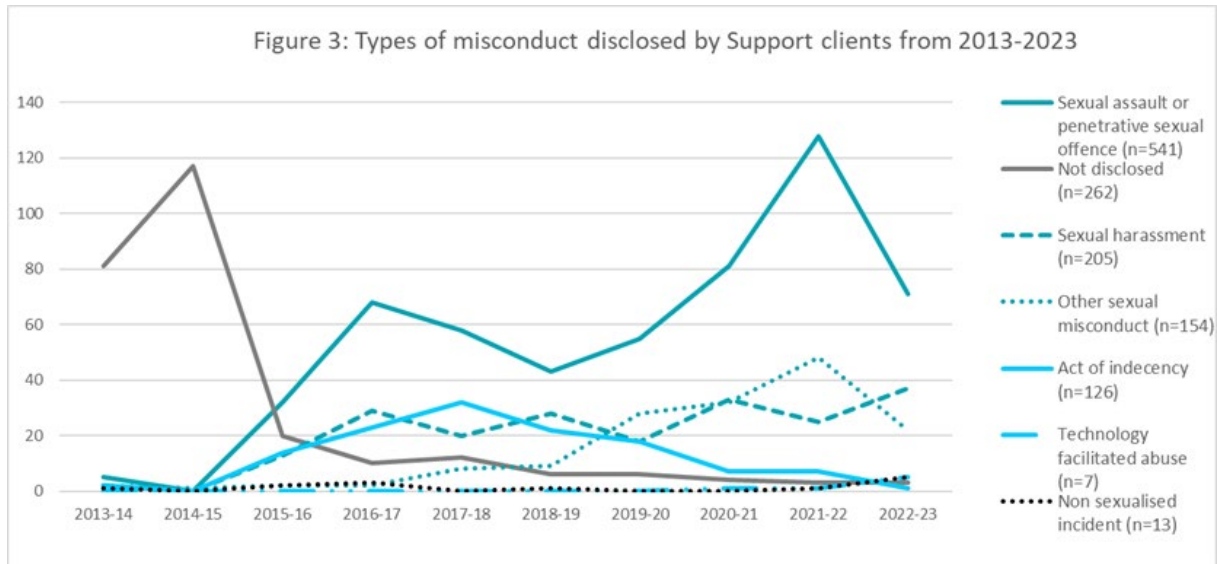


Figure 3 displays patterns of types of misconduct presented to SeMPRO since SeMPRO's establishment.

When people seek support – recent and less recent incidents

Support clients differ according to their personal circumstances, the incident circumstances, and the time elapsed between being subjected to sexual misconduct and making contact with the 1800 SeMPRO Client Response Team.⁹

The Client Response Team works with callers to address their individual needs, regardless of when the incident may have occurred. Clients may disclose when the incident occurred but there is an increasing trend where clients choose not to. The Client Response Team guides callers to identify, navigate, and access relevant services in their local area.¹⁰

⁷ In Australian workplaces, 33% of people have experienced sexual harassment in the prior five years, (AHRC 2020 Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report, page 96) and 1% had experienced sexual assault or attempted sexual assault (AHRC 2018 Everyone's Business report, page 40).

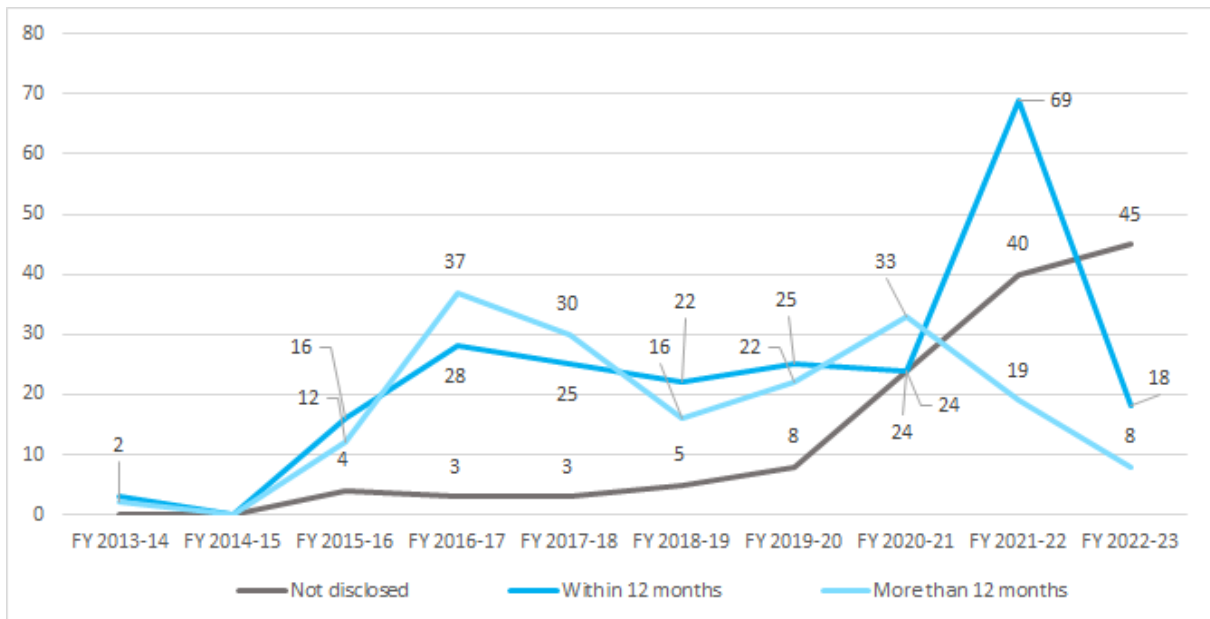
In Defence, sexual harassment occurs 20 times more often than sexual assault, <1% compared to 4% (Defence workplace behaviours survey data 2021).

⁸ For example, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Sexual Violence Responses report 2022 report noted that 71% of women who sought support or advice after a sexual assault went to a friend or family member, compared to 27% who sought support from a support worker or helpline (AIHW, 2022 [National sexual violence responses, Summary - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/sexual-violence/national-sexual-violence-responses-summary) accessed 17 August 2022).

⁹ SeMPRO commenced tracking the time between an incident and contact with the Client Response team in 2016–17 to better understand the demand for services.

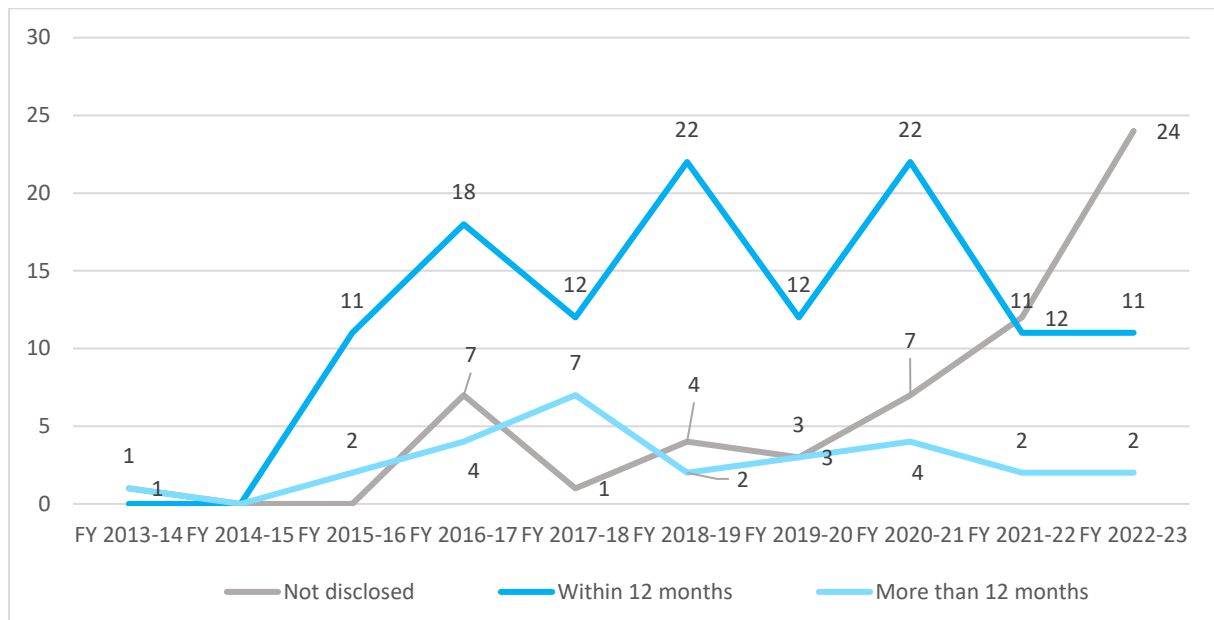
¹⁰ Policing, legal, and other government provided services for sexual offences operate under legal frameworks that vary across Australian states and territories with different regulations, funding arrangements, and eligibility requirements.

Figure 4: Support clients who experienced sexual assault or penetrative sexual offence by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



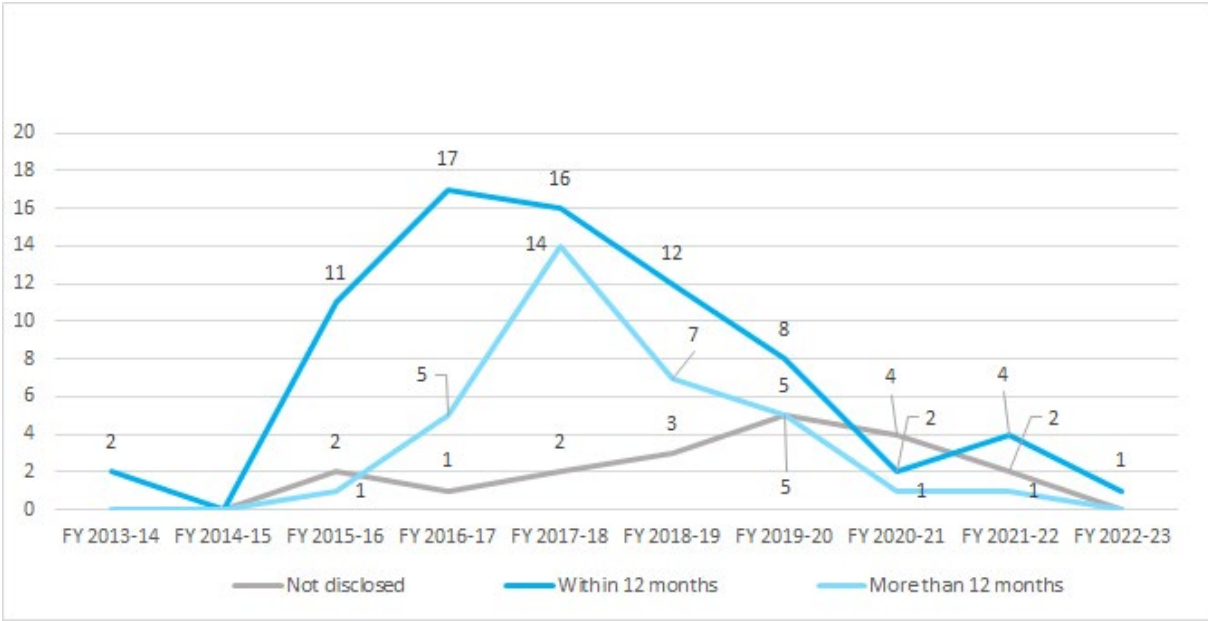
While there is variability shown in the figure, across the years similar numbers of clients present historic or recent experience of sexual offences. There has been a steady increase in clients not disclosing when the offence has occurred since 2019-20.

Figure 5: Support clients who experienced sexual harassment by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



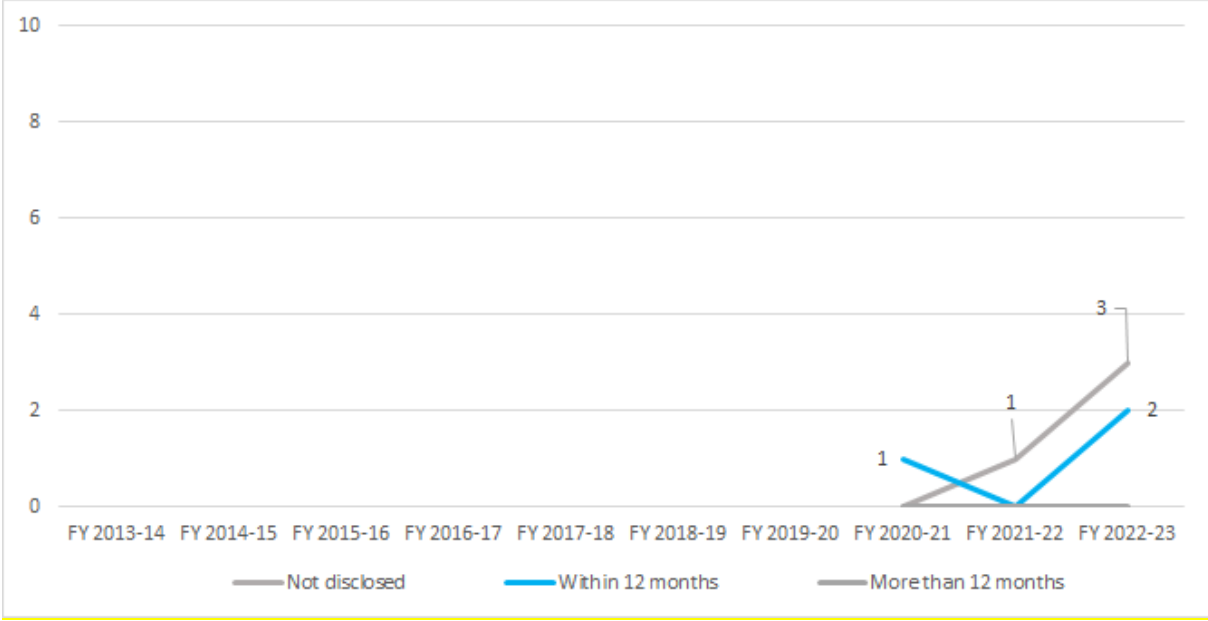
Following on from the previous figure, fewer support clients contact SeMPRO about acts of sexual harassment than they do about sexual assault. In any one year, the number of people who contact SeMPRO about sexual harassment can vary between 15 and 40.

Figure 6: Support clients who experienced acts of indecency by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



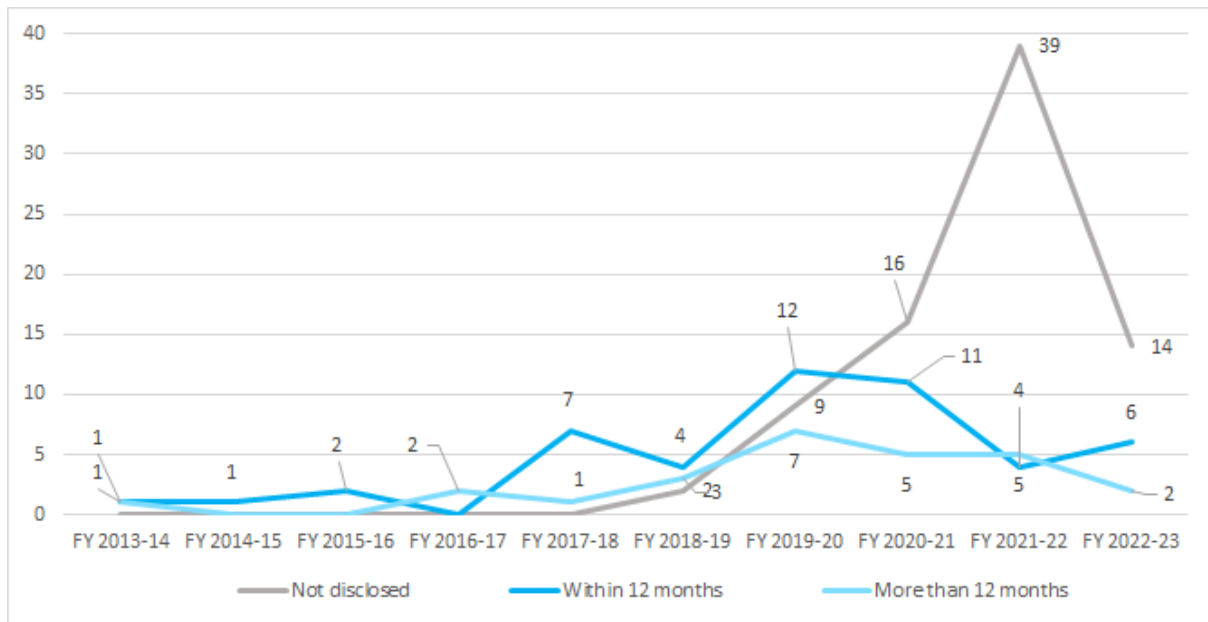
There is a long term trend that clients presenting to SeMPRO about acts of indecency have decreased since 2017-18. This maps with the decline in use of the term ‘acts of indecency’ in general and with revised definitions of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZOC).

Figure 7: Support clients who experienced technology facilitated sexual misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



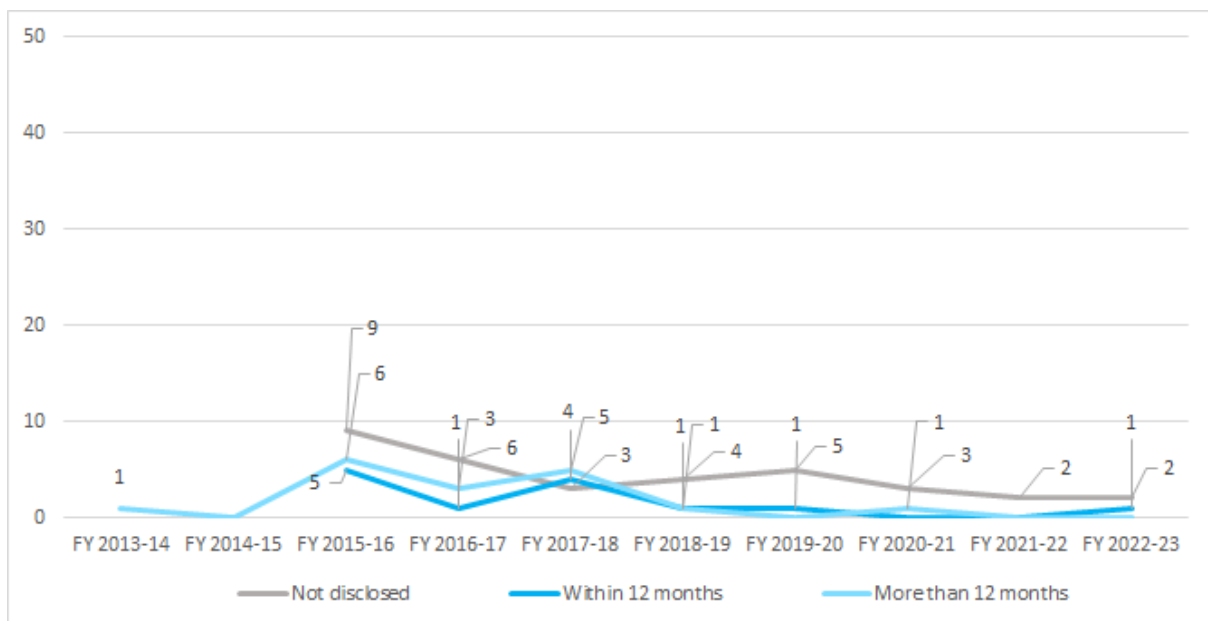
Technology facilitated misconduct often co-occurs with other forms of sexual misconduct, SeMPRO started recording technology facilitated misconduct as a separate form of misconduct in 2020-21 to track the prevalence of it amongst support clients. Concurrently, while the Education Continuum was being designed, SeMPRO identified that one of the Application of Knowledge modules would address the topic of technology facilitated misconduct.

Figure 8: Support clients who experienced other sexual misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



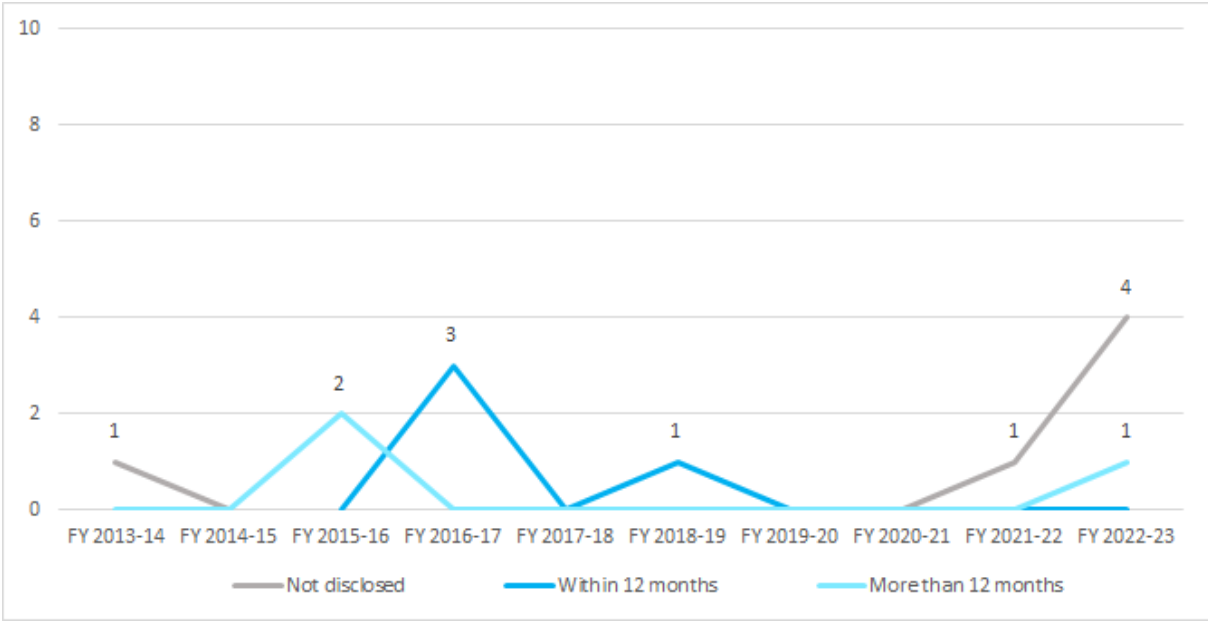
Few clients contact SeMPRO about incidents of sexual misconduct that do not fall under the previous categories of sexual misconduct. There is a notable spike for 2021-22, however this coincides with a confirmed nuisance caller. Other sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to; pornography, sexual discrimination and stalking.

Figure 9: Support clients who did not disclose a type of sexual misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



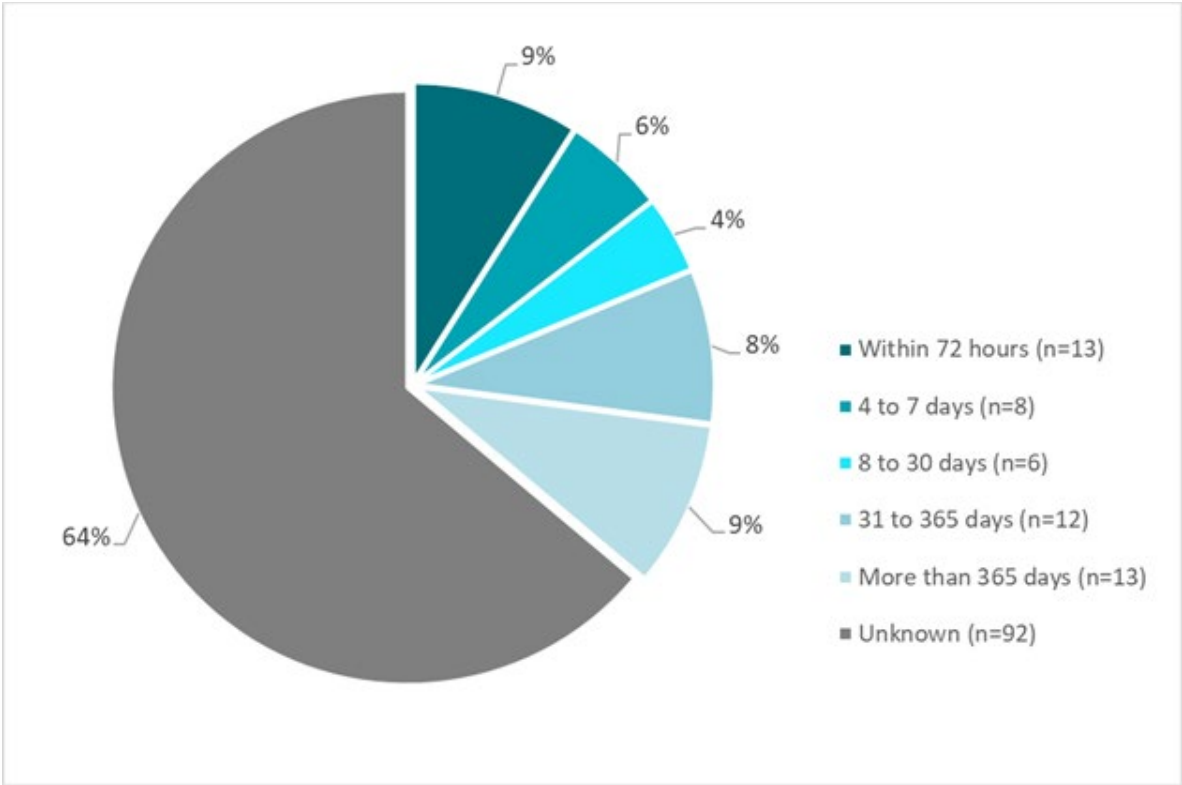
Very few clients who contact SeMPRO do not disclose details about the type of sexual misconduct they experienced. The information provided to the Client Response Team is entirely at the discretion of the impacted person.

Figure 10: Support clients who experienced non-sexualised misconduct by recency of incident to contacting SeMPRO



In keeping with SeMPRO commitment to provide person-centered and trauma-informed care, clients who contact SeMPRO about matters that are non-sexualised misconduct receive support and advice in response to their presenting issues. Where appropriate, SeMPRO helps them to find the resources for ongoing support.

Figure 11: Support clients – days before contacting SeMPRO, 2022–23

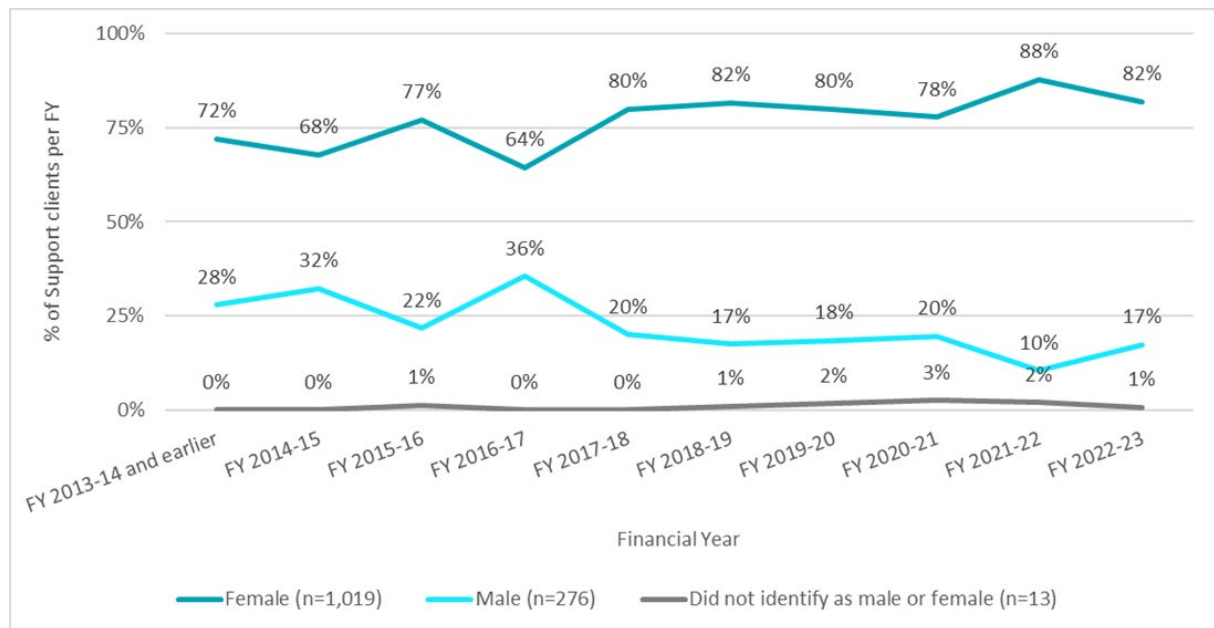


In keeping with a trauma informed response, SeMPRO does not ask clients questions of the recency of the incident. This figure shows that two thirds of SeMPRO clients did not disclose information on when the incident occurred.

Gender

During 2022–23, most SeMPRO Support clients were women (82 per cent, Figure 12).¹¹ This reflects the national profile of women being more likely to be the victim of sexual assault than men.¹² Women also experience other forms of sexual misconduct more than men, including sexual harassment and gender discrimination.¹³

Figure 12: Support clients by gender, 2013–2023



¹¹ A minority of Support clients identified as non-binary or did not provide information about their gender. In this figure these clients are grouped as 'Did not identify as male or female'. In years where there were no clients in this category, the '0%' marker has been omitted.

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) *Recorded Crime – Victims*. ABS cat. No. 4510.0. Canberra: ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release>. Eighty four per cent of the victims of sexual assaults reported to police in 2020 were women.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) *Crime Victimization, Australia, 2019–20*. ABS cat. No. 4530.0. Canberra: ABS. Crime Victimization, 2019–20 indicates women were the impacted person in 78 per cent of the self-reported sexual assaults in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

¹³ Our Watch (2021) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.

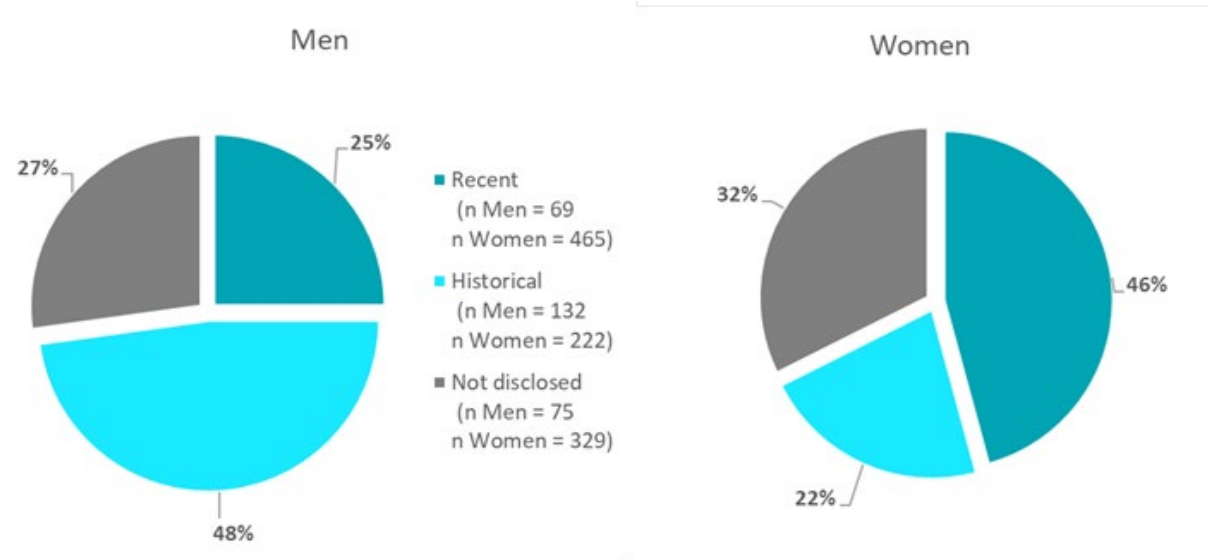
Townsend, N.; D. Loxton, N. Egan, I. Barnes, E. Byrnes, P. Forder (2022) *A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: Findings from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. www.anrows.org.au.

Male and female Support clients use SeMPRO services differently. Men often delayed contacting SeMPRO, while women more often contact SeMPRO soon after experiencing sexual misconduct (Figure 13).

- Half of female Support clients since 2013 requested assistance with a recent incident.
- A quarter of male Support clients since 2013 requested assistance with an incident in the prior 12 months.

This is consistent with the rate of male help-seeking in other areas. Research indicates men are less likely than women to seek help from health professionals for problems as diverse as depression, substance abuse, physical disabilities, health issues and stressful life events. Men’s delayed help-seeking behaviour is exacerbated when the nature of the experience runs counter to traditional masculine ideologies, such as when a man experiences sexual misconduct. Furthermore, men may fear additional stigma by seeking mental health treatment.¹⁴

Figure 13: Support clients recent and historical incidents for men and women 2013–23



In Figure 13, Recent means it is within 12 months of first contact with SeMPRO, Historical refers to incidents that have occurred more than 12 months prior to first contact with SeMPRO.

SeMPRO works to minimise the barriers that personnel may have to reporting and help seeking behaviours. Some people, such as men, have additional barriers.

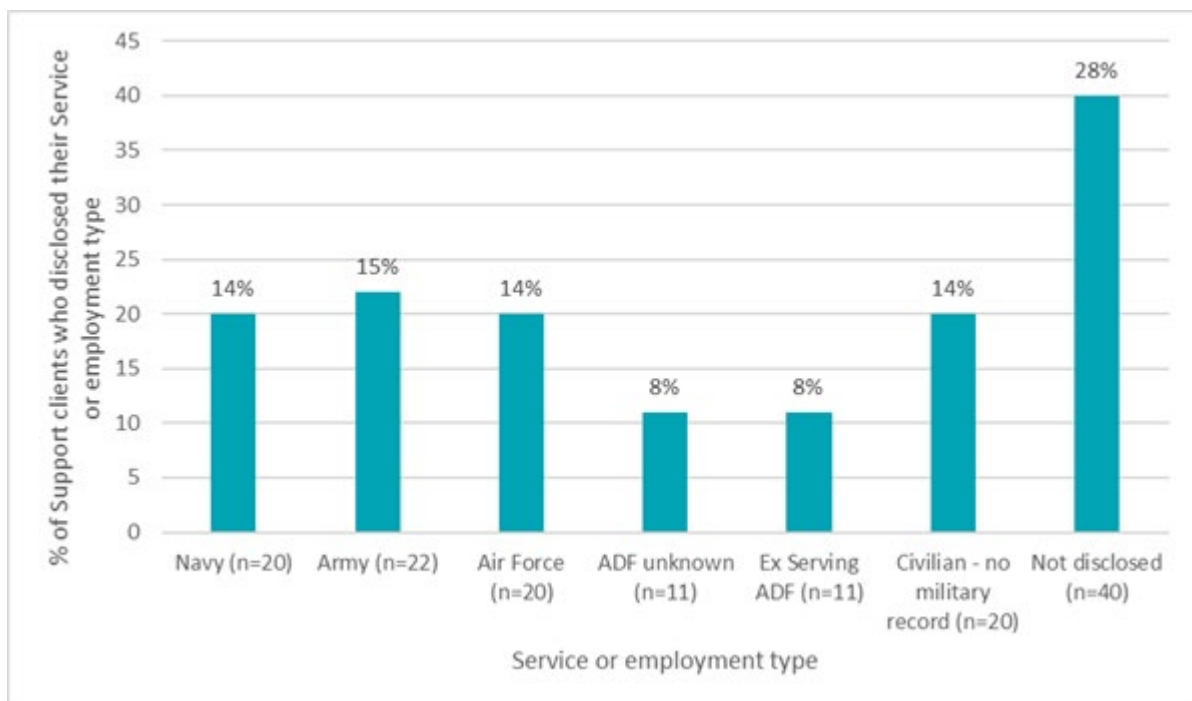
¹⁴ Galdas, P. M., Cheater, F., & Marshall, P. (2005). Men and health help-seeking behaviour: literature review. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 49(6), 616-623.
 Silvestrini, M., & Chen, J. A. (2021). "It's a sign of weakness:" Masculinity, Help-Seeking Behaviors, and Gender-Specific Experiences Accessing VA PTSD Care.
 Vincent A. D., P. G. Drioli-Phillips, J. Le, L. Cusack, T. J. Schultz, M. A. McGee MA, D. A. Turnbull, G. A. Wittert GA (2018). Health behaviours of Australian men and the likelihood of attending a dedicated men's health service. *BMC Public Health* 30;18(1):1078. doi: 10.1186/s12889-018-5992-6. PMID: 30165836; PMCID: PMC6117954. "

- The 1800 SeMPRO Service has men and women in the team available to respond to clients who have a preference.
- SeMPRO education materials invite attendees to think about how barriers to help seeking and reporting can be gendered. SeMPRO educational material is reported in the Educating Defence section (see page 17).

Service to Defence

Just over half of the Support clients in 2022–23 were currently serving ADF members (51 per cent, Figure 14).

Figure 14: Support clients by Service type, 2022–23



More than a quarter of Support clients did not disclose their Defence employment status.¹⁵

¹⁵ 1800 SeMPRO mental health professionals do not question the client about specific demographic details. This is part of the person-centered trauma-informed approach which empowers callers to choose to disclose what they feel comfortable with.

2. Advice clients – individual advice on incident management and response

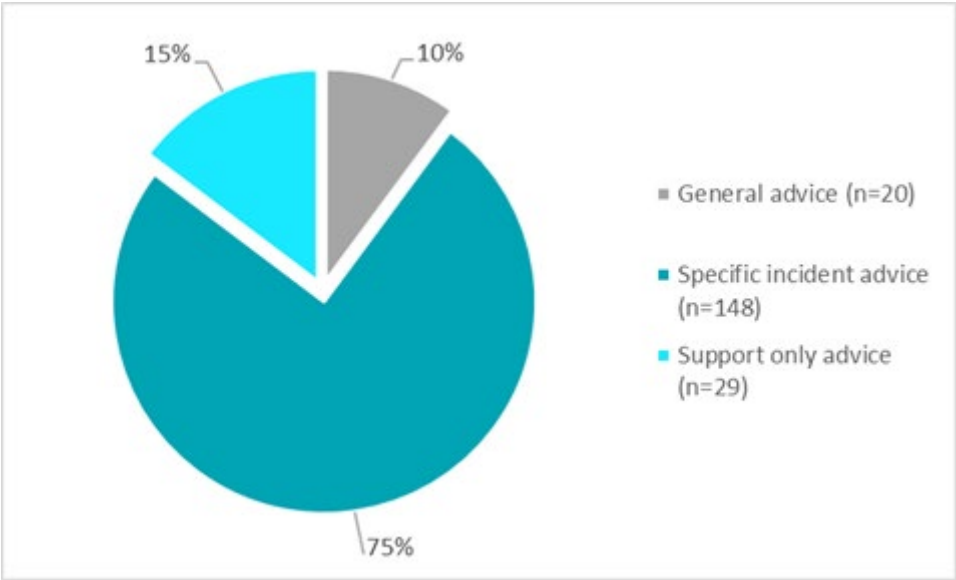
The initial response a person receives after making a disclosure about sexual misconduct can have enduring positive or negative effects. Advice clients are the people around the person who has been directly impacted by sexual misconduct. Advice clients seek help from 1800 SeMPRO to make sure they can provide the best response possible to their team member, friend, colleague, or family member. SeMPRO helps them to respond promptly and sensitively. Advice clients include:

- commanders, managers, and supervisors who seek guidance on applying Defence policy requirements while focusing on the wellbeing of those involved, and
- colleagues, family members, and friends who seek advice on how to assist a person who has disclosed being subjected to sexual misconduct.

Advice clients receive detailed tailored advice on using trauma-informed and person-centred approaches with people who have disclosed or reported sexual misconduct. Trauma-informed person-centred responses improve the wellbeing of the impacted person and indirectly build work environments that encourage reporting and help-seeking behaviour.

If it is needed, the SeMPRO Client Response Team can advise on: policy and system navigation; strategies for responding to the impacted person in a way that ensures their safety, builds trust, and provides choice in complex work environments; and advice on medical and mental health service provision inside and outside of Defence. This expertise is particularly helpful for those in the impacted person’s chain of command.

Figure 15: Types of advice provided to Advice clients, 2022–23



More than half of 1800 SeMPRO service clients were Advice clients in the 2022–23 financial year (refer to Figure 1). Advice clients can be grouped into three sub-categories grouped by their specific questions or needs (Figure 15, above):

- Incident management advice – Clients who need advice for managing a specific reported incident, generally as a commander, manager, or supervisor. Three quarters of Advice clients in 2022–23 sought help with specific incident management.
- Disclosure response advice – Clients who are not responsible for incident management but have requested help from SeMPRO to assist them with a disclosure by a friend or colleague. These clients are generally colleagues, friends, or family members to an impacted person.
- General advice – Clients who sought information on Defence policy, services, and frameworks for managing sexual misconduct incidents. These clients did not discuss the circumstances of a particular incident.

3. Debriefing clients – mental health support to people at risk of vicarious trauma

People who offer their support to victims of sexual misconduct, either as a friend or professionally, can feel overwhelmed. The 1800 SeMPRO team provides confidential debriefing services and other mental health support to people who are at risk of experiencing such vicarious trauma. These are *Debriefing clients*.

Debriefing clients often work in incident management, reporting, and investigation areas in Defence; but can also include family and friends of an impacted person. They have their own needs and reactions to the people they are trying to support and the incident content. These clients are often seeking help because of a sense of burnout or feeling overwhelmed as a result of other people's experience of sexual misconduct. Debriefing aims to prevent potential psychological trauma that might arise from indirect exposure to trauma and to maintain clients' emotional capacity to continue to aid others.

The 1800 SeMPRO team guides Debriefing clients to identify their own resolutions, resources, and options for maintaining their wellbeing following incident exposure. This can include generating strategies to make changes in aspects of their work, identifying buffers, or increasing resilience.

Debriefing clients have comprised a small number of 1800 SeMPRO clients from 2013–14 to 2022–23 as shown in Figure 1.

Educating Defence

All Defence personnel have a right to a safe and respectful workplace free from sexual misconduct, and a responsibility to help create that space. Successful prevention and response to sexual misconduct relies on a number of approaches and education is a central pillar.

SeMPRO develops and delivers education products that are designed to address the personal responsibilities of all Defence personnel covering:

- what sexual misconduct is,
- Defence's behaviour expectations with regard to sexual misconduct,
- reporting options,
- paths for accessing help,
- how to respond to a disclosure in a person-centred trauma-informed way, and
- for those with management responsibilities, how to manage incidents of sexual misconduct appropriately and in a way that minimises the potential for further harm to the impacted person.

The suite of SeMPRO education products includes foundational knowledge for all personnel and workshops on incident response and management that are tailored to specific groups. All SeMPRO education aims to enhance confidence in reporting and to encourage help seeking behaviours more broadly.

Sexual Misconduct Awareness Briefings

The Sexual Misconduct General Awareness brief introduces sexual misconduct concepts and issues to a broad audience. The General Awareness brief provides: 1) an overview of SeMPRO, 2) a definition of sexual misconduct and examples of what constitutes sexual misconduct, 3) information about consent that incorporates changes to consent laws in Australia, and 4) information on Defence policy and incident reporting options. As of January 2023 this education piece was superseded by the Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge.

Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge

The Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge module is compulsory and, as directed by the Defence People Committee on 18 March 2022, all personnel are required to complete the module in 2023, or within the first year of their employment with the Department, when joining in or after 2023. This module is focused on values standardisation and ensuring the expectations of Defence are clear from the outset. This course also provides an introduction to resources available if a person needs help, and how to access support services.

Sexual Misconduct Incident Management and Response suite

The Sexual Misconduct Incident Management and Response Workshops focus on harm minimisation. These workshops emphasise how to respond to an impacted person using person-centred trauma-informed approaches in order to preserve their wellbeing. Incident management and response

workshops are available to personnel who have direct responsibility for others – such as commanding officers, chaplains, and supervisors.

There are three different workshops tailored to different roles Defence members may undertake in response to disclosure of sexual misconduct; incident management, incident response, and wellbeing. There is also a workshop specifically designed for chaplains.

- The Sexual Misconduct Incident Management workshop is designed for decision makers. The workshop outlines the policy and legal requirements in allegations of criminal and non-criminal sexual misconduct. It guides participants to generate strategies that both employ a person-centred and trauma-informed approach toward the impacted person, while also navigating the incident management process in Defence’s unique work environments.
- The Sexual Misconduct Incident Response and Wellbeing workshop was launched in 2021. It is for personnel who, because of their rank or their role, may receive a disclosure about sexual misconduct but do not directly manage incidents or have decision making responsibilities. This workshop offers detailed guidance on how to provide support for an impacted person using a trauma-informed person-centred approach. There is also instruction on Defence policy requirements, including reporting obligations.
- Sexual Misconduct Incident Response for Chaplains helps to equip ADF Chaplains when receiving disclosures in Defence. Chaplains have a particular role of trust in the organisation and may be a first point of disclosure for an incident. The workshop teaches blending chaplains’ existing knowledge and experience in providing pastoral care with Defence environments, services, and policy requirements.

Good practice incident management and response aims to have positive impacts on the Defence community beyond those who are involved directly in an allegation. When commanders, managers, supervisors, and others apply a person-centred trauma-informed approach they demonstrate these behaviours to all those under their command or around them.

Education delivery in 2022–23

Throughout the 2022–23 reporting period, SeMPRO has developed the Sexual Misconduct Education Continuum. The first module, Foundation of Knowledge, was released in January 2023, and has replaced the Sexual Misconduct General Awareness briefing. Until January 2023, SeMPRO-delivered sexual misconduct education was not mandatory across the Defence enterprise. While some Services and organisations mandated the completion of specific SeMPRO courses or incorporated SeMPRO education into their existing training, there was no mandatory requirement for completion.

In March 2022 the Defence People Committee endorsed a holistic approach to mandatory sexual misconduct education, that was implemented in January 2023. This includes the SeMPRO Foundation of Knowledge course, which has resulted in more than half (57 per cent) of Defence personnel achieving proficiency in the Foundation of Knowledge mandatory training (Table 1) in the six months since its release in January 2023. With consideration given to staff turnover and the 12-month timeframe for completion, the theoretical maximum completion rate across all of Defence, once the module has been available for 12 months, is calculated at 89 per cent.

Following the introduction of the Foundation of Knowledge, there has been a significant boost across Defence in employee engagement with SeMPRO educational products. The percentage of Defence employees with any SeMPRO proficiency has increased by 11 percent since the 2021-22 financial year¹⁶

Table 1 shows the individuals who completed the Foundation of Knowledge sessions by their Service.

Table 1: Defence personnel with current proficiency in Foundation of Knowledge, 30 June 2023 – by Service

Service ¹⁷	Foundation of Knowledge proficiency at 30 June 2023
Navy	65%
Army	54%
Air Force	68%
Defence APS (not including APS who are also Defence Reservists)	44%
Total Defence personnel	57%

¹⁶ Department of Defence, SeMPRO Annual Report 2021-22, p15: “more than one half (57 per cent) of current Defence personnel had a current proficiency in one or more SeMPRO courses”.

¹⁷ ADF Service includes Permanent and Reserve. APS includes only Defence APS employees who are not also Defence Reservists.

Policy and Expertise for Defence

SeMPRO was created primarily as a response service for Defence personnel impacted by sexual misconduct, and as an education provider. SeMPRO will always prioritise high quality service delivery aimed at improving outcomes for individuals. SeMPRO's role in Defence has expanded beyond those initial pillars to become the strategic subject matter expert for the entire enterprise and to generate broad-based change.

SeMPRO has been pioneering the development of sexual misconduct policy and education in Defence, and using that experience to positively influence other public sector agencies, non-profits, and corporate organisations. SeMPRO receives requests from other organisations, usually at an organisation-level, wherein SeMPRO is able to provide advice, assistance and feedback as other agencies develop their sexual misconduct policies and training programs. This is a trend that has continued through 2022-23.

Sexual misconduct policy review

SeMPRO conducts annual reviews of the central policy document for managing reported incidents of sexual misconduct, the *Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual (CARM) Chapter 9 – Responding to Sexual Misconduct*. Defence-wide consultation was undertaken to identify where those applying the policy needed more clarity and where other policy changes impacted on the directions for sexual misconduct incident management in CARM Chapter 9.

Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct – an interactive information tool

There are multiple paths for disclosing and reporting sexual misconduct, and investigations further generate internal and external choices for people which culminates in a complex landscape of policy and options. SeMPRO created an interactive process map to capture all of the elements of this system in a single source of comprehensive and accessible information – the *Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct* framework navigation portal¹⁸.

The navigation portal provides extensive information to the widest possible audience, when they need it, and in a format that is easily assimilated. It outlines enterprise-wide processes, highlights connections to external law enforcement, links policies and resources for assisting personnel, and gives access and eligibility details for all internal and external services options.

¹⁸ [DPG BMS](#) – Disclosing, Managing and Reporting Sexual Misconduct. The portal is hosted on the Business Management Systems web page. It is accessible to all Defence personnel directly, or via SeMPRO and CARM web pages.

Future Work for SeMPRO

1800 SeMPRO Rebrand and Communications Plan

Since inception SeMPRO it has operated under a Teal Ribbon logo. SeMPRO will be updating it's logo and 'trading name' to 1800 SeMPRO to convey the accessible support-line aspect of the organisation, and to encourage people to talk about Sexual Misconduct; whether that be to receive support, increase awareness of the issue, or understand how to manage an incident. The Communication Plan developed alongside the Rebrand will increase awareness of the 1800 SeMPRO remit to provide support and advice to all current and ex-serving ADF members, Defence APS personnel, Defence contractors, ADF Cadets, Officers and Instructors of Cadets, and all of their families. It will also aim to clarify the purpose of SeMPRO as it is often mistakenly viewed as a reporting agency.

Environmental Risk Assessment

The Sexual Misconduct Risk Assessment Trial aims to use the knowledge of personnel in base locations to understand the unique risks, protective factors, and opportunities for change that could reduce the potential for sexual misconduct taking place. Ethics approval has been granted by the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee and work will commence at the first two trial sites from July 2023.

Appendix – SeMPRO key concepts

Sexual misconduct

Defence uses the term ‘sexual misconduct’ to encompass the spectrum of unwanted and unwelcome sexualised behaviours including criminal offences. Sexual misconduct specifically spans sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual offences.

- Sexual discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because of that person’s sex, characteristics of that person’s sex, or assumed characteristics of that person’s sex. *The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* contains a detailed definition. *The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* also criminalises discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, and breastfeeding or family responsibilities.
- Sexual harassment occurs when a person makes unwelcome sexual advances, requests sexual favours, or engages in other unwelcome sexualised conduct, in circumstances reasonably anticipated to offend, humiliate, or intimidate. Sexual harassment is criminalised in the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*.
- Sexual offences are crimes as defined in Commonwealth, State, and Territory legislation. Specific offences differ across Australian states and territories.

Applying the term ‘sexual misconduct’ to describe all unwanted sexualised behaviours is common but not universal. Other terms used to cover the full range of behaviours include ‘sexual harassment’ and ‘sexual assault’. Defence uses those terms to exclusively reflect specific behaviours as they are defined in legislation.

Disclosing, reporting, and investigating

Disclosing, reporting, and investigating are separate concepts. The term *disclosure* means to tell another person about a sexual misconduct incident to access help in some way. Reporting means to advise someone with the authority or obligation to action information about a sexual misconduct incident. While an investigation may be one outcome from reporting, it is a distinct process.

Disclosure and restricted disclosure

Disclosure often means revealing information about a sexual misconduct incident to a friend, family member, healthcare professional, or to seek other professional or informal support.

Defence encourages people to seek help above all else and provides multiple avenues for confidential health and mental health services for personnel impacted by sexual misconduct without making a report. Personnel are able to self-refer to SeMPRO, medical officers, psychologists, chaplains, and social workers in Defence. Disclosures to these services is not shared with command teams without the client’s consent and are not subject to Defence mandatory incident reporting (CARM 9.5.0.1, paragraph 3).

Current serving ADF members who use health and mental health services because of a sexual offence, without making a report to Defence, have made a *Restricted Disclosure*. All clients of Defence support services receive the same high quality care irrespective of their decision to make a

report or their decision to share whether they have reported with their practitioner. Only a subset of clients are identified as Restricted Disclosure clients because they meet a specific set of circumstances and not because there is a difference in the service received from 1800 SeMPRO. All other clients who seek support services as an impacted person are described as Unrestricted Disclosures.

Restricted disclosure is a mechanism that was formalised with the establishment of SeMPRO. It articulates the ability for current-serving ADF members who are subjected to sexual offences to access support, medical assistance, and other services without automatically triggering notifiable incident reporting obligations by the service provider.

1800 SeMPRO clients are described as making a restricted disclosure when they contact 1800 SeMPRO for support without disclosing or reporting the incident to any other Defence personnel with notifiable incident reporting obligations. All 1800 SeMPRO clients receive a confidential service within the same boundaries regardless of their choice to report an incident or not.

Reporting

Reporting in Defence means advising a commander or manager, the Joint Military Police Unit (JMPU), the civilian police, or an authorised officer under the Public Interest Disclosure scheme about an incident of sexual misconduct. Personnel subjected to sex discrimination may choose to report the matter to the Australian Human Rights Commission. Defence encourages people directly impacted by sexual misconduct to report the incident to Defence, or within the civilian system, but there is no obligation to do so.

All sexual misconduct reports made to Defence are to be actioned promptly and sensitively. *CARM* Chapter 9 sets out the required actions for commanders and managers who receive a report about sexual misconduct and the *Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct* framework navigation portal details the processes to be followed.

1800 SeMPRO services are available to aid clients to assess their options in the military or civilian legal systems.

Mandatory reporting

Sexual offences, and all other criminal offences including intimate image abuse and stalking, are notifiable incidents in Defence which means they trigger mandatory reporting requirements for most personnel. Sexual harassment incidents and sex discrimination do not attract mandatory reporting requirements.

Personnel who become aware of a sexual offence are required to report it to their commander or manager or directly to the Joint Military Police Unit. There are some exclusions. The victim of a criminal offence, those who are able to hold information because of their profession, and other circumstances such as a disclosure to a family member are not subject to mandatory reporting. (*CARM* 9.5.0.1, paragraph 10).

Investigating

Defence applies person-centred trauma-informed processes in sexual misconduct incident management. This includes providing choices to people who are impacted by sexual misconduct. Providing choices is a part of returning control to the impacted person and supports their recovery and their wellbeing. In keeping with this, personnel impacted by sexual misconduct can elect not to

have the matter investigated if they do not want to. They can request an investigation be undertaken by the Joint Military Police Unit rather than civilian police where both have jurisdiction, or they may approach civilian police directly.

The military police will liaise with civilian police to determine jurisdiction, and which policing agency will take carriage of the investigation, where the impacted person wishes for an investigation to take place without a preference for either.

Harm minimisation

Harm minimisation is about reducing the harm to a person as a central concern to all actions and decisions. The principle of harm minimisation aims to influence the behaviour of personnel around the directly impacted person to ensure good practice responses to disclosures of sexual misconduct.

All SeMPRO activities are conducted using the principle of harm minimisation. *Person-centred* and *trauma-informed* are two primary skills aimed to effect harm minimisation. The team's education products are designed and delivered using trauma-informed and person-centred approaches as well as teaching these skills to participants.

Person-centred response

Defence applies a person-centred approach when responding to people impacted by sexual misconduct, and in reporting and incident management procedures, to minimise the impacts that trauma can have on personnel.

A person-centred approach is where the person is supported to lead their own care.¹⁹ Person-centred approaches originated in the disability sector and are now used within the mental health sector, aged care services, schools, the healthcare sector, and criminal justice system.

The focus is on the person and what they can do, not their condition or disability. Support should focus on achieving the person's aspirations and be tailored to their needs and unique circumstances. They are a set of practical values-based tools and skills that help find ways to support the person rather seeing the person as broken and needing to be 'fixed'²⁰. A person-centred approach contributes to building organisational cultures of learning and accountability through empowering the individual. This is in contrast to a process that places the organisational systems as a higher priority than the person (Table 2).

Person-centred approaches complement trauma-informed design. Person-centred service delivery places the needs, wishes, and particular circumstances of the individual at the centre of the service. This is distinct to placing the needs of the support person or the organisation at the center of the service.

¹⁹ *What is a person-led approach?* [What is a person-led approach? - Principles for effective support \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/what-is-a-person-led-approach) accessed 2022/08/31. This resource explains person-centred approach from a medical point of view. It is a useful resource that uses simple language.

²⁰ NDP Factsheet *What is a person-centred approach?* www.ndp.org.au accessed 2022/08/31.

Table 2: Person-centred versus system-centred approaches

PERSON-CENTRED	SYSTEM-CENTRED
Talking with the person	Talking about the person
Planning with the person	Planning for the person
Focused on strengths, abilities, skills	Focused on labels/diagnosis, deficits
Finding solutions that could work for anyone, preferably community based	Creating supports based on what works for people with ‘that diagnosis’
Things are done that way because they work for the person	Things are done that way because they work for staff or the service
Family and community members are seen as true partners	Family members & community seen as peripheral

Trauma-informed response





Trauma is the response a person may have to a distressing event that threatens their safety, or the safety of other people, such as being subjected to sexual misconduct²¹. Trauma can have physical and emotional impacts on daily life and in the workplace. SeMPRO acknowledges that trauma can exist in any group. SeMPRO client services and education products are designed and delivered with the awareness of the impacts of trauma on individuals and act to minimise re-traumatisation.

Applying trauma-informed services means to consider the pervasive nature of trauma and promote environments of healing and recovery rather than practices that may inadvertently re-traumatise.²²

²¹ American Psychiatric Association 2013. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.

²² [What is Trauma-Informed Care? - University at Buffalo School of Social Work - University at Buffalo](#) open access resource. Accessed 2022/08/31.

Table 3: Trauma-informed care

Safety	Choice	Collaboration	Trustworthiness	Empowerment
				
Definitions				
Ensuring physical and emotional safety	Individual has choice and control	Making decisions with the individual and sharing power	Task clarity, consistency, and Interpersonal Boundaries	Prioritizing empowerment and skill building
Principles in Practice				
Common areas are welcoming and privacy is respected	Individuals are provided a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities	Individuals are provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services	Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained	Providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each and every contact at the agency

SeMPRO support and advice is provided in accordance with trauma-informed principles of safety, trust, choice, empowerment, and collaboration. The practitioner will listen to the client and assist in identifying current needs, appropriate supports, referral agencies, and next steps if needed. A brief explanation will be provided on the service and how it operates. Contact with 1800 SeMPRO is confidential and is not shared without the client’s consent unless there are exceptional circumstances such as risk of harm to self or others. SeMPRO can be contacted anonymously for support or advice. The service is provided by both male and female practitioners.

SeMPRO applies the following five trauma-informed principles to its client service delivery:

- **Safety** – Creating safety with clients means working with them to generate their own strategies to promote their physical and emotional safety in the present and into the future; to identify safety behaviours; and to establish protective behaviours.
- **Choice** – Maximising the client’s choices is achieved by providing all possible options available on small details as well as large decisions.
- **Collaboration** – Collaboration with clients means seeking their input to achieve their desired outcomes and identifying avenues for the next steps to take.
- **Trust** – Trust is created by respecting the client’s confidentiality and privacy; by being transparent about the role undertaken by the practitioner; by following through on commitments made; and by building understanding of the systems with which the client will interact.
- **Empowerment** – Giving authority to the impacted person to genuinely guide their own path is empowering. Clients are provided as much help as possible to assist them to gain ownership of their decision making while acknowledging that control in some processes sometimes cannot be complete.