

# Chaya Dissanayake, Trauma-informed Counsellor

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## PROFILE

A passionate and hard-working counsellor who graduated from the Masters in Counseling program at The University of Queensland, that is committed to empowering individuals from a well developed trauma-informed framework and with a wealth of experience and knowledge from extensive studies in counseling and psychology, encompassed in various multicultural settings.

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## SKILLS

Highly responsible and reliable

Outstanding ability to conduct intake and risk assessments

Apt in quick critical thinking and problem solving

Excellent ability to work in a team and independently

Highly flexible and adaptable

Possess a strong theoretical and a practical understanding of effects domestic violence on individuals from CALD communities.

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## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Sep 2022 — May 2024

Trauma - informed, First Responder Counsellor , 1800Respect Brisbane, Queensland

1800RESPECT is the leading helpline in Australia and is the National Service dedicated to achieving a reduction across all communities in the prevalence and impacts of domestic and family violence and sexual violence, including workplace sexual harassment.

- Conducted evidence-based counselling sessions with individuals impacted by domestic and family violence, sexual assault and workplace sexual harassment, to identify the service user's goals to access any immediate and long-term supports.
- Provisioned accessible and clinically informed counselling services that meet the diverse needs and complex considerations of individuals seeking support through a trauma-informed, person-centered, solution-focused, crisis-counselling and brief-counselling frameworks.
- Provisioned clinically informed counselling supports and strategies to manage and cope with trauma responses with the service user's experiences of violence.
- Discussed psychoeducation in relation to healthy relationships, mental health, risks associated relationships with domestic violence, the impact of violence on development in children to prompt psycho-social and behavioral changes in the service user.
- Provided referrals where appropriate to service users to a range of services, including access to community-based support, crisis support to emergency services and long-term counselling and case-management support and connection concerning domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Assessed risk and needs and works alongside the service user to find supports to maximize safety and well-being.
- Supports service users in developing safety plans to manage safety and escape violence.
- Developed self-care plans with the service user in prevention and managing stress, anxiety and promoting resilience.
- Maintains accurate and confidential counselling case notes to record the client's engagement at the call centre. Delivers authentic, compassionate, empathetic responses in front line service and counselling role.
- Competent to create child safety reports for children at risk of harm.

Jul 2021 — Jul 2022

Domestic and Family Violence Practitioner, 99 Steps - Access Community Service

Logan Central, Queensland

Access Community Services Limited (ACSL) is a leader and specialist in the settlement sector, employment, training and youth and social enterprises for migrants, refugees and mainstream clients, in Queensland, particularly in the Logan Region.

The 99 Steps program is a part of ACSL and is designed to improve pathways for individuals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to easily access appropriate support services that assist in the prevention and recovery of domestic and family violence. The program also assists women and families to transition out of crisis support and re-engage with the local community, workforce, and broader support.

- Provisioned brief counselling, case management, advocacy, assessment and referral services for clients and their families in accordance with program requirements and policies.

- Demonstrated outstanding ability to listen empathically, validate and support women with unconditional positive regard in parallel with a strong trauma-informed frameworks and a strengths-based approach.
- Developed strong working relationships with the women to understand their needs and risks, created regular safety plans and provided psycho-education and other supports related to DV.
- Supported women to connect to services to find employment, access driving classes and other access education to empower themselves.
- Ensured all clients were provided with information about the full range of options available to them to support making informed decisions concerning domestic violence in the event the client chooses to leave the relationship.
- Demonstrated strong skill in liaising with stakeholders, clients and with TIS interpreters to share information and communicate effectively.
- Provisioned regular court support to clients when necessary to advocate for the women to the Logan High-Risk Team to represent the clients on behalf of the service .
- Highly competent conducting intakes of women to assess needs and risk, develop safety plans, provide referrals, information and psych-education relating to domestic violence.

Mar 2019 — Oct 2019

### Student Caseworker (Domestic and Family Violence), Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS)

Brisbane, Queensland

Engaged with this service as a placement student throughout the academic year in 2019. IWSS is an organization which is committed to supporting and empowering women from CALD backgrounds experiencing domestic violence in the suburbs of Brisbane CBD and the surrounding area.

- Established outstanding performances in both counseling and case-management through solution-focused and feminist frameworks through trauma informed counselling.
- Exceptionally competent in performing intake assessments, crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referrals.
- Demonstrated a high level of commitment to practicing by the feminist framework both professionally and personally on the gendered nature of violence.
- Supported at the intake team to and regularly provisioned brief counselling to de-escalate distress experienced by women or to provide the appropriate options.
- Accomplished to conduct high quality counselling sessions with interpreters with TIS National.
- Possess exceptional skills and knowledge to empower and assist clients from CALD backgrounds by understanding unique needs that needs to be met such as reducing social isolation through establishing community connections.
- Generated referrals to other services to enhance support received by the clients for legal, migration, medical and etc.
- Demonstrated competence in situations such as cases associated with honor killing, severe financial abuse and perpetrator suicide attempts to successfully empower and attain support for the clients.
- Operated in intake procedures to provide brief interventions, responding to calls from clients and workers, make appointments, conduct assessments, and to conduct safety planning.
- Exceptionally apt in producing high quality referrals in a timely manner.
- Exhibited excellent research skills to find resources, information and statistical data to support team member to assist their clients' and to attain new resources to the facility.
- Attended regular supervision to monitor progress of to manage self-care and engage in critical reflections to maximize care for the clients.

Feb 2019 — Dec 2020

### Residential Advisor , UniLodge St Lucia

Brisbane, Queensland

This is a reputable accommodation provider for university students throughout Australia. Employed as a casual worker as a residential advisor for the year 2019. The role entailed the employee the responsibility for 4 main and 2 accompanying properties based in the university suburbs during after hours to assist its residents with a range of inquiries.

- Exhibited excellent ability to be flexible and resilient across shift work and overnight environment.
- Demonstrated excellent capability to work in a team and the ability to communicate effectively to empower each other to achieve goals to organize frequent events for the monthly community spirit program.
- Successfully trained the new members for the Residential Advisors' team for the year 2020.
- Acted as a mentor to the fellow students in interpersonal matters among residents.
- Proved exceptional capability for being responsible to be in charge of the properties for any type of after hours services including lockouts, securing the properties in each shift and attending emergencies the tenants are facing.

- Exhibited continuous adherence to all protocols and procedures established by the organization throughout the year.
- Composed comprehensive handover shift reports each day to advise the team the further actions to take.
- Continuously contributed to the improvement of facility by being a point of communications between the tenants and office to convey requests that improved the quality of services to the tenants.

Jan 2016 — Apr 2016

Psychology Intern , Sumaga Pre-schools and Special Needs Centre

Colombo, Sri Lanka

The organization provisioned specialized education for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Engaged with this service and a part of the undergraduate program in the university's program.

- Formulated Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) to evaluate students' progress with the teaching staff and the parents.
- Introduced differential learning methods that were incorporated into the the organization's regular activities to enhance outcomes,
- Attained knowledge in differential learning through creating novel activities to improve performances and learning in children with ASD which were successfully adapted by the institution as permanent procedures in sensory therapy and speech therapy practices.
- Constructed enhanced and effective relationships with parents by collaborating with them to increase the connection between the caregivers and the institute.

Mar 2020 — May 2020

Psychology Intern , Psychological Sciences Institution

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Worked with leading Child Psychologist to produce developmental plans for a child of 6 years diagnosed with moderate Learning Disabilities. Provided him with individual therapy in outreach and in-home sessions.

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EDUCATION

Feb 2017 — Dec 2019

Masters in Counselling, University of Queensland

Brisbane, Queensland

Relevant Courses Undertaken:

- Interpersonal Skills in Counselling
- Counselling and Mental Health
- Understanding and caring for those affected by loss
- Counselling Children and Young
- Ethics and Professional Issues in Counselling
- Family Therapy. Traditions: Basic Concepts and Skills
- Counselling for Crisis and Violence
- Career Guidance: Counselling for Life Planning

**Thesis:** A Systematic Review: What are the Mental Health Issues that affect the Perpetration in Domestic Violence?

Along with the coursework, this program entailed the student in being engaged with a placement at the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) which is mentioned above.

Sep 2012 — Jul 2017

Bachelors in Psychology, Missouri University of Science and Technology

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Along with the coursework, this program entailed the student to be engaged with a placement which provided support mental health interventions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder which is mentioned above.

Jun 2010 — Aug 2012

Gateway International School Negombo

Negombo, Sri Lanka

Secondary school

A/Level Results: 3Cs - Physics, Biology, Mathematics

Sep 2002 — Jun 2010

Cambridge International School

Dubai, UAE

Primary and Secondary school

O/Level Results: 1 A\* -Biology, 7 As - English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Art, Information Technology, Environmental Management.

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RELEVANT VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT AND SIGNIFICANT ROLES

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|------|---|-----------|
| 2019 | Post Graduate Relations Officer in UQ Sri Lankan Society  | Brisbane  |
| 2018 | Red Cross Emergency Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trained and qualified to implement Psychological First Aid in crisis situations</li><li>• Successfully operated in a team to attain and surpass estimated number volunteers to sign up at the UQ volunteer Expo by the team's strategic collaboration.</li><li>• Trained to work with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations in Queensland.</li></ul>  | Brisbane  |
| 2018 | Red Cross Night Cafe <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possess skills in building relationships with disengaged youth.</li><li>• Perform various roles including duties of making and serving food, execution of daily inspections for damaged or missing good and apparatuses in the property.</li><li>• Assist the youth to attain employment and services for individual empowerment. Therefore, has an extensive knowledge of the facilities available for mental health, drugs and alcohol, legal and other related services accessible in central Brisbane and surrounding suburbs.</li></ul> | Brisbane  |
| 2013 | Vice President of the Art Club as an undergraduate  | Sri Lanka |
| 2011 | Prefect in High School  | Sri Lanka |

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LANGUAGES

English

Sinhala;  
Sinhalese

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REFERENCES

References available upon request