

Claim counselling expenses

We may be able to pay your counselling costs if you have been injured by violence that happened in Queensland.

Claim counselling costs

We can pay for counselling to treat psychological injuries or adverse impacts caused by violence. Any victim can claim 12 counselling sessions to start with.

If you need more than 12 sessions, a health practitioner will need to diagnose your psychological injuries and provide a [Comprehensive clinical report](#). This report will need to tell us the details of your injuries and the treatment they are recommending. We usually start by granting 24 sessions if you have a diagnosed psychological illness, disorder, or impairment.

We may also ask for a [Progress report](#) at regular intervals, telling us how your recovery is going.

Approved counselling providers

Counselling must be provided by a qualified health professional. The counsellor must maintain an appropriate level of professional and public liability insurance (generally \$10,000,000).

If the counselling is being provided in Australia, the provider must be:

- a health practitioner registered (including provisional registration) under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law*
- a mental health social worker accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers
- a social worker accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers with demonstrated relevant counselling experience
- a counsellor or psychotherapist who is a 'full clinical member' of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia or a 'level 3 or 4 member' of the Australian Counsellors Association.

If the counselling is being provided overseas, the provider must be:

- a health professional with an equivalent overseas qualification.

You can choose your own counselling provider. Your GP may be able to make a referral if needed or you can find a psychologist or social worker in your area and contact them directly.

Approved counselling costs

If your claim is approved, we can pay for reasonable counselling expenses and report fees to diagnose or treat injuries caused by violence. We can only pay out-of-pocket expenses (the gap).

Your counsellor will need to provide a receipt, invoice or treatment plan. We will pay the rate outlined in the Victim Assist Queensland – Table of Costs or an equivalent overseas rate.

Australian providers – the receipt or invoice must include:

- what treatment was provided (including the corresponding Victim Assist Queensland – Table of Costs item number)
- the cost per session
- details of Medicare or insurance contributions.

Overseas providers – the receipt or invoice must include:

- what treatment was provided
- the cost per session
- details of any government or insurance contributions.

How to claim

If you are claiming financial assistance for the first time, you need to:

- report the violence
- complete the approved application form – including the counselling expenses section
- provide information about your injuries
- attach receipts, invoices or treatment plan for each expense you are claiming.
- provide copies of your identity document(s)
- Send your application and other documents to:
 - VictimAssist@justice.qld.gov.au
 - Victim Assist Queensland, GPO Box 149, Brisbane, Qld 4001.

If you are adding a new expense for an application you have already submitted, please write to or email us information about the new expense using the above contact details.

Claiming ongoing counselling treatment

The notice of decision (provided when we assessed your original application) outlined how many sessions of counselling we agreed to pay for. If you need more sessions, your counsellor will need to provide a [Comprehensive clinical report](#) telling us what treatment you need.

The notice of decision includes further instructions about how to claim more counselling. We will assess the new expenses and let you know if they can be paid for or not.

We may also request a [Progress report](#) at regular intervals, telling us how your recovery is going.

Claiming expenses for a pre-existing condition

If you had a health condition before the violence, but the violence made your condition worse, we may be able to pay new, additional counselling expenses. Example

Maria has had depression for the last 2 years. Before the act of violence, she saw her psychologist once a month and her psychiatrist once every 3 months. She was also prescribed an anti-depressant that she took each morning.

Maria was assaulted. The assault made Maria's depression worse and she also started having panic attacks. Her psychiatrist has added Panic disorder to her diagnosis. She is currently seeing her psychiatrist once a week. Her prescriptions have also changed. Maria could ask us to pay for her extra psychiatric appointments and her extra medication.

Maria's psychiatrist would need to complete a [Comprehensive clinical report](#) to confirm the new diagnosis and extra treatment needs.

Payment process

If your claim is approved, we will send you a 'Notice of Decision'. This notice will list what we have agreed to pay for, who we will be paying and the conditions on the payment. Please don't tell someone that we will pay for something before you get the 'Notice of Decision'. The 'Notice of Decision' will say if we will pay the cost or not.

Common payment conditions

Paid expenses

We must reimburse the person that paid the cost. This may have been you or it may have been a family member, friend, or agency. If someone else paid the cost for you, we need to pay them back. Please provide their name, phone number or email and banking information.

Unpaid expenses

In some cases, the cost hasn't been paid yet. Please provide an invoice so we can pay the service provider directly. If it is a medical or counselling expense, we must deduct any Medicare and private health rebates first. It is important that the invoice is made out to your name. This is because you received the service or goods. The invoice should not be made out to Victim Assist.

Other conditions (if any) will be noted in your 'Notice of Decision'.

Limitations

We cannot cover every expense you may incur because of violence. We cannot pay for:

- appointments you missed or cancelled
- counselling costs for health conditions that were not directly caused by violence
- pre-existing health conditions (unless the violence made the condition worse)
- counselling costs that are covered by a private insurer (if you have insurance)

- counselling costs that would usually be paid for by another government department, scheme or insurer (e.g. Queensland Health, Queensland Ambulance Services, Child Safety, Medicare, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, National Disability Insurance Scheme, WorkCover)
- costs for treatment that is not included under *Claim counselling costs* treatments or *Approved counselling costs*.

Timeframe

Due to the high number of claims already queued, it may be many months before we're able to assess your application and pay approved expenses.

If you have an urgent expense, and meet the conditions for claiming urgent expenses, we may prioritise the assessment of these expenses. If we decide the expenses don't meet these conditions, we'll let you know. Non urgent expenses will be queued for general assessment within normal timeframes.

Other factsheets you may need

You should also read the following instructions:

- Reporting requirements for all applicants
- Providing information about your injuries
- Prove your identity when you apply
- Claiming urgent expenses

All instructions, forms and reports talked about in this factsheet are available at www.qld.gov.au/victimsapply.

If you do not have internet access, please call 1300 546 587 during business hours and request the information via post.
