

Practice at the Bar is unquestionably stressful!

There is a higher than average level of stress within the legal profession. This may result in maladaptive consequences and outlets, including anxiety, depression, alcohol and drug misuse, family issues, work difficulties and related problems.

The reluctance of people to seek help for fear of showing signs of weakness can perpetuate and exacerbate the problem. We need to educate and assure ourselves that it's okay to ask for help, and that to do so is not a weakness but a strength that could save you from unnecessary suffering and, in extreme cases, maybe even save your or someone else's life.

The ACT Bar Association has recognised the seriousness of these issues and has established BarCare to assist members in dealing with such pressures.

BarCare is a confidential service to assist barristers that acts independently from the ACT Bar Association.

How BarCare works

Members are encouraged to make separate contact with any panel member and organise a consultation. The Bar Association will meet the cost of the **first** consultation for **all barristers holding an ACT Practising Certificate**. The member will be responsible for payment of any additional consultations. (Medicare and/or insurance rebates may be available.)

The Panel

The panel members hold the following attributes:

- Formal qualifications in counselling or clinical psychology, or organisational psychology;
- Seniority and experience in their professional field;
- Experience in working with lawyers;
- Completely independent practitioners in private practice settings;

Confidentiality

The process is completely confidential.

There is no need to inform the Bar Association in relation to any session arranged. The sessions are strictly confidential and the panel will not be reporting to the ACT Bar Association on any individual case.

Payment of Consultations

Accounts are forwarded to the CEO to sign off on, with the identity removed. This ensures complete confidentiality to the barrister. Any personal information is only disclosed to the Bar Association with the express permission of the barrister.

Source of referral

The nature of the scheme is aimed at a proactive approach. To overcome the reluctance of barristers to seek help, there is a proactive aspect that has been instituted with the co-operation of the ACT Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court of the ACT. Judicial officers of these Courts will, in any case where the facts or circumstances are considered horrific or of a particular confronting nature, advise the CEO of the name of the case and counsel involved. The CEO will then contact one of the panel members who will in turn make contact with the barrister involved to offer the services of BarCare.

Family members or colleagues who may have concerns about a barrister may also seek guidance about how they should approach those difficulties.

If preferred, the CEO can also make a call to the barrister and offer the services of BarCare. In this situation the name of the reporting person is not disclosed to the barrister.

Key Message

We all from time to time struggle with various issues. Sometimes they go away and other times you can't stop thinking about them. Please allow yourself to talk to someone or if you see someone showing these signs – ask them if they are okay!

COUNSELLOR PANEL

Sam van Meurs

Sam is a clinically trained psychologist who conducts individual therapy with adults and adolescents while also specialising in legal reports for the criminal, vocational, injury compensation, and family court arenas. He has worked in a variety of community and clinical settings with a range of clinical populations as a volunteer, paid carer, and once qualified, as a psychologist. While undertaking training as part of the Australian National University's clinical psychology program he has also had experience in performing competency assessments, and facilitating group therapy sessions. At present Sam is also completing his PhD in Clinical Psychology at ANU. Sam is currently interstate but is available for Telehealth appointments.

Sam can be contacted on sam@ccfpsych.com.au or via phone on 0412 352 028.

Linda Nicholson

Linda is a clinical psychologist who works with adults in private practice, including barristers. Linda utilises evidence-based approaches in therapy and works with clients who are experiencing anxiety, depression, stress and workplace stress, grief, difficulties with relationships (including in the workplace), struggles with health and addiction, work-life integration, and building life goals and personal meaning. Linda brings compassion, empathy, humour and warmth into her relationships with clients. Linda is based in Canberra.

Linda can be contacted on 0488 193 066 or admin@LNpsychology.au

David Jones

David has been working as a counsellor now for over thirty years. During that time he has provided relationship counselling to the Canberra community, initially at Relationships Australia for thirteen years and then in private practice. In addition to relationship counselling during his time at Relationships Australia he developed and managed a domestic violence program which included running a mandated program for perpetrators as a part of the integrated community response to DV in Canberra.

In private practice at the Karuna Centre he became involved in Collaborative law for Family Law matters providing counselling and working in partnership with family lawyers since 2005. For some years he also provided workshops on communication skills and building client relationships for the ACT Law Society. Over the years he has provided individual and couples counselling for lawyers at the Karuna Centre. In February of 2021 he moved to QLD and has continued to provide counselling to the Canberra community via video.

David currently works Tuesdays and Wednesdays and can be contacted on 0423 622 608 or david@karunacentre.com.au

Ms Sue Read

Sue is the founder and Director of Life Unlimited Psychology. She is a registered psychologist and highly sought-after speaker and presenter, as well as a former elite athlete. She has been in clinical practice for over twenty years. Sue offers evidence based, holistic and practical approaches to assist clients. She draws on her extensive science, psychology, health and neuroscience background to explore practical strategies for building resilience and managing stress.

Sue is passionate about helping individuals not just “manage symptoms” but achieve a meaningful and purposeful quality of life and utilises strengths-based approaches in her work. Interventions include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Eye Movement, Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), brief client centred therapy and trauma focussed counselling.

Sue’s passion for working with people impacted by chronic stress, trauma, grief, illness and disease, was spurred strongly by her own experience of illness that effectively ended her elite sports career. Sue has dedicated her professional life to working with individuals and groups to assist them to manage and positively recover from such life events and other setbacks.

Sue can be contacted at Life Unlimited on 6248 5138.

Ms Aileen Howe

Aileen provides psychological support and counselling for a range of mental health concerns and enjoys working collaboratively with her clients to find real solutions to the issues they are experiencing.

Aileen works with a wide range of individuals and couples with various concerns including anxiety, depression, trauma, relationship difficulties, grief and loss, personal and work-related stress, parenting issues, adjustment and life transitions, sleep problems, phobias, substance abuse and many of life’s other challenges. Some of the approaches Aileen utilises in her work are: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Mindfulness Based Emotional Balance, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), Eye Movement, Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), Compassion Based Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Solutions Focussed Therapy, Hypnosis, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Aileen is a full member of the APS College of Clinical Psychologists and is registered with the Psychology Board of Australia. She is also a registered provider with Medicare Australia.

Aileen can be contacted at Life Unlimited on 6248 5138.

Dr Isabelle Bauer

Isabelle is a highly qualified Clinical Neuropsychologist / Registered Psychologist.

B.S. (Psych), M.S. (Clin Psych), PhD (Neuroscience), Postdoctoral Fellowship in Neuroimaging and Cognition in Psychiatry, MAPS.

Isabelle is a passionate psychologist, clinical neuropsychologist, researcher, and an AHPRA Board-approved Supervisor. She has been involved in Neuroscience and Nutrition (PhD) and Psychiatry of Bipolar Disorder (Post-Doctorate) both as a provider of support services, educator, and clinical researcher.

She enjoys working with adolescents and adults across the lifespan to help them navigate issues such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, neurological conditions, pain, loss, ageing, and chronic illness. Her objective is to help her clients identify their goals and motivations, then take steps towards making changes in their life. She is committed to

BARCARE

HEALTH CARE for ACT Practising Barristers

creating a client-centred, collaborative, warm, and empathetic environment so that her clients feel supported while they work together to achieve these goals. Isabelle also enjoys working with clients from all cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds. Her therapeutic approach includes aspects of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), acceptance and mindfulness (ACT), and dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT), while drawing from methodologies that are cognitive and motivational and commitment oriented. She is particularly interested in using aspects of neuroscience and neurobiology to aid therapy. Isabelle can be contacted at Life Unlimited on 6248 5138.

Ms Elizabeth Williams

Elizabeth has a breadth of experience working with individuals and families across the lifespan. Elizabeth works with clients experiencing many life challenges and specialises in counselling adolescents and families, particularly those formed through adoption, out of home care, blended and separated families, or where there has been early childhood trauma. She also provides support to people experiencing anxiety, depression, trauma, grief and loss, and personal and work-related stress.

She is also a qualified Workplace Assessor and Trainer and has trained and assessed in many settings including child protection, government agencies and the education sector.

Elizabeth's practice is guided by a commitment to a number of key therapies and approaches that support relationships, and that are client centred. These include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dyadic Developmental Therapy (DDT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), with a focus on strengths-based practice and attachment theory. Elizabeth is also a registered provider with Medicare Australia.

Elizabeth can be contacted at Life Unlimited on 6248 5138.

Dr Tram Dinh

Tram is a clinical psychologist and board-approved supervisor with unconditional registration with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency. She has a Bachelor of Science Psychology with First Class Honours and a Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology. She has a special interest in positive psychology and resilience in mental health and well-being. Her doctoral research program examined how gratitude, interpersonal relationship dynamics, and personality traits influence our psychology, well-being, and life satisfaction.

Tram is skilled in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, EMDR, Emotion-Focused Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Brief Solution-Focused Therapy, and Couples Therapy. She works with adults and adolescents and delivers personalised evidence-based psychological interventions to match individual needs. She has worked with people with varying concerns including anxiety, depression, PTSD, relationship issues, stress, workplace difficulties, sleep problems, and grief.

Tram also specialises in preparing legal reports for criminal, civil, vocational and family law matters. As a bilingual psychologist, she is able to conduct assessments and therapy in both English and Vietnamese.

Tram is based in Canberra.

Tram can be contacted on 0422417764 or via email at Dr.Dinh.Psychology@gmail.com

Source your own Psychologist

Another option for members is to source your own Psychologist who is convenient for you. Once you have had your initial consultation, forward the receipt to the ACT Bar Association for reimbursement.

If you would like to explore that option, consider [Strategic Psychology](#) as they are local to the ACT and have a number of experienced Psychologists that have dealt with Lawyers and Barristers.