

# How can FVLSAC help?

At FVLSAC we understand that trauma can impact on the daily lives of our clients.

We understand that dealing with legal issues can mean feelings of trauma come flooding back. Sometimes it can make it extra hard to manage the legal stuff as well as normal life.

Workers at FVLSAC are trained to help people with trauma in a culturally safe way. Our lawyers can help with the legal stuff connected to trauma. Our client support workers can support you and sit with you. They are people you can trust.

We can also link you in with other services if you would like some additional support.

Our service is here to help on good days and bad days. Our communities are strong and resilient. FVLSAC sees the impact of the past, prioritises cultural safety in the present and walks alongside our clients as they determine their futures.

Contact us so we can help  
you, your family, your  
community.

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**Family Violence Legal Service**  
Aboriginal Corporation (SA)

# TRAUMA



**SUPPORT AND LEGAL HELP FOR  
ABORIGINAL FAMILIES**

**Family Violence Legal Service**  
Aboriginal Corporation (SA)



# T r a u m a S t o r y



**T**here once was a girl, curly haired, chocolate coloured, bright and bubbly. She had a big family, lived on country, laughed a lot but sometimes she found things hard. Often she did not know what to do about her feelings. She was sassy though, so often people did not see her struggling.

**R**unning away became her favourite pastime. Sometimes she was running from what was happening in front of her – like last night when Dad was drunk and growled at Mum, threatening to give her a flogging like last time. Sometimes she ran from memories of past hurt – like when she found out about cousin Ronnie’s suicide. Sometimes she ran from the sadness she felt flowing off of Nanna – who lives with loss from being part of the stolen generation. Sometimes she feels like running so she can breathe again.

**A**lways the nightmares return. They go away for a while, but then they come back and she feels jumpy, like her heart is going to pound out of her chest, she has no air and she cannot think clearly. She struggles to remember things for a while afterwards. Then comes the shame and the feeling that no one understands her. She wants to avoid everyone she knows. If she’s alone, her anger should keep her company, but it fades and she ends up feeling lonely ... every time.

**U**nderstanding that all of her feelings and the way her body responds is a completely normal response to trauma might help her. But how can she find out about it ... everyone around her has been through the same sort of thing and they do not always see how it affects her. They have their own stuff to deal with.



**M**oving forward is what she wants more than anything. It has been months and months of feeling like this. She wants to know what ‘this’ is. One day a friend tells her about complex trauma. She learns Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience trauma from what they see and experience in their lives but also from historical stuff, like the impact of colonization, the stolen generation, separation from family and culture and lots of disadvantage. She learns that unless she seeks help, the trauma feelings may stay with her and not move on. Others might feel her trauma, even her kids one day. Intergenerational trauma is a big thing in community.

**A**sking for help is so hard. But there are services out there whose job it is to help with these feelings. All the sass in the world is no protection from trauma. She learns this as she slowly lets people in to help. Over time, she gives her trust to workers and services. She goes to one place where she feels safe. Sometimes she bails on her appointments because it is too much for that day and she gets too nervous before the appointment. But they always call her back, they don’t make her feel bad, they just make another time for her to see them. Her favourite days are the days when she talks and she leaves feeling light as a feather. The lightness means she does not run anymore. Not running helps her feel strong. Now she feels strong and proud. Trauma is crappy but she is learning it can be managed.

Please note: the story above is fictional and is not the story of a FVLSAC client. We hope it represents the experiences of people who live with trauma in their lives.

