

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can access this service?

The Solicitor Outreach Service (SOS) is available to solicitors who hold a current practising certificate from the Law Society of NSW.

Can my family or staff access the service?

SOS is only available to NSW solicitors.

Does it matter where I am located?

You can access SOS irrespective of where you are located. Treatment may be provided in person, over the phone or via video-conferencing technology, depending on your individual circumstances.

What is a psychologist and what do they do?

In Australia, psychologists are registered health professionals. Psychologists have completed university training and professional supervision, and they are registered with the Psychology Board of Australia and listed with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

Psychologists need to satisfy yearly requirements to maintain their registration status. Psychologists must also adhere to strict professional standards and code of ethics.

Psychologists use evidence-based strategies to help people cope with emotional, work, stress, relationship, addiction, mental health and other difficulties.

The Law Society has also worked with PeopleSense to give their psychologists an understanding of key pressures that solicitors commonly face in their practice.

Can I only access this service for work related issues?

You can access SOS for any concern or difficulty that you may be experiencing, personal or professional.

The Law Society of NSW will continue to offer advisory services for those who would like to talk through legal, practice related or ethical questions.

Is it confidential?

Yes, engagement with SOS is confidential. Although SOS is an initiative of the Law Society of NSW, the services are being delivered by third party provider, PeopleSense by Altius. PeopleSense will not be sharing any information with the Law Society of NSW which could identify solicitors accessing SOS.

As part of the psychological services provided, the psychologist will need to collect and record personal information relevant to your situation. Psychologists must comply with strict regulations around privacy and confidentiality.

To ensure that SOS is meeting the broad mental health and wellbeing needs of NSW solicitors, PeopleSense will be providing the Law Society of NSW with de-identified and aggregated reports. These reports will not contain any individual or identifiable information.

Please discuss any questions about confidentiality directly with PeopleSense, by phoning 1800 592 296.

How much does it cost?

Each NSW solicitor can access up to three psychological sessions per financial year, as well as immediate access to crisis counselling if in distress, paid for by the Law Society of NSW.

What if I want to continue with treatment?

The psychologists employed by PeopleSense are registered with Medicare. Depending on your individual circumstances, you may be able to access Medicare-subsidised treatment with the same psychologist outside SOS with a referral from your GP under the Medicare Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative. More information is available [here](#).

Do I need to get a Mental Health Care Plan or referral from my GP?

You do not need a referral from your GP to access SOS. However, you will need to consult with your GP if you wish to access Medicare-subsidised treatment outside SOS. More information is available [here](#).

When is a good time to seek help?

If you need support, are struggling to carry-out day-to-day activities or have experienced difficulties coping for two weeks or more, consider seeking professional support.

Who is the crisis counselling for?

The crisis counselling is primarily intended for people experiencing acute distress or thinking about suicide.

What should I expect when I speak with a psychologist?

It is common to feel nervous or uncomfortable to begin with. These feelings often abate once treatment has commenced. During the initial session, the psychologist will ask questions so they can understand your situation and develop a customised treatment plan.

Psychology is talking therapy. Psychological treatment is a collaborative process, and results can take time and effort. Psychology tends to be goal directed and solution focused. You may be asked to identify treatment goals, to complete tasks outside of session and to report back on these within session. People generally require multiple sessions before noticing changes/improvements.



Who are PeopleSense by Altius?

You can find out more information about PeopleSense [here](#).

Can I use a different service?

This is the service offered via SOS. However, there are a range of other services that provide crisis support, mental health resources and online programs. You can find out more about some of these services [here](#). There are also many privately-operated mental health services. Your GP may recommend someone, or the Australian Psychological Society has an online directory which can be used to locate a psychologist via location or presenting issue.