

Referral Pathways

There are many different ways that people can access support if they are experiencing emotional or psychological distress. Making the decision to access support takes a considerable amount of courage, and acting on that decision can be hard. It can often be confusing and overwhelming trying to make sense of the different options, and which option might be best in a particular situation. Below is some information that will hopefully make the process of finding the best support service slightly easier.

This document provides information about accessing support via the following:

- Mental Health Care Plans (MHCPs)
- Private Health Insurance
- Finding psychologists
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for clergy and employees of the Melbourne Diocese of the Anglican Church
- Crisis Services
- Helplines
- Tip Sheets

Mental Health Care Plans (MHCP)

- Mental Health Care Plans are generally obtained by making an appointment with your GP. MHCPs allow an individual to access the services of many Psychologists, Social Workers or Occupational Therapists, to treat identified mental health issues such as Depression and Anxiety Disorders. MHCPs are fairly straightforward to get, and most GPs are very supportive of accessing psychological services.
- MHCPs can also be obtained for Adjustment Disorder, which typically occurs in response to a particular stressor. Adjustment Disorder is often diagnosed when your usual effective coping strategies are no longer effective under the circumstances.
- As of 1/4/2020, a MHCP will allow you to access up to six sessions initially, with the possibility of further sessions following a review with your GP, up to a maximum of 10 sessions each calendar year. Representative bodies are currently lobbying the government to increase the number of sessions available, particularly in light of the current crisis.
- In most cases, sessions will incur a gap fee. Most providers will be conducting sessions via telehealth (video or voice call) due to COVID-19 restrictions. As of 20/4/2020 the Federal Government has **removed** the mandate that clients who are under 16, concession card holders and those that are considered 'more vulnerable' to COVID-19 can only be bulk billed, meaning **there now will be** gap fees for most MHCP sessions via telehealth. However, many psychologists are willing to be flexible with fees in situations where there is financial distress, particularly at the moment in light of the financial pressure that the COVID-19 situation is placing on many people.

Private Health

- Many Private Health funds have some provision for psychological services, depending on the level of cover. The rebate available varies significantly between health funds, so it is always important to check what's available. Most funds will not

provide a rebate on sessions where Medicare has already been used to cover some of the cost.

- Several Private Health Funds have agreed to extend their cover for psychological services to telehealth sessions. Again, you will need to check this with your particular fund.

Find A Psychologist (APS & AAPi)

- Finding a psychologist can be daunting, and as with any profession, there are good psychologists and not so good psychologists. Recommendations from people you trust are often a good place to start, but it's important to remember that just because someone else found a particular therapist helpful it does not mean they will be the right 'fit' for you.
- There are a few search functions that can help to find a psychologist:
 - The Australian Psychological Society (APS) provides the Find a Psychologist service at www.psychology.org.au/Find-a-Psychologist
 - The Australian Association of Psychologists (AAPi) also provides a similar service at <https://aapi.org.au/find-a-psychologist>

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- The Melbourne Diocese offers all employees and their immediate family free access to confidential counselling services
- No approval is required to access this program
- To make an appointment call (03) 8650 6262

Relationship Counselling

- It is likely that social isolation, being at home full time with partners and financial stress will put extra pressure on relationships
- MHCPs cannot be obtained for relationship difficulties, however it is possible that some private health funds may cover relationship counselling so check with your health fund.
- Services that offer relationship counselling include
 - Relationships Australia www.relationships.org.au 1300 364 277
 - CatholicCare www.ccam.org.au/page/12/counselling
 - Relationship Matters www.relationshipmatters.com.au/services/couples
Note: Relationship Matters is also the provider of EAP services for the Melbourne Diocese (see above) and can be accessed for free through the EAP program or direct appointments can be paid for by the individual

Crisis Services

- There are a number of crisis services available depending on the circumstances.
- **Mental Health** crises, including a psychotic episode, self harm, feeling suicidal and feeling out of control
 - Call 000 in an emergency or if there is risk of immediate harm
 - 24/7 Crisis Assessment and Treatment teams (CAT team)
 - Visit www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/adult/index.htm to determine which service area is appropriate for your location
 - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services

- Visit www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/child/index/htm to determine which service area is appropriate for your location
 - Note: the above websites are quite clunky and can be confusing to navigate. Each service area is limited by geographical boundaries, and you may need to look at a number of options before identifying which area you are likely to fall into. Identifying your own service area before it's required might help to reduce stress levels.
- **Family Violence**

It is likely that family violence will increase over the next weeks and months. There are a number of support services that will remain fully functional over this time, including crisis accommodation. If you or someone you know is in quarantine or self-isolating and is at risk or experiencing family violence:

 - **Call 000 in an emergency or Safe Steps 24/7 crisis service on 1800 015 188**
 - Other Key Contacts:
 - The Orange Door (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday (closed public holidays))
 - Barwon – 1800 312 820
 - Bayside Peninsula – 1800 319 353
 - Inner Gippsland – 1800 319 354
 - Mallee - 1800 290 943
 - North Eastern Melbourne - 1800 319 355
 - Victims of Crime Helpline - 1800 819 817 or text 0427 767 891 (8am to 11pm every day)
 - Child Protection - 13 12 78 (5pm to 9am Monday to Friday, 24 hrs on weekends and public holidays)
 - Sexual Assault Crisis Line - 1800 806 292 (24 hours a day, seven days a week)
 - Men's Referral Service - 1300 766 491 (8am to 9pm Monday to Friday; 9am to 5pm Saturday and Sunday)
 - Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
 - w/respect - 1800 542 847 (5pm to 11pm each Wednesday and 10 am to 10pm on Saturday and Sunday)
 - MensLine Australia - 1300 78 99 78 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Helplines

- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- Parentline 13 22 89
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- Headspace 1800 650 890 & headspace.org.au/ehespace/
- Mensline Australia 1300 78 99 78
- ReachOut au.reachout.com

Tip Sheets

- The APS has made available a series of tip sheets on topics including managing coronavirus anxiety, maintaining mental health while isolated, and one specifically for older Australians on these issues. Find them at www.psychology.org.au/COVID-19-Australians