



# Types of clinical support



## GENERAL PRACTITIONER (GP)

Best starting point for someone seeking professional help.

A good GP can:

- Make a diagnosis.
- Check for any physical health problem or medication that may be contributing to the depression or anxiety, or may affect your treatment.
- Provide information and discuss available treatments, taking your preferences into account
- Prescribe medication.
- Work with you to draw up a Mental Health Treatment Plan so you can get a Medicare rebate for psychological treatment.
- Refer you to a mental health specialist such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.
- Schedule regular appointments to check how you are going

## MENTAL HEALTH GP

In Australia, doctors don't need any special training in mental health to practice as GPs, BUT:

- Some have more expertise and specialisation in mental health.
- GPs with mental health training or expertise would be categorized as a 'Mental Health GP' and can offer more expert services if you are seeking help for mental health concerns.
- You can determine this by consulting with the practice or talking to the GP about their relevant experience.

## COUNSELLOR

A counsellor is a trained, objective professional with whom you can build a healing and trusting relationship.

- They are trained to offer different types of assistance; most frequently talking-based styles of therapy.
- Counselling is a process of talking about and working through your personal problems.
- There are many qualified counsellors who work across a number of different settings.
- Training involves a 2-year Diploma of Counselling or similar bachelor's degree.
- Some counsellors may not be eligible to be registered with Medicare to qualify clients for a rebate.

## PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychologists are registered professionals focussed on providing psychotherapy (talk therapy) to help patients.

- You don't need a referral from a GP or psychiatrist to see a psychologist BUT you'll need a Mental Health Treatment Plan from a GP to claim Medicare rebates.
- Psychologists can also diagnose mental health disorders if necessary.
- Psychologists are NOT medical doctors, therefore CANNOT provide medication.

Registration as a psychologist requires:

- 4 year accredited university degree and
- 2 year Masters degree or work-based supervision program

# TYPES OF CLINICAL SUPPORT

## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Clinical psychologists are a specialised type of psychologist who have undertaken an additional clinical registrar program. Similar to psychologists, they DO NOT prescribe medication, but focus on psychological therapies instead.

A clinical psychologist can be of particular help when a condition:

- Is complex or difficult to diagnose.
- Involves suicidal ideas or plans.
- Isn't responding to standard treatment through your GP or another mental health professional.

As part of their work, a clinical psychologist may help you to manage a long-term mental health condition and liaise with a broader team of allied health professionals.

## PSYCHIATRIST

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who have undergone further training to specialise in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health conditions.

- You will need a referral from a GP to see a psychiatrist and claim Medicare rebates
- Psychiatrists can prescribe and monitor medication, provide psychological treatment, and make other psychiatric assessments.
- Psychiatrists specialise in complex mental health disorders, particularly if they are severe and hospital admission is required. E.g., Severe depression and anxiety, bipolar disorder, psychosis, schizophrenia, OCD, eating disorders, personality disorders.

## Further information

If you are considering a professional support session please read MHM's Profile of a Good Support and Professional Support Sessions document via [www.mentalhealthmovement.com.au/resources](http://www.mentalhealthmovement.com.au/resources)

