

Steps to see a Psychologist:

1. **Decide how you would like to pay:**

a. If you would like to pay out of pocket or use your private health care insurer, you can go ahead and make an appointment with a psychologist. (They tend to be set-up to help to process private health claims with hi-caps machines, but if not, clients can do that themselves after. They need to check with their insurers how much is covered and what the requirements are.

b. If you would like to use Medicare rebates (see rates below), ask your GP for a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP). You can then find a psychologist and take your MHCP with or ask your GP for a referral to a psychologist (they write an accompanying letter and send the MHCP directly to the psychologist). Psychiatrists (MD's mental health specialists who diagnose and administer medication) can provide referrals to psychologists too.

Medicare allows clients to receive rebates for up to 10 sessions per calendar to see a psychologist. The approval is initially to see a psychologist for 6 sessions, then a review meeting with the GP to determine if they can approve a request for 4 more sessions. This is renewed annually.

2. **Visit your GP** to request and general a Mental Health Care Plan & ask for a referral to a psychologist (you can name a registered psychologist at this point). The GP can send the MHCP and referral letter directly to the psychologist if they are in the system, or you can bring hard copies to your first psychology appointment

3. **See your Psychologist!**

With a MHCP they can receive a Medicare rebate of \$96.65 back per session. They can use private health insurance or pay everything out of pocket as well.

NOTE: Other avenues of referral sources could be NDIS, WorkCover, or DVA - these groups have different processes, but once it's set up, eligible clients can see psychologists under these schemes.

Where to find psychologists or counsellors:

Some online directories lists psychologists or general searches can help. Word of mouth tends to be a good predictor of a good match, and typically Christian psychologists/counsellors don't state that in their profiles... asking friends, family or leaders if they know any through good testimonies.

Some online directories to search for psychologists and counsellors:

- Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/counselling>
- Australian Psychological Society: <https://psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist>

Different types of psychologists:

Psychologists are registered and regulated health professionals with Ahpra's PsyBA (Psychology Board of Australia) (ask for this evidence if it is unclear) either as **generally registered psychologists** or **clinical psychologists**. Both these groups can have specialties. In private practice, they tend to do similar work, but clinical psychologists have more of an interest in assessment/diagnoses and tend to focus more on disorders (but this is a very big generalisation!). Clients seeing generally registered psychologists receive **\$96.65** Medicare rebate per session, and clinical psychologists receive a higher rebate per session (**\$141.85**) for their clients, so they typically charge a little more. Counsellors are also accredited with their counselling bodies - their training, scope and practice tend to be a little shorter and different from psychologist training and they tend to charge less than psychologists.