



Medicare Rebate for Counselling Services

Through Medicare's Better Mental Health Initiative many people are eligible for a rebate for individual counselling that relates to a mental health related concern.

Who is eligible?

People who are experiencing difficulties with their thoughts, emotions, behaviour, social skills or decision making are eligible for a partial rebate. Medicare terms these types of difficulties as a 'mental health disorder'. Examples of situations where a person might fit into this category include when a person is experiencing:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Significant grief
- Sleep problems
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Eating disorders
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Psychotic disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Phobias
- Sexual difficulties
- Conduct disorder

N.B. There are no medicare rebates for relationship or family counselling.

Does that mean I have to have a mental illness to be eligible?

No. A mental health disorder does not mean you have a mental illness, it means you are having difficulties with your emotions, thoughts, behaviours, social skills or decision making.



What do I need to do to apply?

To apply for the rebate, you need to have a Mental Health Care Plan completed by your GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician prior to your counselling session. This involves your doctor getting an overview of your situation and developing a treatment plan involving a referral to Life Supports Counselling Service. Make sure you book a longer appointment with your doctor to enable the plan to be completed in one appointment. This cost of this appointment should be completely covered by Medicare.

How much of the counselling fee is covered?

For a session with a psychologist you will get a rebate of approximately \$80 and for a session with an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker you will get a rebate of approximately \$70.

You will be required to make payment for the full fee at the time of the appointment; you can then claim your refund through Medicare. Life Supports fees also contribute toward your Medicare safety net which means that once you have reached your safety net, you will get most of your fees refunded through Medicare.

How many sessions are covered?

Typically ten counselling sessions are covered per calendar year. In exceptional circumstances an additional six sessions can be funded.

What can I do if I have any queries?

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact our office.