

THE BENEFITS OF SEEKING THERAPY WITHOUT A MENTAL HEALTH CARE PLAN

Counselling and Psychotherapy are currently not covered under the Medicare Better Access Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP) System. However, my fees compare favourably with the Medicare 'gap' benefit charged by many psychologists. Even with the Mental Health Care Plan, you still may need to outlay money for the shortfall of the gap benefit claimed through Medicare.

There are many benefits to having therapy without a Mental Health Care Plan including:

- **You get to choose the therapist that you would like to work with** and discuss with your therapist the style of therapy that you would like to undertake. Most Counsellors tend to work from a holistic framework and a style unique to the client, taking the time to work through the client's entire story, as opposed to the medically adapted model required through Medicare.
- **There is no limit to the amount of counselling sessions that you may require with a Counsellor.** You have control over the length of treatment that you would like to commit to, whereas you are limited to a fixed amount of sessions through the Mental Health Care Plan and if you require more sessions under the plan, you may have to pay the psychologist's full fee.
- **You can be guaranteed that there are shorter waiting periods with most Counsellors,** currently a lot of psychologists are booked up for months in advance, or not taking on new clients.
- **Without a Mental Health Care Plan, you can guarantee complete confidentiality with your therapist, your records will not be collected for 'my health records' nor will your personal information be recorded with Medicare, private health funds and at times, employers.** Having your details recorded with these services can undermine your sense of privacy and confidentiality. Once you have a Mental Health Plan diagnosis it will become part of your health records permanently.
- **Without a Mental Health Care Plan, you are not labelled with a mental illness or medical disorder through the diagnostic methods.** Having a psychiatric diagnosis on your health records can sometimes limit your ability to qualify for health or life insurance cover or could affect applying for employment. Not everyone that has therapy has a mental illness, some people just want guidance and support with such things as relationship issues, making important life decisions or just working through some grief and loss.