

I'm sure you have many submissions so I will be brief.

Firstly I would **like to apologize** on behalf of myself and numerous colleagues I have spoken to who are dismayed at the poor behaviour of some members of our profession who seem more concerned with power than service. I have become more aware of this by reading some of the previous submissions which has, frankly, shocked me. I urge you to please not get the misguided impression that psychologists are generally like this. As research will show, in any group, even psychologists, there are those with a "will to power" who often tend to have the loudest voice.

I am a psychologist with 25 years experience in the clinical field. I do not have a Clinical Masters in Psychology but I have a Masters in Clinical Family Therapy which has involved 3 years of live team supervision working with families. In psychology terms I have done the "4+2 route". During my time I have specialised in trauma, addictions and rehabilitation. I also do couple and family work.

As someone with some years of experience I would like to point out some things from the "inside" that may not be immediately obvious from the "outside".

Firstly, people who do therapy work quickly realise how intense and demanding it is. People do not stay in it without doing ongoing professional development simple as a matter of survival if nothing else. However a person does not last long just in survival mode. There has to be a genuine love of the work and a desire to help people. I know that may not sound very scientific but it is important to remember why people do this work. Almost inevitably people go on to train further if only to stay sane and supported. In my example I have done ongoing training in hypnosis, dance therapy, mindfulness, MBSR to name a few areas. I have lost count of how many in service trainings I have done over the years.

In my time I have met many highly skilled therapists who are Social Workers, "4+2 psychologists", "clinical psychologists", "counselling psychologists". Amongst what I would regard as the most healthy, skilled and grounded of these therapist there is a distinct lack of oneupmanship. Rather there is a sense of support, transparency and wanting to help each other. This is something that needs to be protected within the system. **It is very important, I believe, that practitioners are on an equal footing.** Not doing so erodes a sense of cohesiveness and mutual support. Also it is quite wrong that those who are hungry for power be accommodated at the expense of service to the community. **As the Better Access research shows, high quality outcomes are being provided across the board.**

Therefore, whatever is decided should be for all psychologists (and, I believe, Social Workers).

Secondly, I am very concerned about the proposed reduction in services, especially as so many of the presenting issues fall under complex mental health. **Twelve sessions allow those on a low income with complex ongoing issues to get a monthly appointment which I think is an absolute bare minimum.** The exceptional circumstances clause gives additional support especially where there are ongoing concerns about harm to self or others.

I hope that these things are being considered.

Yours Faithfully

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