

Submission to the Senate Enquiry into Mental Health

My submission is in relation to the two-tier Medicare system.

I am a counselling psychologist, endorsed as such by the Australian Psychology Board. I am a member of the APS College of Counselling Psychologists (granted membership in May 1997).

I am writing to support the proposition that – if the two-tier system is to continue - counselling psychologists be included in the top tier along with clinical psychologists, on the basis of their advanced training in psychopathology, psychopharmacology, assessment and psychotherapy skills and experience in treating clients with the full range of mental health disorders.

I am only one of many experienced counselling psychologists, but I will outline some aspects of my own training and professional background and practice to exemplify how the training, experience and expertise of counselling psychologists can equal that of many clinical psychologists:

- My postgraduate qualifications are MA (Counselling)(1992), and PhD (2004). You are by now well aware of the training involved in postgraduate counselling psychology, so I will not elaborate here. My PhD research involved an extensive clinically-focused qualitative and quantitative analysis of process of change in therapy. The research involved in-depth interviews with over forty clients who had disclosed experiences of sexual assault and abuse to therapists, and analysed factors instrumental in enhancing or impeding therapeutic change.
- I have many years experience as a clinician including 7 years working in rehabilitation psychology in a hospital environment with South East Sydney Area Health Service (SESAHS), 15 years conducting my current busy private practice (predating by many years the introduction of the Better Access Scheme) where I have worked with clients with a wide range of presentations including complex mental health disorders;
- I have over 20 years experience in developing and conducting training and professional development programs for psychologists;
- I have been a guest lecturer at the University of Wollongong (1996 & 1997), lecturing in the Psychotherapy strand of the Masters in Clinical Psychology program;
- Over the years I have provided clinical supervision to a range of helping professionals, including clinical psychologists and psychologists employed in a range of mental health settings both government and NGOs, including Adult Mental Health Unit, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit, Community Health Centres, Division of General Practice. Most of the clinical psychologists for whom I have provided supervision are on the upper tier of the two-tier Medicare scale.
- Over many years, in all the above roles, as a practitioner, supervisor and trainer, I have had extensive experience in assessment and treatment of clients presenting

with a wide range of mental health disorders, and of supervising and teaching other practitioners who were doing so.

- When I was employed with SESIAHS I was re-graded to the Clinical Psychologist Classification (pay scale) on the basis of my relevant qualifications and clinical experience.

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