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## **ALISON NEWTON**

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I am a psychologist with 33 years experience. I bulkbill all my clients who see me under a Mental Health Care Plan. A significant proportion of my client population would not be able to afford to pay any gap. If the Clinical rebate from Medicare were to be dropped to the general psychologist rate the following groups of clients would not be able to see me:

- Aboriginal women seeing me to stabilize their life after release from prison because of crimes associated with drug use. In the last month I have seen six Aboriginal women fitting this category. None of them have employment.
- Survivors of Domestic Abuse, many of whom are on Disability Pensions In the last month I have seen fifteen different women fitting this description
- Survivors of child sexual abuse, many of whom with Borderline Personality Disorder and on Disability Pensions. In the last month I have seen sixteen separate individuals, two of whom are Aboriginal.
- I am also seeing a woman on a suspended sentence for a major crime.
- I am seeing many people suffering posttraumatic stress disorder. Other than those in the above groups in the last month I have been working with a further one victim of crime, struggling to get back into the workforce.
- I am working with one woman who hoards and is on a Disability Pension.
- In the last month I have seen three different men who have perpetrated domestic abuse and are presently engaged in complex Family Court proceedings.

It is my experience that when a drug-addicted client continues to see me over the course of one Mental Health Care Plan, they will stabilize of methadone programme and the chances of further offending is greatly reduced.

Also it is my experiences that survivors of trauma, move from being depressed, anxious, languishing in their life to having more frequent and longer periods of feeling as if they are flourishing in their life. These people have a much greater chance of returning to the workforce. Many of my clients manage to find employment after decades of Centrelink payments.

As well as the work for which I am paid, I facilitate pro bono WOWSafe: Women of the West for Safe Families, which is a community action group to raise awareness

regarding domestic abuse and to provide a voluntary service assisting families to move towards safety.

Personally, I could fill my books with the worried well who have professional jobs and can pay, but I put it to the Senate Committee that my services are better devoted to low income trauma survivors.

Yours faithfully

ALISON NEWTON