



Senate

To the relevant person/s

8/4/2011

Hello,

I am a provisionally registered psychologist, currently completing the Master of Psychology Counselling degree. I submit this letter in relation to the *Senate Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services – Better Access matter*.

I put forward to the relevant persons the following. In undertaking training as a Counselling Psychologist, I will complete 6 years of study, and an additional 2 years of supervision to gain specialist title, totaling to 8 years of professional development. In my training so far, I have received extensive and thorough development in the application of excellent counselling skills. This includes, but is not exclusive to, developing and maintaining an effective and efficient counselling process and relationship to empower clients to make the changes they want to have a better quality life. To my surprise, delight and enlightenment, alongside this training, I have also received advanced training in understanding psychopathology, across the spectrum, ranging from mild to severe disorders. In learning this, training on the effective use of various diagnostic tools to assess mental health disorders, and provision of treatment driven by sound research and theory, is provided. This ensures that Counselling Psychologists, like Clinical Psychologists, provide an effective, ethical and evidenced based practice to diagnosis and treat mental health disorders that clients may present. Additional to this training, my workplace experience has shown many of the clients that I have seen present with mental health disorders. Examples of such disorders include various depressive and anxiety disorders, complicated grief, social and other phobias, personality disorders, and adjustment disorders. In providing an effective and ethical service, I work with the client to develop treatment that focuses on addressing all their challenges, including their mental health problems. In light of this information, it would seem reasonable to provide clients with an opportunity to have equal access to Counselling Psychologists as much as Clinical Psychologists. In the interest of the client's well-being, I humbly request that commonwealth funded sessions for Counselling Psychologists remain at 18 sessions per year. Further, it seems reasonable that Counselling Psychologists remain in the top tier, alongside Clinical psychologists. This seems like a reasonable request given the equivalent training we receive, and wider range of expertise we gain to be both excellent counsellors and clinicians.

Sincerely