

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I wish to voice my concern in regard to the impending loss of the two tier system and cuts to session numbers for clinical psychologists.

I am a Clinical Psychologist and gained my registration to become a clinical psychologist after returning to university for 2.5 years to complete further studies in Clinical Assessment, Clinical Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology. These subjects were not an easy feat for a psychologist who has been practicing psychotherapy for over 20 years. Indeed, the course of a Clinical Psychologist is far more stringent and difficult than my previous studies in becoming a specialist psychologist. Most of my non-clinical psychologist peers would not consider embarking on with the further studies due to the great demand and commitment both academically and financially in becoming a clinical psychologist specialist.

Nonetheless, I gained extensive knowledge in clinical assessment that I had not received when I first returned to do undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the late 80s and 90s. I acquired enormous knowledge and skills in assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders and psychopathology that had been lacking in my previous work as a Counselling Psychologist. My diagnostic skills and assessment in the area of psychopathology is far more superior to any generalist psychologist due to the extensive study in the field of lifespan and advanced evidence-based and scientifically-informed psychopathology, assessment, diagnosis, case formulation and psychotherapy.

On a personal level I have noted how many of my non-clinical psychologists peers contact me inquiring as to a possible diagnosis of an individual with a possible mental disorders, as my non-clinical peers are not as stringently trained in psychopathology thus lack the knowledge and skills in assessment and mental disorder diagnosis. This is indeed a major concern for me that those with clinical psychologist registration will 'lose their voice' in the wilderness of the community with those individuals who have complex and severe presentations of mental disorders.

Moreover, the treatment of moderate to severe range on those who have complex and severe presentations will be disadvantaged due the cuts to session numbers. And, indeed the moderate to severe range presentation is unique to the specialised training of the Clinical Psychologist, and these cases can sometimes take up to twenty to thirty sessions per annum with their comprehensive treatment which is very similar to a Psychiatrist without the inclusion of medication.

I certainly remain concerned for the future mental health of our great nation should the two tier system and the cuts to rebated session numbers go ahead.

Yours sincerely,

A very concerned and disappointed Clinical Psychologist (Frankston, Victoria)