

I am a 60 year old woman who has been qualified as a psychologist since 1989. I have worked as a Senior Policy Analyst, Social Justice and Primary Health Care in SA Health for 5 years.

I then changed focus to become an Organisational Psychologist/ Managing Consultant for one of the big three Chartered Accounting firms in the world. I received psychological supervision there – and am deemed in the category of 4 + 2. After 7 years there, I decided to commence my own clinical practice and have been busy and successful to date after some 22 years. Over these years I have provided positive healing and therapeutic interventions. My results and referrals speak for themselves as concrete evidence.

I am most disheartened that psychologists of my ilk are treated so poorly – with no respect or recognition. We are the very foundation of psychology practice. We assist and move clients through their issues based on the primary health care – Better Access programs. Logically if you take the time to listen, watch and learn, primary health care is the basis of mental health care.

On the ground, so to speak, we 4+ 2 psychologists are extremely qualified in the area of clinical psychology even though we do not don the label of “Clinical” we save the Government millions of dollars as we address client’s needs, establish goals and overall redirect clients back on the rails of every- day living. This saving through primary health care eliminates extremely costly and often unsuccessful hospital tertiary care.

Again, if we have the accessibility to see clients early in their presenting mental health issue/s, we will be a cost benefit to the Government. Cutting back to 10 sessions is unrealistic and in the big picture will actually cost the Gillard Government much more than we, as practitioners and taxpayers deserve.

Primary Health Care – Psychology is the way forward. We are attending to the needs of the mental health community – not spending another 2 years to gain a “Clinical” qualification . Let’s keep people out of expensive mental health care. That’s why you need to trust and support the generation that did the hard yards 4 + 2 and worked “in situ” not in a university class room or sitting in front of a computer in the comfort of their home.

Deborah Turner  
Psychologist and Hypnotherapist