

25 July 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Potential changes to the two tier system including diminishing sessions for Better Access - Clinical Psychology

I am dismayed that this debate is necessary. I have worked both as a psychologist and as a clinical psychologist and the difference between the two areas is substantial. I have worked hard to become a clinical Psychologist. I had completed 4 years of a degree and decided I needed further training to be able to be clinically skilled. Because I live in the country - Albany, Western Australia I could only complete my clinical training on campus if I travelled to Queensland to attend James Cook University - which I did at my own expense. I have since completed a Phd through Curtin University. Are not my qualifications worthy of a difference in salary? Is not my experience worthy of a differential pay scale? Are not my clients deserving of a 6 by 6 session allocation under Better Access?

Clinical Psychology is a specialist field within the realm of psychology. Clinical psychologists assess, diagnose, predict, prevent, and treat psychopathology, mental disorders and other individual or group problems to improve behaviour adjustment, adaptation, personal effectiveness and satisfaction.

What distinguishes Clinical Psychology as a practice specialty is the breadth of problems addressed and of populations served. Clinical Psychology, in research, education, training and practice, focuses on individual differences, abnormal behaviour, and mental disorders and their prevention, and lifestyle enhancement. It is a life span perspective.

There is wide recognition for the need for clinical psychology services as seen by recommendations' of the State Mental Health Plan and the Ministerial Taskforce and the multitude of successful psychological evidence-supported treatments reported in the scientific literature for many severe mental health disorders. This further includes: the cost effectiveness of psychological treatments and positive consumer evaluations of Clinical Psychology services.

Why does my work have to be diminished? I have studied and met requirements for Registration, College Membership, AHPRA etc. I provide an effective and efficient service to my clients.

I await your reply with some answers to my questions.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Josephine Hurley  
Albany Psychological Services