



## Cost-Benefit Of Psychological Services: Psychology – Doesn't Cost It Pays

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has looked at the frequency of mental health problems. One of their various publications notes that:

In 2014-15 there were 4.0 million Australians (17.5%) who reported having a mental or behavioural condition. Anxiety-related conditions were most frequently reported (2.6 million people or 11.2% of the population) followed by mood (affective) disorders, which includes depression (2.1 million people or 9.3%). Around one in twenty Australians (5.1%) reported having both an anxiety-related condition and a mood (affective) disorder.

But how many will actually consider the costs versus benefits of making use of the professional services of a Psychologist to deal with these mental health conditions?

### Cost-Benefit Of Psychological Services.

It can be difficult to put a monetary cost of not making use psychological services. Could you put a dollar figure on;

- The lost productivity from constantly thinking about your unresolved problems;
- Staying stuck in bed, hiding under the covers, instead of getting to work or study?
- A “tradie” making mistakes and having to do re-work (or taking longer to complete tasks and get to other jobs) because they “can’t think straight”;
- Being unable to concentrate because of workplace issues like bullying or other workplace difficulties, or worries from home impacting on work or study;
- Being so depressed or anxious that you cannot get on with your job?
- Not being engaged and “present” for your children or spouse;
- Being unable to cope with changes in your circumstances?

Fortunately, there are reports that look at this. For example from Employee Assistance Programs, (see the link for an explanation of an EAP program) like this example given by the International Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) in their “EAP Buyers Guide” about how “Chevron has recognized savings of \$50,000 per case from reduced turnover due to EAP use. Chevron also reported “employee performance improved 50% following a supervisor referral to the EAP.” Also, that “Campbell Soup Company saved 28% in mental health costs using its EAP”

**How does Psychologist fees (for which you can potentially get a Medicare rebate of \$86.15 per session) compare with other things you could spend your money on?**



- How much would you pay on cigarettes in a week? (To deal with your stress and addiction to nicotine)
- How much do you spend on Alcohol in a week? (Again, as a way of “relaxing” or dealing with stress.)
- How much do you spend on Gambling – Pokies, Scratchies, Lotto, TAB, or at a Casino?
- To fill the car with fuel, or pay for parking or car service?
- Take-away meals, coffees, lunches or eating out, or a night out?
- Going to the Hairdressers, Nail Salon, or Beauty Spa?
- What does Gym Membership cost?
- Paying for home services – e.g. Lawnmowing, Household cleaning, or to get a “Tradie” to come and do household repairs or provide other services?
- What does it cost you for childcare?
- Any other “vices” or hobbies?

It should also be remembered that the Medicare rebate for a 50-minute consultation is about a third of the fee recommended (currently \$254 till 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020) to maintain a financially viable practice. Therefore, it is normal practice to have to pay some sort of a “Gap” fee.

### [What Do I Get For My Money?](#)

- A 50-minute consultation with a registered Health Professional where you are the centre of attention (this is a bit different to a coffee with a friend). A psychologist has both professional training and experience in dealing with a wide range of issues and is required to comply with an enforceable *Code of Ethics*;
- Depending on circumstances, possibly handouts and or workbooks to work on, or think about between sessions. Or there may be suggestions of books to read or movies to watch to assist you in dealing with your issues or concerns;
- An opportunity to look at your concerns with someone “a few steps removed”;
- An ongoing professional therapeutic relationship;
- A setting where you can be sure that (basically, except for Emergency situations) what you say will stay in the counselling room and not be disclosed to others.

### [Summary:](#)

Mental health issues are relatively common. Although it may be difficult to put a monetary figure on how much you will save, it is fairly clear that one of the reasons that Medicare subsidises Psychologist consultations is because “Talking Therapies” work.

(Rebates and recommended fees update May 2020) Originally posted on [11/05/2018](#) at <https://www.liferesolutions.com.au/huntingdale/fifo-workers-mental-health-telehealth-can-help/>

