

To whom it may concern,

I have seen my psychologist on referral from my GP since 2010 and for approx 45 sessions. At the start of our sessions I was feeling anxious, depressed, and hopeless. I learned all about how to identify my emotions instead of suppressing them. I learned how to take care of my emotions. I learned how to manage my feelings of overwhelm and panic. Now I am able to engage in social activities, reconnect with my friends, return to study and feel happy. Most importantly, I have richer relationships with my husband and children. I no longer need to suppress my emotions because I have some tools to manage them.

What I found really helpful was the way my psychologist was insightful, understanding and caring. Although initially unsure how anyone could possibly help, my psychologist has been effective with interventions and has given me hope. I find my psychologist's availability and flexibility really helpful.

I wish, particularly when I first starting seeing my psychologist, that I could see them more times per year under the Medicare system. I felt stressed when the rebated sessions ran out. Now I don't need to see them as often, but still need to when my emotions become overwhelming (maybe 5 times per year on average but some years more than others).

I wish that I could receive a higher rebate to see my psychologist under the Medicare system. The out of pocket cost is sometimes a deterrent in booking an appointment.

I had seen at least 5 other psychologists previously, who were not a good fit for me because they were predictable in their advice. I did not feel they could help me as they didn't seem to really understand what I was experiencing and didn't give me tools over and above what I was already trying. I felt more hopeless after seeing these previous psychologists as I didn't know what would help if they couldn't.

My psychologist is not branded 'clinical'. I want my government to allow me to choose to continue to see my psychologist because they are important for my wellbeing and I need to know they are there when I need them. If you force me to pay out of pocket in full I would feel distressed, and if you forced me to see a psychologist branded 'clinical' whose rebates are significantly higher than what my psychologist can offer me, I would feel hopeless again.