

At 55 years old and recently qualified in Counselling and Body Psychotherapy I find myself on a new path in my life having spent 30 years farming in a small desert community in the Middle East.

In my practice of 16 months I am seeing eight permanent clients Over the past year I have conducted 80 hours of clinical practice and over 25 hours of supervision as required by my member organisation, the Australian Counselling Association

I also participate in Ongoing Professional Development with recognized training organizations.

I believe that mature age and wide range life experience gives me additional insights into my clients difficulties and challenges .

Mental health is in the awareness is growing exponentially in the general public and the demand for my services shows clearly that increasing numbers of people are becoming brave about taking responsibility for their well being .

When I returned from Israel I invested my life savings into re-establishing my place in society as a functional, productive, independent woman. I recall researching online in 2015 and coming across a government notification stating that by the year 2019 mental health practitioners will be required to fulfil the need for services in the field. And so, I decided to embark on a Diploma in counselling and a three-year Diploma of Body psychotherapy.

This new era in my life and career development involved deep psychoanalytical work on myself. This process required using my life savings.

I have had many enquiries from potential clients as to whether I am a Medicare provider. The fact that I receive these questions

shows that there is a need for reform regarding the ACA and its recognition as Medicare provider.

For people to have their best chance at recovery, they should have the widest possible range of choices of trained professionals. Personal connection with a therapist is paramount in success of the therapeutic process. This in turn enables a healthier society.

I have the unique opportunity to assist the clients I see to gain clarity and relief from discomfort and emotional, and physical pain. My particular specialty integrates the body into the therapeutic setting. This is one of many modalities that are trauma based, empirically sound and scientifically recognised.

Enabling the ACA to provide Medicare is an essential step to meet the hugely growing demand which will only increase as the government funded programmes to destigmatise mental health continue to have their effect.

Much of the current demand for services such as mine have been generated by government - now is the time for the government to support the demand that it has encouraged.

This seems to be the basic right of a citizen in a healthy society, to choose who is suitable to share in their struggles. Australia is a forward-thinking country in so many ways. Let's be leaders with regard to healthier ways of assisting citizens.

In closing, my hope is that the government notification I read in 2015 can continue this goal of providing mental health and open the possibility for ACA members to provide an essential service for the wellbeing of this great country.