

**To: Australia Government Productivity Commission, New Inquiry Mental Health:
From Jane Oakley-Lohm
Balancing of Life Contact:
Counsellor, Clinical Supervisor, Mediator, Project Manager,
Assessor for trainee counsellors.
Experience: Working in Central Australia including rural and remote work for 30 years, in diverse roles and positions: Now residing in Tasmania.**

Date: 12th December 2019.

The very first basics of counselling:

- To provide a safe non judgmental environment
- To really listen to the client so that they feel heard and not too listen to a client to just reply and make a judgement.
- To build self esteem and empower a client to make chooses and directions for themselves
- To address what is the clients concerns and use tools to address this
- To work with the client to find out where they want to be
- To use tools to assist the client with making changes in their life for a new direction
- To refer on to a psychologist when we feel they need further assistance or a diagnose.

At the meeting someone asked a counsellor what level did they think was suitable if counsellors would be included in the mental health scheme this counsellor said level 3 or 4 and then went onto mention she was a level 4.

My thoughts are that all counsellors that are registered with a counselling association should be included in the mental health scheme.

Reasons for this:

- Clients need to choose their counsellor and not be told who they have to see.
- Counsellors starting out will never get to a level 3/4 because they can't get their foot into the door, (same issue as we now have) so therefore this would be fixing a job for present counsellors on a level 3/4. Not helpful for new counsellors studying now and yet colleges and universities are still enrolling new students knowing that the present system can not employe new graduates.

Please read below:

Since I left the Launceston meeting I started to research counselling jobs elsewhere around the world:

Below is just one that I found in the UK and I had a reply within 12 hours.

I wrote:

Can you please forward this email to who is managing the position of:

Job Reference: [156-2146832](https://www.gov.uk/jobs/156-2146832) (A Diploma Level)

I have started to look for some counselling positions in England as I hope to travel and work there, I am presently based in Tasmania Australia and have Australian qualifications and I have been a member with the Australia Counselling Association since 2004.

I hope you don't mind me asking this question but can qualified Australian counsellors apply for UK counselling jobs? I have seen this position which would interest me or something like this.

I have seen the advert as per link below.

https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/?vac_ref=915861413

(The above job requires a counsellor with a Diploma level):

I understand that the closing date for this position is a on the 15/12/19.

Closing Date:

15/12/2019

Contact Name:

Kirsten **Telephone:**

The hospital reply is: (BACP) British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
Hi

Thank you for sending this through. I would welcome this application as I am aware that the Australian standards are excellent. However we would need the appropriate British accreditation to apply e.g. BACP.

I hope this helps you.

Best wishes

Kirsten

Below is the info on the above job advertisement - **A diploma level:**

Employer:

[Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust](#)

Department:

Health and Wellness Service

Location:

Truro

Salary:

£30,401 - £37,267

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Please read the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Applicant Information Pack document in the 'Further Links' section before applying for this position. This pack will provide you with all the details you need on how to make your application and what happens next. You can also view our Total Reward Package Information for details on our colleague benefits.

Here at Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust we are on a journey to being brilliant and we know that the success of this journey will be influenced by the wellness and resilience of our people. We are absolutely committed to helping our people be the very best they can be, which includes providing a wide range of physical, mental and financial health and wellness services.

In order to fulfil our commitment to this we know we need to build a progressive and preventative health and wellness service providing a full suite of help for our colleagues ranging from health promotion, early intervention, proactive management and crisis intervention for all aspects of wellbeing.

We have an exciting opportunity to expand our psychological wellbeing service for staff. We are looking for an experienced, enthusiastic and motivated individual to join our team. The successful candidate will provide a Staff support and counselling service to our Occupational Health service users with the support of the Lead Staff Support Officer and the Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing.

Based within the Occupational Health Department, the post holder will be required to work closely with the Occupational Health and Wellbeing team, internal and external managers, service users, departmental leads, and all partnerships.

You will need to have counselling and welfare related qualifications at Diploma level, including some relevant experience. Evidence of personal & professional development along with an interest in improving staff health and wellbeing are desirable.

We are located in one of the most beautiful parts of the country so we can offer a fantastic work life balance. We offer the opportunity to live in a county where the sea is never far away, the arts and music scene is vibrant and London is only an hour away from Newquay Airport. We are well known for our research, development and innovation

The post is offered on a part time basis, two to three days per week

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified and experienced candidates irrespective of their background

On the Balancing of Life (BOL) website you will see counsellors with enormous experience in life and in other areas from working in the community, yet they start at a diploma level to a Masters level in counselling. We presently have 14 counsellors with

another two being uploaded within a week. <https://www.balancingoflife.com.au/national-counsellors> These counsellors are all members of the Australia Counselling Association (ACA) have insurance, have an ABN, they are not level 3/4 and can't get to a level 3/4 with the present system. Together they provide an online counselling service 7 days a week including out of hours. If the community had access to X amount of sessions available to them from the Mental health system without having to be referred from a doctor (This happens in the UK) then people would be accessing help much quicker and keeping the overall costs of mental health down for Australia. BOL counsellors rates are \$60-\$80 an hour this is similar to the out of pocket expense with many psychologists. We can keep our prices down as we all work from a home office.

I do understand that the Australia Mental Health system needs to change to help those in need in the Australia Community, some do need to be assessed from a psychologist some need to chat to a counsellor to deal with some day to day issues so that they don't have to go onto see a psychologist.

My thoughts of being a counsellor for 16 years and working in diverse areas and locations is:

Allow the Australians to choose their own counsellor and psychologist this stamps out referrals to friends and keeps the system honest, if a client doesn't feel comfortable in the present referral system they have to go back to the doctor and repeat the whole process again so get access to another psychologist. This is time and money and we are dealing with people wanting to access help with mental health concerns.

I have taken my time and thought about how to provide a counselling service to the whole community including rural and remote 7 days a week and have come up with Balancing of Life concept.

<https://www.balancingoflife.com.au/national-counsellors>

EG: Profile of one counsellor

<https://www.balancingoflife.com.au/alexandra-porta>

Please consider the (BOL) concept for the community of Australia so that we can provide a counselling service ASAP to the whole community. We are established and operating with supervision in place. For us to succeed we need to be recognised and have access to be included in the mental health scheme

Counsellors are: Australia qualified, insured, have ABN's, members of the Australia Counselling Association which ensures ongoing training and supervision.

Thank you for taking time out to read this, I am passionate to help all people in the community.

Kind regards,

Jane Oakley-Lohm

Counsellor/Mediator/Assessor/Trainer/Clinical Supervisor/Sand Play Therapist

Children's Author "My Buddy and Me" normalising grief and loss and learning resilience

<https://www.balancingoflife.com.au/store>

Online Training

<https://www.balancingoflife.com.au/on-line-training>

W: www.balancingoflife.com.au

National online counselling service, 7 days a week including out of hours

Chinese proverb

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day

Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life time