

Psychosocial resources to use with your patients

This resource was developed by the RACGP Specific Interests Abuse and Violence in Families.

Please be aware that this list is not exhaustive and may change over time. Please notify us of relevant updates by emailing gpsi@racgp.org.au.

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Online and community skills-based development	
Activity	Description
Social prescribing <i>e.g., Parkrun, mood gym (tennis), Ocean mind (surfing)</i>	Clinicians can play a role in prescribing or recommending social services within the community towards their recovery. The term social prescribing is often used for activities which are mental health specific.
Activity scheduling/engagement <i>e.g., activities/community classes: yoga, Taichi, surfing, art, writing, singing, walking, gardening</i>	These are best if initiated by the person. They can also be developed with clinician support. Activities can be individual and/or group.
Some patients may require support to be able to engage in physical activity, including physical rehabilitation with exercise physiologist or physiotherapist.	

Education/vocation – may require clinician documentation to access	
Activity	Description
School	Learning support plans can assist students in individualised learning plans. Be specific and targeted. Medical Documentation is often required to access this.
Online short courses <i>e.g., Open University Australia, Rise Up (short courses aimed to get youth 15–18-year-olds ready for the workforce www.riseup.org.au/what_is_riseup)</i>	Some people may need support to return to education and/ or vocation. Consider shorter courses which are disability accessible.
TAFE www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/fee-free-tafe	The Australian Government provides subsidised training, often available through short courses. TAFE can be a good way to access this.
University	Accessibility services, academic support.
Work-placed <i>e.g., Employment assistance program (EAP)</i>	Employee based psychological assistance. Can also advocate for work-based supports for disability or capacity building during recovery.
Centrelink <i>e.g., Disability Employment services (DES) https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/disability-employment-services</i>	Can assist people with a disability find and keep a job. If they are eligible for Centrelink, cite “DES suitable” on their medical certificate if you feel they qualify. NDIS can also.

<i>This is available through Job Access. More information is available at https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/</i>	
Community e.g., local council, library, NGO	Some local councils and NGOs may provide additional supports and services for psychosocial supports and training

Social services	
Activity	Description
Ask Izzy <i>National website that connects to services askizzy.org.au</i>	
Domestic and family abuse and violence DFAV <i>National: 1800 Respect</i> <i>International supports: Hot peach pages (www.hotpeachpages.net)</i> <i>State specific services:</i> <i>QLD: DV Connect which connects and integrates DV services.</i> <i>VIC: Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre Ph: 1800 015 188</i> <i>You can find other State specific resources here: https://www.respect.gov.au/services/</i>	<p>Department of Communities and Justice may have state specific links to emergency financial, housing, and legal aid.</p> <p>Some National NGOs also provide DV psychosocial supports e.g., NEAMI; Wayside Chapel; Mission Australia; White Ribbon.</p> <p>Some smaller NGOs may be locality specific.</p>
Family support <i>e.g., FACS +/- child specific services.</i> <i>Note Child Protection Helplines may be state specific e.g., Child First (NSW); Orange Door (Vic); Child at Risk Unit (ACT)</i> <i>Respite: Carers Gateway; Carers Australia</i>	<p>Family and community services (FACs) can also provide family support services e.g., through Child First; Orange Door.</p> <p>Respite: Carers gateway; Carers Australia</p> <p>For young children (may be state specific): Child and Family Health Services; Tresillian; Karitane.</p>
Housing (check state-specific resources) <i>e.g., NSW Link2Home</i>	<p>May be state-specific. Some LHDs and PHNs provide additional supports.</p> <p>While awaiting housing, consider other strategies to keep the person safe e.g., some councils provide access to public pools to enable a space off the street and access to showers. Master locksmiths provide Mlak keys for disability to public toilets.</p>
Pets <i>e.g., RSPCA</i>	In an emergency, pets may require care. RSCPA may assist.
Legal assistance	Legal aid, has state-specific services.
Financial	Check state-specific resources, council, NGOs. Consider emergency supports, financial training, debt reduction, gambling support.
Food <i>e.g., Oz Harvest</i>	Also check state-specific resources, council, NGOs
Refugee specific/culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)	Check state specific resources e.g., asylum services, translation interpreting services (TIS)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Check local services, PHNs.

<p>Services for refugees/people seeking asylum https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/services/</p> <p><i>Translation services national:</i> https://www.tisnational.gov.au</p>	<p>People of indeterminate Australian status may not always be eligible for public services.</p> <p>Translation services - All clinicians can access free translation services</p>
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Psychological Therapy	
Activity	Description
It is best to fit the therapeutic need with the appropriate type of therapy and therapist.	
<p>Structured therapies <i>e.g., Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), Interpersonal therapy (IPT), acceptance and behaviour therapy (ACT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), skills training e.g., behavioural therapy, activity scheduling, problem solving, relaxation skills training.</i></p>	<p>These are usually time limited and for a specific issue. This is most effective with good psychological awareness and supports.</p>
<p>Non-structured therapies <i>e.g., motivational interviewing, supportive psychotherapy</i></p>	<p>These can be used during any consultation and are helpful for every clinician. They do not have to be disorder specific.</p>
<p>Trauma focused therapies</p>	<p>The focus in trauma focused therapy is ensuring a safe environment, listening, and collaborating to ensure addressing appropriate needs. Validation and self-empowerment are important processes for recovery.</p> <p>Some people may not be able to tolerate talking therapy or EMDR, particularly early on in their recovery journey. Support with other alternatives can help. Manage co-occurring issues.</p>
<p>Addiction</p>	<p>Check statewide resources on public services. Participants do best if they are proactive to engage. Supportive therapy and motivational interviewing are therapies of choice, in addition to appropriate pharmacotherapy for addiction. Manage co-occurring issues.</p>
<p>Eating disorders</p>	<p>Best managed with a team-based approach. There are limited public services, available only for those who are most severe and at risk.</p>
<p>Neurodiversity</p>	<p>There are no public services and limited private. Psychoeducation and direction to appropriate Australian guidelines may assist while awaiting specialist review. E.g., AADPA, Autism guidelines</p>
<p>Somatic/non-talking therapies <i>e.g., art therapy, yoga therapy, equine therapy</i></p>	<p>Requires clinician training to provide therapies, rather than being solely for diversional purpose. Differs from prescribed activity or social prescribing</p>

Funding models for psychological therapies within Australia	
Activity	Description
Does not require referral	
Online courses <i>e.g., This Way Up</i>	This Way Up
Helplines	Suicide prevention Men's lines DFAV: 1800 Respect (Domestic and family abuse and violence)
Non-directive counselling (telephone)	New Access Funded by PHNs/ Bolton Clarke/ Beyond Blue
Suicide specific services	Safe Havens (specific to LHD)
Head to Health website and clinics	May be state-specific
Headspace	Up to age 25 years, for low intensity mental health. Other NGO services may provide time limited services for moderate-high intensity mental health youth/ adult services (e.g., in NSW: Uniting Health), but may be state-specific and may require referral.
Perinatal	PANDA, Gidget Foundation
Private	self-funded
Private health insurance	
Requires clinical referral	
Medicare	Better Access (GP Mental health plan): This funding is designed for time limited psychological therapy for conditions under ICD 10. Funded psychotherapies that can be referred includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psycho-education (including motivational interviewing) - Cognitive-behavioural therapy including: - Relaxation strategies - Skills training - Interpersonal therapy - Eye-Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR)
	May include gap out of pocket costs to the patient
	GP Management Plans/ Team care arrangement: For people who have a chronic health condition.
	May include gap out of pocket costs to the patient
	Eating disorders plan: Check MBS eligibility and process Enables psychological and dietetic support Best utilised with concurrent psychiatrist care
Assessment and Diagnosis of Disability (one-off lifetime, for age < 25 y) General Practitioner Item 137 (telehealth 92142) Psychiatrist: Item 289 (no telehealth equivalent) for complex neurodevelopmental disorder including autism Non paed/psych specialists Item 137 (telehealth 92141) Paediatrician Item 139 (telehealth 92140)	
The MBS item numbers are not equivalent between specialisation.	

	Can include assistance with allied health (up to 8 sessions) for assessment. Once lifetime item number claimed - enables access to 20 (10+10) allied health in a lifetime within treatment plan.
Psychological support services	PHN funded, can vary with each PHN. Designed for participants with more vulnerable needs e.g., financial distress, homeless/ at risk homeless, perinatal mental health. May include additional support in situation of suicide risk. No out-of-pocket cost for participants.
Victims' services	State specific. Funded through Departments of Communities and Justice. Can self-refer, but patients may need support to do so. Trauma focused psychotherapy
Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program	For veterans and/ or their family members
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) <i>You can find more about what is provided through NDIS here:</i> https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/managing-your-plan/support-budgets-your-plan#capacity-building-supports-budget	Can be self-managed or coordinated with a NDIS planner/ coordinator. NDIS focuses of supporting people with permanent disability with an expectation that they may use this in conjunction with other specific services. There may be gaps with funding where NDIS and public services do not provide. Funds are provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core supports - Capacity building supports - Capital supports budget

Companion animals	
Activity	Description
Psychiatric assistance animals <i>e.g., Mind dogs</i> https://www.minddog.org.au	Certification for training of aid during psychological distress.

Emergency contacts	
Activity	Description
Australian Government Health Direct https://healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-helplines	
Suicide <i>Lifeline on 13 11 14 (available 24h, 7 days)</i> www.lifeline.org.au <i>Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467, or</i> www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au	Emergency contact if the person has suicidal ideation and / or intent
Child Protection Services	Check your state-specific contact
Kids Helpline <i>Ph 1800 55 1800.</i>	Kids Helpline is a National free 24/7 confidential and private counselling service for children and young people 5 – 25y.
Domestic and Family Abuse <i>Ph 1800Respect</i>	Emergency and non-emergency contact for persons affected by domestic and family abuse and violence. Can assist with psychological and social supports

Mensline <i>Ph: 1300 789 978</i> https://mensline.org.au	Men specific service, for men affected by; or who are using domestic and family abuse and violence
Beyond Blue <i>Ph 1300 22 4636 (available 24h, 7 days)</i> https://www.beyondblue.org.au/	For aid during psychological distress.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific <i>13YARN on 13 92 76, https://13yarn.org.au</i>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific
LGBTIQ+ <i>QLife on 1800 184 527, https://qlife.org.au</i>	LGBTIQ+ specific Available from 3 pm – 12 am