



Psychology

Psychologists help you to learn about yourself.
They can help you learn skills to manage your thoughts and emotions

Psychologists work with you to understand your mental health, and overcome some challenges you may be facing. A Psychologist doesn't only treat mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. They can help with a lot of things including how to understand other people's emotions and reactions, how to become more confident in social settings and the community, and how to positively live with your disability. You will usually go and see your psychologist at their clinic.

Psychologists have either an undergraduate degree with honours or internship, a master's degree, or a PhD. They must be registered with AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) to be able to support people in Australia.

While all psychologists can support you, they all have different personalities, experiences, and expertise. They might specialise in physical or intellectual disability, working with children, trauma, relationships, or many other things. It is important to choose a psychologist that you trust to truly understand you.

Some psychologists may be great for your friends and family but may not be right for you. It is very common for people to try a few psychologists before they find one that they can develop a good relationship with.

Here are some questions that might help you choose your Psychologist:

- > Are you registered with AHPRA?
- > What is your experience working with people with my disability?
- > What is your speciality?
- > What is a session usually like?
- > How often do you think I will need to see you?
- > Will you set goals with me?
- > Will you consider my NDIS goals in your assessment?
- > Have you worked with interpreters before?

What is mental health?

Mental health is how we feel, think, and act. It includes stress, how we relate to other people, and how we make choices.



My Psychologist has helped me work out what I want and don't want in my relationships

What is mental ill-health?

Mental ill-health is when there is a problem in our lives that impacts how we react to our usual life. Often people will react differently, not 'behave', and not want to - or not be able to interact with other people. Some people have diagnosed conditions such as depression or an eating disorder. Some people do not have a diagnosis and feel mentally unwell.

What is a psychosocial disability?

A psychosocial disability is when a person's mental ill-health creates a disability in their life. Not everyone who has mental ill-health will have a psychosocial disability. It is when mental ill-health causes a reduced capacity to do everyday tasks, and participate in the community, or maintain employment.

What Psychologist can (and can't) do for you

- | | |
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| ✓ Talk with you about your issues, and how you might overcome them | ✗ Prescribe you medication |
| ✓ Teach you about emotions, and relationships in the community | ✗ Guarantee you will make friends, or find a life partner |
| ✓ Keep your thoughts and emotions confidential | ✗ Share your personal stories with anyone |

What a psychology report usually includes

A psychology report might be helpful in your NDIS planning or review meeting. A good report might mean the right amount of funding for psychology support, but a poor quality report might mean you don't get enough supports to live your life independently.

When it is time for your plan review, make sure your Psychologist writes a report of the work you have done together. You may need to remind them as they often have a lot of clients.

Good reports;

- > Make clear recommendations for funding, including expected outcomes
- > Relate the recommendations to your NDIS goals
- > Use language the NDIS uses, such as "reasonable and necessary"
- > Provide evidence for any requested funding of hours
- > Show the progress you have made during your current NDIS plan

Your rights and entitlements

- > A Medicare card entitles you to 10 appointments with a psychologist which are partially paid for by the government. You need to get a 'Mental Health Care Plan' from your doctor (GP) to get these sessions.
- > You are entitled to ask for a psychologist that speak your language. This may be difficult to find.
 - You have the right to a confidential interpreter if you cannot find a psychologist that speaks your language.
 - Your psychologist may prefer to organise the interpreter. They will find a fully accredited and confidential professional.
- > You are entitled to ask to have any worksheets, reports or documents translated for you.
- > You are entitled to the support and care of a trustworthy professional who will work with you to reach your goals.
- > You have the right to speak to a psychologist before deciding if you will have an appointment with them. You can ask questions to help you decide if they might work well with you.
- > If your psychology report is missing key information - such as goals - you have the right to ask the psychologist to change the report.



Translate

Phiên dịch

How your Psychologist can help with NDIS planning and review meetings

Your psychologist can produce a report based on your progress toward the goals in your NDIS plan. This might be as a formal assessment or an update report for the NDIA and can request different or additional equipment that you need. They will not include any confidential information and write only in general terms.

Steps for using a Psychologist

1.

A. Receive psychology funding in your NDIS plan

Start here if you do not have NDIS funding for psychology

B. See your GP for a Mental Health Care Plan and a referral to a psychologist

It is not compulsory to get a Mental Health Care Plan from your GP, but it can help your NDIS funding pay for more sessions with a psychologist

2.*

Find a psychologist that you think may suit your needs.

3.*

Make an appointment with a psychologist

4.*

Share your NDIS plan, goals, preferences, and support needs with your psychologist

5.

Meet your psychologist at their clinic

6.

Practice the skills they teach you, and use any worksheets or tools they suggest

7.*

Make sure the progress report they give you is correct and talks about your goals, progress, and any need for additional sessions/support over the Medicare subsidised sessions

8.*

NDIS review meeting

* If you have a Support Coordinator, they will organise these with you.

What is Telehealth?

You can ask your Psychologist if you can have your appointment over the phone or on video. This is available for people who live far away, or cannot get to their appointments because of disability, mental health, or self-isolation.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020, Telehealth became more common and available to more people in Australia.

What's the difference between...?

There are a few types of Mental Health professionals that all sound similar, but have some important differences. The four main types that you might hear of are Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, and Counsellor. The NDIS also has Mental Health Recovery Coaches.

A **Psychiatrist** is a medical doctor who can provide medication and treatment for people with mental illness. It takes 11 years of training to become a psychiatrist. You may only see a Psychiatrist a couple of times a year. Medicare can fund some of this appointment for you.

A **Psychologist** has spent at least 6 years studying at university and as an intern to become a psychologist. They use many different types of talk and social therapy to support your mental health and wellbeing. They can be funded through Medicare and the NDIS.

A **Psychotherapist** usually has an undergraduate degree in the health field and has done some extra study in mental health. They focus on how past experiences impact your life currently, and talk about things that are happening at the moment. Psychotherapy is self-regulated in Australia and anyone can be a psychotherapist. It is important to ask the therapist about their qualifications before you see them. They are not funded through Medicare or the NDIS.

A **Counsellor** may have completed a short course in counselling, or a post-graduate degree. Counsellors can work in a wide range of areas and usually focus on short term life events such as death and grief, relationships, family violence, or other similar issues. Counselling is self-regulated in Australia and anyone can be a counsellor. It is important to ask the counsellor about their qualifications before you see them. They are not funded through Medicare or the NDIS.

A **Mental Health Recovery Coach** is a person who works for the NDIS and has experience working in Mental Health. Many have qualifications, and some have worked in Mental Health for many years. Some recovery coaches have lived-experience. This means that they have experienced mental ill-health and recovery, and can use their experience to help you. They can help you to find good mental health services and use the NDIS, as well as get to know you and the people important to you.

How to ask for Psychology in your NDIS plan

It can be difficult to get psychology funding in an NDIS plan where a psychosocial disability is not diagnosed.

If you think you need psychology because of your disability, you can ask the planner to include this in your plan. You will need to explain why this need is due to your disability and not anything else.

1. Think about your need – do you have a psychosocial disability? Is your mental health caused by your disability?
2. Does your disability cause you to experience mental health issues?
 - How?

3. Are you currently or have you previously seen a psych/counsellor?
4. Do you usually use all 10 of the Medicare reimbursed sessions?

There are many reasons why a person may not use all of the funding in their NDIS plan. These include long waitlists for health therapists, or if you are sick and are not having your regular supports.

This is OK and doesn't mean you will get less money in your next plan. When you have your annual Plan Review, make sure that you tell your planner why you have some unspent money in your NDIS plan.

Making a complaint

If you are not happy with your psychologist's report, you can discuss this with your psychologist, or their manager.

If you are not happy with your psychologist, or how they are behaving, you can make a complaint to their manager, or a specific complaints' manager within the organisation.

If you think that there has been a serious problem, or you are not happy with how the organisation has handled your complaint or concern, you have 3 options for complaints.

1. If you are making a complaint about the charges to your NDIS plan, or you believe they are not acting an NDIS registered organisation should, you can complain to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission directly. They exist to support you with your concerns and to help improve services for all people with disability.

You can contact them on:

- ☎ 1800 035 544 TTY 133 677
- ✉ contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au
- 💻 www.ndiscommission.gov.au
- ✍ NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
PO Box 210, Penrith, NSW, 2750

2. If you are making a complaint to get an explanation, apology, refund, or a change in policy/practice, you can make a complaint to the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner. They handle all major complaints about health services in Victoria.

You can contact them on:

- ☎ 1300 582 113 TTY 131 450
- 💻 www.hcc.vic.gov.au
- ✍ In-Person or by Mail: Level 26, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000. To make time for your visit, call 1300 582 113.

3. If you are making a complaint because you think the psychologist's behaviour puts other people at risk or is unsafe, you can make a complaint to AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency). They can review a psychologist and their ability to practise.

You can contact them on:

- ☎ 1300 419 495
- 💻 www.ahpra.gov.au
- ✍ AHPRA, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001



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