



healthfocus

clinical psychology services

Spring Time!

Hello everyone,

Welcome to Spring! The weather is warming up and flowers are blooming. We hope that everyone is enjoying this spring season. While winter was not as cold as last year, this year's winter has seen a higher incidence of serious cold and flu infections that some of us are still recovering from, so the warmer weather is a welcome change.

In this newsletter, we would like to share what's been going on at both the Armadale and Riverton practices.

Our Riverton branch has now been operating for 5 months and we are very happy to be getting to know the clients, doctors and schools in the local area. We are pleased to be able to offer clinical psychology services to the local community and appreciate the welcome we have received.

The marketing team have been travelling to GP clinics to introduce us. Thank you so much for making us feel welcome, listening to us and understanding our services, and forging connections so that, together, we can provide the local community with great health care and support residents' well being.

At Armadale, we recently went through the process of upgrading our telephone and

Internet to the NBN, which many locals will either already have done, or will be doing soon. Our experience was anything but smooth, and we were without Internet for a day, phone for a week, and fax for two weeks! Thank you to referrers and clients for their patience during our NBN transition.

In this issue we have some information about Healthfocus and Employee Assistance Programmes, especially for small and medium business.

We also have received many questions from our referrers and clients at the Riverton practice about our fee structure and our gap charges, and this newsletter includes an update on this.

There is also an informative information piece by Dr Yeow Tan about what it means to cry and how it relates to psychology.

Finally, we have some information about our rollout of the online appointments system.

-- the Healthfocus team

Newsletter

Spring 2017

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Many employers of choice offer a full range of assistance programmes for their staff and contractors, known as EAPs. While larger organisations may have panel arrangements in place for psychological services, small and medium sized organisations can benefit from services provided by Healthfocus.

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Early Intervention Service for Employee Assistance Programs by Healthfocus



An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a work-based intervention facility that supports the emotional, mental and general psychological wellbeing of employees and usually includes services for staff, contractors and their immediate family members.

EAPs seek to provide preventive and proactive interventions for the early detection, identification and/or resolution of both work and personal problems that may adversely affect an individual's wellbeing, which in turn can have negative consequences for work performance.

Such issues may include, but are not limited to, relationships, health, trauma, substance abuse, gambling and other addictions, financial problems, depression, anxiety, psychological disorders, communication problems, legal matters and coping with stress and change.

Many employers of choice offer a full range of assistance programs for their employees and families, and while larger organisations often have panel arrangements in place for psychological services, small and medium sized organisations can benefit from services provided by Healthfocus.

HOW TO ACCESS PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES FROM HEALTHFOCUS THROUGH AN EAP

Often, a quick chat or two on the phone or in person is all that is needed in the early stages of problems. So before an employee or family member proceeds with the usual process for getting psychological treatment via a GP referral and a GP Mental Health Care Plan, **Healthfocus offers employers and employees an "Early Intervention Service"** package of up to 2 telephone calls and 3 in-person counselling sessions.

During the early intervention phase, a qualified Psychologist will work with the individual to identify and understand the presenting issues, including a psychological assessment, and agree with the individual on actions that can be taken.

Such action may consist a short course of counselling, or if the presenting issues are serious, then gaining approval from the employer for a longer course of therapy that may include employer funded

treatment sessions, and/or coordination with the individual's doctor under the Medicare subsidised "Better Access" program through a GP Mental Health Care Plan (GPMHCP).

Often, the employer will cover "gap fees" that may apply.

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS:

To make Healthfocus services available through your organisation's EAP, simply follow these steps:

- + Call Healthfocus to register your organisation with us so that we will be ready to accept calls from employees.
- + Agree to the privacy and confidentiality policies that Healthfocus applies to EAP services.
- + Accept the fee schedule for the Early Intervention Services package.
- + **Place this information sheet in accessible locations, including lunch/staff rooms, Intranet, notice boards and in staff induction kits.**
- + Consider making information on workplace wellbeing available, e.g., the "R U OK?" campaign material.
- + When a request for assistance is made by an individual, we will be in contact to get a list of **non-identifying** information, for example a list of the last 5 digits of tax file numbers or dates of birth (**without names**), that enables us to confirm that the individual is eligible to services and to inform you of access to the service.
- + We will send you a summary of the outcome of the Early Intervention programme. This may include general feedback for the organisation. If further funded services are recommended, we will seek approval on a case-by-case basis.

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES:

Firstly, and importantly, Healthfocus respects and protects your privacy. Your access to our service is strictly confidential and **your identity will not be made known to your employer** unless you wish it to be.

Our focus is on your wellbeing. We will take care of as much of the paperwork as we can.

Accessing the EAP Early Intervention Service is easy. Just follow these steps:

- + If you or an immediate family member needs assistance, or thinks they may need help, call one of the telephone numbers below during business hours.
- + When you make contact, state that you wish to access the **EAP Early Intervention Service**.
- + You will need to tell us which employer organisation you got our details from and provide some information to us. **Remember that we will not reveal your identity to the employer unless we have your permission.**
- + One of our psychologists will call you for an initial telephone chat in which you will find out more about the service and we will agree with you on an action plan.

INFORMATION FOR DOCTORS:

If your patient works for an organisation that offers an EAP, then this can be the first avenue for patients to access psychological help. Please make this information available to your patients' employers if appropriate.

TELEPHONE CONTACT DETAILS

Armadale: (08) 9399 1911

Riverton: (08) 6369 1191



Crying is a normal and important expression of emotions

People often hold attitudes towards crying such as “weak” and “vulnerable”, and as a result hide their tears.

It is also not uncommon for individuals who present in therapy to be baffled by their own tears and to quickly dismiss them.

But crying is a way of expressing emotions and a universal human behaviour (Vingerhoets, Cornelius, van Heck & Becht, 2000). From being teary-eyed to full-on sobbing, crying marks the beginning of life’s course and continues through to adulthood, occurring in our most significant events and many ordinary ones.

Newborns and infants enter the world without language ability, relying solely on non-verbal ways of communicating their needs, and crying serves as a crucial and valuable tool for this function.

Conversely individuals with difficulties producing tears/unable to cry have been found to have difficulties identifying their own feelings and, consequently, difficulty communicating their emotions (van Leeuwen et al., 2012).

Individuals have also been found to be more willing to provide support to others with visible tears than to those without, indicating that tears are associated with stronger connections and pro-social response tendencies (Balsters, Krahmer, Swerts, & Vingerhoets, 2013).

It is commonly accepted in popular culture based on extensive survey data that crying is cathartic and beneficial to one’s physiological and psychological health in creating a release of tension while producing feelings of relief.

What does it mean to cry?

by Dr Yeow May Tan

Conversely, holding back tears may be damaging to the body and mind (Cornelius, 2001). However, there is insufficient empirical research evidence at present to support such effects, and modern research on crying remains in its infancy.

We cry in a variety of situations that evoke emotions including anger, joy, sadness, relief and feeling “touched”. Even if we may not necessarily fully make sense of the tears in the moment they arise, they exist for a reason and they stem from our emotions.

Having the capacity to cry is part of being human. Tears articulate what words sometimes are unable to, and can reveal more than what one is consciously aware of.

Tears are essential to bonding and connection, carry significant relevance to us as humans. They provide an entry to a deeper understanding on the interaction between our thoughts and feelings- they tell a story unique to the individual.

Rather than fighting or controlling our tears, only by being authentic with ourselves and our emotions, and by creating space for our emotions, can we begin to understand what the story is telling and the meaning behind the tears.

We may not like to expose ourselves to others, but to deprive ourselves of the space and opportunity to share and connect with others on a deeper level is being unfair to ourselves and no different from dismissing ourselves in the process.

In this sense, it is easy to mistake tears/vulnerability for weakness, when in fact being vulnerable is where true strength lies.

References

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ONLINE APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM



Rolling out now...

Our front desk team of Jane, Rachel, Sarah and Ushta began rolling out the new online appointments system in April 2017, beginning with appointments for the new Riverton location being booked using the online system as we ironed out teething issues.

From July, a parallel run commenced for Armadale, and we migrated fully to the new system in August. Initially the online system is being used internally by our front desk team.

The online system enables us to make bookings across both locations from either front desk and for our psychologists at both clinics to better manage their schedules.

For clients, you may have noticed that our front desk team may have started asking you for your email address and if you would like to receive email confirmations of your appointments. Through the email you receive, you can notify us of changes to, or cancellations of, appointments.

Thank you to those clients who have volunteered to test out the system and help us to flush out some gremlins, and thank you to Jane, Rachel, Sarah and Ushta who have done a great job at adopting the new system.

We will soon be making the online system available from the website and clients will be able to book appointments with a few simple clicks!

You will also have the convenience of receiving email and SMS reminders for upcoming appointments.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Talk to our front desk team to find out more about the online appointments system



The Western Australian economy is undergoing a period of sustained stress, with costs of living and doing business increasing, but with stagnating real incomes for individuals and businesses

Medicare Rebates and Gap Fees

As part of the outreach activities that we have been doing, we have attended "meet and greet" sessions to introduce ourselves to doctors, GP clinics and medical centres in and around Riverton, Parkwood, Willetton and surrounding areas.

We appreciate that many of you have taken the time to welcome us and to understand our services, and we have gained some valuable feedback from the health services community.

One of the common themes we heard was that most of the GP Clinics in the area bulk-bill many of their patients, that there is a mixed demographic in the local community, and there are clients who would not expect or be able to cope with significant gap fees for psychology services.

We understand the financial strain that some clients are experiencing, because as a privately owned and operated, independent services provider, many of those same stresses are visible to us as a small business.

Healthfocus always seeks to provide the very best standard of individualised care for our each of our clients and this is reflected in our fee structures.

Some pertinent facts:

- ✚ Medicare rebates have been frozen since 2013, and psychological services rebates will continue to be frozen until 2019.
- ✚ Costs of living and doing business, like power, utilities, and transport have continued to rise significantly after the end of the "mining boom" in 2012.

- ✚ Businesses and individuals in Western Australia are under more financial stress than ever.
- ✚ Economic conditions have led to work stress or stress because of being out of work or under-employed, which can lead to increased incidence of mental health conditions.

Regrettably, in our experience, clients to whom we have offered bulk billing have a markedly higher rate of non-attendance and a higher rate of non-attendance without prior notice.

This poses a challenge to our front desk team who need to schedule appointments for psychologists well in advance because of our waiting lists for individualised services, for example, for a child or non-English speaking client.

A non-attendance without notice means that a waitlisted client is not able to take up an appointment.

However, we have listened to the feedback we have gained, and ***under special circumstances with recommendation from the referring doctor, we will consider reduced-gap or no-gap services***, for example, if the individual or family holds any form of health care or other concession card, or the doctor cites an extenuating situation.



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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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