

<b>PIR Agency:</b>	Open Minds
<b>Date:</b>	October 2014 – August 2015
<b>Key issue(s)</b>	The system gap of lack of public or affordable access to specialist psychiatric, and occupational therapy services for assessment and report which are required for assessment for support from Disability Services, means that there is inequitable access to those in need.
<b>Main Objective(s)</b>	<p>Gain knowledge of Disability Services process and what supports are available and Disability Services eligibility requirements and documentation needed as evidence of disability and need.</p> <p>Identify how to access free or subsidised reports for the purpose of gaining support through Disability Services.</p> <p>Develop a list of psychiatrists and psychiatric, psychological and occupational therapist services which can be accessed for free or at significantly reduced cost.</p>
<b>Summary of Impact or Result</b>	
<b>Context</b>	
<b>Stakeholders/Partnerships</b>	Disability Services Queensland, Local specialists providing assessment and reports under medicare item numbers, local Universities.
<b>Project Management</b>	Meeting held with Disability Service to clarify definitions of requirements for application, identify appropriate reports and discuss access to services in the Caboolture area.
<b>Description of Activities</b>	<p>1. Managing mental health</p> <p>Introduction to Better Access Medicare items</p> <p>Under the Better Access initiative, Medicare rebates are available for GPs to provide early intervention, assessment, treatment and management of patients with mental disorders as part of a GP Mental Health Care Plan (Items 2700, 2701, 2715 and 2715).</p> <p>Under these item numbers, GPs can refer patients for Medicare rebated psychological services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•psychiatrists</li> <li>•clinical psychologists - registered with the Psychologists Registration Board in the state or territory in which they are practising. (Psychologists whose state/territory registration includes any limitation, eg. where marked 'provisional registration' are not eligible</li> <li>•GPs who are registered providers of focussed psychological strategies (FPS)</li> <li>•GPs who have completed the required training recognised by the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration and are registered with Medicare Australia</li> <li>•Social workers who are members of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), including certification by the AASW as meeting the standards for mental health set out in the AASW's 'Standards</li> </ul>

for Mental Health Social Workers 1999'

- Occupational therapists with full or part-time membership of OT Australia, a minimum of two years of experience in mental health and an undertaking to abide by The Australian Competency Standards for Occupational Therapists in Mental Health.

A GP Mental Health Care consultation item (2713) is available for GPs to provide continuing management of patients with mental disorders. A Review of GP Mental Health Care Plan item is also available (2712).

There are also Medicare items which aim to support psychiatrists to see more new patients. Items 291 and 293 enable a GP to seek assessment and management advice from a psychiatrist. Under this item psychiatrists undertake a patient assessment and prepare or review, a management plan to be carried out by the referring GP.

For more information on the Better Access Medicare items please visit the Department of Health and Ageing website [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba)

## 2. University Clinics

University of the Sunshine Coast is located at Sippy Downs. They are accessible for self referrals for therapy but require a written referral from an appropriate medical or educational professional for all cognitive assessments. All services of the psychology clinic are free of charge, however, wait lists are likely to apply.

Please note: The Clinic is unable to provide treatment for individuals who have very complex and / or severe problems such as psychosis, significant suicide risk, violent or criminal behaviour and severe personality disorders.

For more information phone 5459 4514 or visit <http://www.usc.edu.au/explore/campus/usc-clinics/psychology-clinic>.

QUT Student Clinic is located at St Lucia. They offer neuropsychological assessments and reports. The assessment includes the consultation and written report. Call QUT School of Psychology and Counselling on (07) 3138 0999 to add your name to the wait list or visit [www.clinic.psy.uq.edu.au](http://www.clinic.psy.uq.edu.au). Subsidised fees apply. Discounts apply for Health Care Card holders.

The University of Queensland Psychology Clinic offers high quality, affordable psychological services. Discounts are offered for students and Health Care Card holders. Their services cover a range of child, adolescent and adult problems. For more details see the attached brochure, phone 07 3365 6451 or visit [www.clinic.psy.uq.edu.au](http://www.clinic.psy.uq.edu.au). Subsidised fees apply with discounts for students and Health Care Card holders.

Australian Catholic University are located at Banyo. They offer 50 minute therapy sessions, psychometric testing including cognitive/intellectual/educational assessments, clinical/behavioural assessments and school observations. Discounts apply for persons with a Health Care Card. For more information, see the attached brochure, check out the Brisbane Psychology and Counselling Clinic at [www.acu.edu.au](http://www.acu.edu.au) or phone 3623 7453.

3. Referral from a GP to a private psychiatrist under Medicare Items 291 (and follow up under item 293). Item 291 enables the psychiatrist to provide a comprehensive written assessment and management plan which will:

- Comprehensively evaluate the bio-psycho-social issues
- Address diagnostic psychiatric issues

- Make management recommendations addressing the above two
- The written report will be provided to the GP within two weeks of completing the assessment
- The diagnosis and management plan is explained and provided to the patient unless clinically inappropriate

Project Impact	
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Partnership with local Disability Services has drawn awareness to the difficulty that people have in accessing specialist reports needed for successful application for support. Information provided to staff within Disability Services means that they are better equipped to advice applicants on where they can go to gather the evidence required for a successful application.

Partnership with Universities has raised their awareness and understanding of Mental Health organisations who may refer people through to them for assessment and has so widened networks and scope for referral.

Information gathered on local specialist services and Medicare item numbers has been disseminated to local mental health organisations enabling them to be better equipped to support people in need.

Lessons Learned	
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There was no budget allocated to this project, with a budget it would have been possible to develop a document that detailed referral sources and relevant information, which could have been communicated to a wider audience and enabled the information to be more accessible.

Key challenges and barriers were a lack of affordable/free services within the local areas, although several options were identified the University options for example still require a person to travel and this may in itself be a barrier to access.

The project provided the opportunity to open discussions with Disability Services and to develop effective working relationships between Disability Services and community based Mental Health Services, thus providing people with improved outcomes when applying to access support through disability services.

Appendices	
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