

## **Information for GPs**

### **Medicare Referral to Group Therapy Course**

Dr Kaitlin Harkess, Clinical Psychologist, facilitates group Mindfulness-Based Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy interventions. These groups integrate psychoeducation, behavioural and cognitive interventions, relaxation strategies, and skills training informed by modern Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) principles. In addition to the psychotherapeutic group work, a somatically focused adjunct of yoga is offered as an experiential form of moving mindfulness. The cognitive and behavioural interventions delivered in this group are evidence-based interventions for reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. Kaitlin is trained in providing trauma-informed psychological interventions and trauma-sensitive yoga.

The Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative offers eligible individuals a Medicare rebate for 6 – 10 Group Psychological Therapy sessions provided by a Clinical Psychologist, each calendar year (1 January to 31 December, not from the date of referral). This is in **addition** to the 10 individual sessions that may be accessed.

**To access the Medicare rebate for this group through the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative, patients need a referral from their GP (or psychiatrist), which include the following details:**

- **The patient's symptoms**
- A statement that a **mental health treatment plan** is in place (or a psychiatric assessment and management plan), with a recommendation for Group Psychological Therapy
- **A written referral** to Clinical Psychologist Dr Kaitlin Harkess, clearly recommending **Group Psychological Therapy**, signed and dated by the referrer

Referrals may be mailed or faxed (see details below), or provided to Kaitlin at the group commencement. Patients must register for the group by contacting Kaitlin ([www.wisdomforwellbeing.au](http://www.wisdomforwellbeing.au)).

*Note.* Patients do *not* need a referral to participate in this group if they do *not* wish to claim a Medicare rebate.

Please contact Kaitlin if you have any questions about the group, referrals, or individual therapy services.

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Dr Kaitlin Harkess is a Clinical Psychologist with a strong interest in metacognitive processes and the therapeutic application of mindfulness skills. She has conducted research exploring the relationship of yoga and factors related to chronic stress and psychological distress and is currently writing a Somatic Psychology book for PESI Publishing. She has experience working in the public Mental Health Service, as well as consulting privately.

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**This document is only intended as a guide** for Better Access to Mental Health Care referrers (GPs and Psychiatrists) due to the lack of clarity surrounding the Medicare system's referral process for **group** psychological therapy services. This is not a substitute for Medicare's guidelines, which can be found at [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au).