


A photograph of a woman with long, dark hair, wearing a light green top, looking towards a healthcare professional whose back is to the camera. The professional is wearing a white coat and a stethoscope. The scene is set in a bright, clinical environment. A green wavy line separates the image from the text below.

medicare

Mental Health Centres

Talking to your patients about
Medicare Mental Health Centres



The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has developed this guide to support you in discussing Medicare Mental Health Centres with your patients, as well as with their families and carers.

About Medicare Mental Health Centres

What are they?

- Welcoming, non-judgmental spaces providing mental health information, services and support.
- Free and confidential.
- No diagnosis, referral, appointment or Mental Health Treatment Plan needed.

Who are they for?

- Adults with moderate to severe mental health needs.
- Non-Australian citizens welcome.
- Family members, carers or friends who are worried about a loved one and want advice and guidance.

“A Medicare Mental Health Centre is a safe, welcoming place where people can get free support if they’re in distress or feeling overwhelmed.”

Dr Sophie Davison, Chief Psychiatrist,
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Around 1 in 5 Australians aged 16–85 experienced a mental health disorder in the 12 months to May 2025.

43% of the population (8.5 million people) have experienced a mental illness during their lifetime.¹

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Prevalence and Impact of Mental Illness](#), 20 May 2025

“Everyone is welcome and we have a no wrong door policy ... so anyone can come in and get support on the spot when they need it.”

Samantha, Peer Support Worker

What services do they offer?

- Immediate help and follow-up for people who are in distress.
- Support for people with mental health concerns.
- Support for carers and families of people experiencing mental health challenges and distress.
- Help connecting people with other services to support them in the future, from health to mental health, and social supports like housing and employment.
- Access to the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) for patients who need help communicating with centre staff.

Who works at the centres?

Medicare Mental Health Centres are staffed by multidisciplinary teams which bring together mental health professionals and peer workers ready to listen to and understand your patient's situation and provide the best possible care.

The mix of staff is based on local community needs and may include:

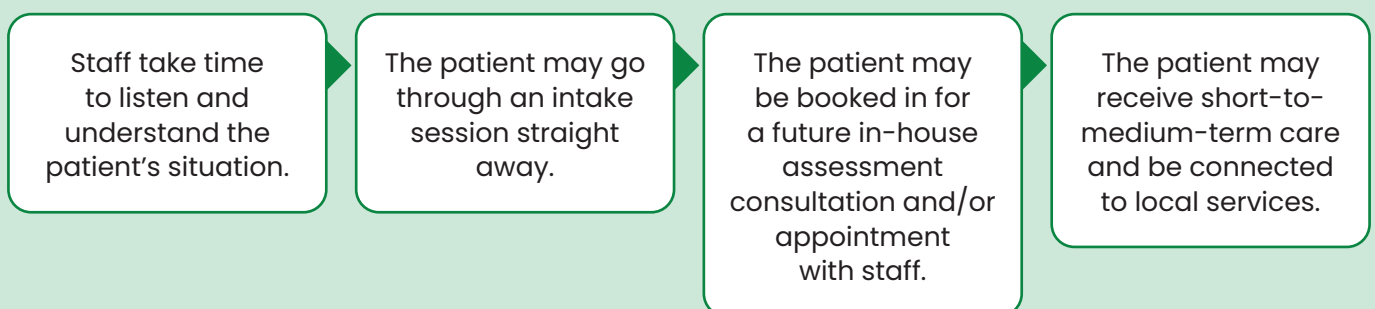
- psychiatrists and/or psychologists
- mental health nurses
- social workers
- alcohol and drug workers
- peer workers with lived experience of mental health challenges.

“Medicare Mental Health Centres are a welcoming environment for all cultures. They are culturally sensitive. They are private and confidential.”

Nalini, Peer Support Worker

When someone visits a centre

When someone visits a Medicare Mental Health Centre, they will typically go through the following process.



Communication with you

- Centre staff encourage patients to inform you about advice or support they receive.
- This helps ensure they receive ongoing care that meets their needs.
- The outcome of a patient's referral will be shared with you as their usual GP or referring provider, where the patient gives consent.

Medicare Mental Health Centres are being established across Australia. Use our [interactive map](#) to find your nearest centre.

Tips for talking about Medicare Mental Health Centres

- Recommend centres to patients based on their level of need and if you think they are a good option for a patient.
- Talk about Medicare Mental Health Centres as a timely and effective complementary care option, especially for patients in distress who need to speak to someone quickly.
- Centres can support adults waiting to access longer-term mental health care.
- Care provided through centres is separate to the 10 subsidised sessions available under a Mental Health Treatment Plan through the [Better Access](#) initiative.
- Centres aren't intended to replace or duplicate mental health services you already provide or that are in your local area.

Patients talk to their GP about mental health more than any other issue.²

“When people feel like they’re being heard, it makes a real difference ... we definitely want to help people get better outcomes.”

Patrick, Peer Support Worker.

More information and resources

To find the nearest centre and check opening hours, visit: medicarementalhealth.gov.au/centres.

There are also helpful centre information resources for patients, including for First Nations and multicultural patients available at: medicarementalhealth.gov.au/resources

Patients can call 131 450 (TIS National) and ask the TIS staff member to call 1800 595 212 (Medicare Mental Health, available Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm) for advice about local mental health supports.

A range of other Medical Mental Health resources for health professionals are available at: medicarementalhealth.gov.au/for-health-professionals.

If you have questions or enquiries about this guide, email: medicarementalhealth@health.gov.au

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, [National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020–2022](#)