

## LOCAL HELP FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Today we continue our conversation about mental health and the services available to us. We all have mental health. Very much in the same way as we all have physical health. Our mental health, just like our physical health can be impacted by many factors, which can effect our day to day functioning and quality of life.

Seeking the right help, and getting the right help early enough, can significantly reduce the impact of these stressors on our functioning and our capacity to cope with life.

1 in 5 Australian adults will have a diagnosable mental illness in any one year. Most of the 20% of these people will be impacted by our more prevalent mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. Although some people may be impacted significantly, resulting in severe illness and impairment, most people diagnosed with depression and anxiety can feel better, provided they seek help from trained mental health practitioners. There is also a range of self-help strategies that can be highly effective in the management of depression and anxiety.

### WHERE TO START

We always recommend starting with your GP and having a chat to them about what is going on for you. We all experience challenging emotional issues at different times. We cannot always deal with these on our own. If you feel you need help and it is not an emergency, it is best to see your doctor.

When you see your doctor, they will assess what help you need. This could include:

- making a mental health assessment
- creating a mental health treatment plan (MHTP)
- referring you to a psychiatrist or other mental health professional
- giving you a prescription for medicines to treat depression or anxiety.

Be sure to book a longer consultation when you make the appointment.

### MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLAN (MHTP)

A MHTP is a plan your doctor writes with you about treating a mental health condition. Your mental health treatment plan will have goals agreed by you and your doctor. It will also have treatment options and support services available. One such local support service is called My Step.

It also helps you to access eligible, private allied health professionals like psychologists, social workers or occupational therapists who can help you to get better and live well.

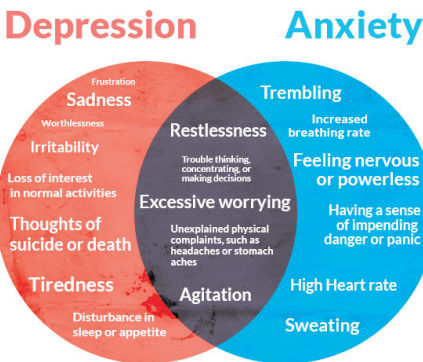
### TREATMENT OPTIONS IN AND AROUND DENI

#### My Step to Mental Wellbeing (My Step)

This service is provided locally by Murrumbidgee Local Health District via the Cressy Street Centre. The service is provided within a stepped care model. This means that a person with mild, moderate, or severe symptoms can be supported by clinicians and as their needs change, the level and type of support can change with them, so people do not have to go through another referral process and tell their story multiple times. This program caters for people of all ages.

A range of mental health supports is provided. This may be as simple as providing health information to a structured clinical service delivered both face to face and using telehealth. Services are also provided into residential aged care facilities and there is a Mental Health Nursing service providing support for people with complex mental health support needs.

There is no fee for the My Step support service. There has been a lot of work done recently with the online provision of services and now a person can quickly and easily receive resources and information about the strategies and support the clinician has discussed with them.



The service is staffed by mental health qualified clinicians and peer workers. The clinicians may use CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), DBT (Dialectic Behavioural Therapy), and a range of other therapeutic approaches depending on the needs of the person. This is not a case management service but is a therapeutic service with sessions providing strategies and tools to build skills, enabling a person to manage and improve their mental health.

#### How to access My Step

You can have your GP complete a MHTP or you can self-refer through the MPHN Central Access and Navigation Service (CAN) on 1800931603 or 1800 954 544 or email can@mphn.org.au.

Once a referral is made you will receive a phone call within 24hrs from a My Step Clinician to discuss your referral. Your next phone call will be within 1 week and will be with a My Step clinician whom will be providing you with supports.

Some levels of support provided do not require a MHTP. Once your information is passed onto the support that matches your needs, you will be advised and supported to obtain a MHTP from your GP.

#### Private Practitioners and Counsellors

It is important to know that lots of people are known as counsellors, so it is important when deciding on a counsellor, to feel comfortable that they are suitably qualified and experienced to help you with your needs.

The MHTP will provide a rebate for up to 10 sessions per calendar year with a Medicare Registered Provider. These providers are usually psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists who have the relevant training and experience. The amount of the rebate will depend on the service and speciality. Very few providers bulk bill so this means you will probably have some out of pocket expense. Some private health insurers may also offer some money back. Be sure to find out about out-of-pocket expenses upfront when booking your appointment.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT IN THERAPY?

The therapist will usually do an initial interview to work out what is happening for you and what you need help with. They will then make some suggestions as to what interventions and resources might be helpful to you. This might be a mixed bag of specific therapies and self-help strategies. One of the evidence-based therapies used to treat depression and anxiety are Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

CBT is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a range of problems including depression, anxiety and substance use problems. CBT teaches you how your thoughts, feelings and behaviours influence each other.

What you **THINK** and **DO** affects the way you **FEEL**.

### WHO PROVIDES PRIVATE SERVICE IN DENILIQVIN?

In Deniliquin we have counsellors in private practice, and they offer a variety of different services. Most providers provide a mix of online or face-to-face services.

**Suzie Crawford** is a visiting psychologist who sees adults, children, adolescents, and couples, NDIS, TAC and Workcover (NSW and Vic) clients. To book an appointment call Deniliquin N8 Health 03 5881 8429

**Lourene Liebenberg** is a Mental Health Occupational Therapist who works mainly with adults but will see children and adolescents. She is a registered Medicare and DVA provider, and some bulk billing appointments are available currently. Appointments can be booked by calling her on 0428 281 060.

**Sue Martin** is a Medicare registered Occupational Therapist who works with children and their families. She is also able to assist with children, adolescents and their families who have NDIS funding. You can make an appointment by calling Sue on 0427 876 841

**Mark Johnston** is an Occupational Therapist who works with Adults and Adolescent males. He is registered with Medicare, NDIA and DVA. You can make an appointment by calling Mark on 0407967224 and to discuss his fee options.

**Therapy Connect** is a private provider of allied health services “online” via telehealth. They offer flexible, person-centred support to children, youth and adults with disability and/or challenging behaviours. For more information contact 1300 757 806.

### SELF-HELP STRATEGIES

There is a lot of resources about the importance of self-care and self-help strategies. The problem many people face when they are feeling depressed or anxious, is to find the motivation and courage to do the things we know are good for us to do.

Some of strategies to maintain or improve mental wellbeing is:

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating Well, Exercise
- Mindfulness and Relaxation exercises
- Staying connected with friends and family

There are Apps to assist with this. Talk to your clinician about how you can use and access these.



Together we can make our community kinder and more supportive for people.  
Thanks to Deniliquin Mental Health Awareness Group and Channel4Change for supporting this page