

If you need urgent advice or crisis assistance

Peninsula Mental Health Services Triage 24 hours a day 1300 792 977

Lifeline 13 11 14

ATAPS Crisis Support Service – 1800 859 585

1. What is the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Program?

The **Access to Allied Psychological Services Program** is a national initiative provided through GP Networks to assist and support GPs and their patients to access psychological treatment and support services. This Program is very similar to the services provided under the Medicare based Better Access initiative.

Under the ATAPS Program GPs will work with psychologists and other mental health professionals to provide support to people with mental health disorders and ensure timely and appropriate access to counselling services.

There are a number of projects under the ATAPS Program, including specific services for people experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviors and for people suffering from perinatal depression.

2. Who is eligible to receive services under the ATAPS Project?

A person 12 years of age and older with a mental disorder who has a current Health Care Card (low income) may access the Program. The person must consult with and be assessed by their GP. The GP must complete a GP Mental Health Treatment Plan and fax to Peninsula GP Network (PGPN) on 9708 8157.

3. What will these sessions cost me?

There will be no cost to you for your sessions with your Mental Health Practitioner. Your Mental Health Practitioner will be paid by Peninsula GP Network. You are eligible to six paid sessions, with the possibility of a further six sessions if your GP thinks it necessary.

4. Who is the person I will be seeing?

The Peninsula GP Network has contracted a number of experienced and skilled mental health practitioners (Psychologists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Mental Health Nurses) who are specialists in working with a range of mental health disorders and issues. All of the mental health practitioners contracted to the ATAPS Project are registered with their professional bodies and offer accredited counselling services.

5. What about my privacy?

PGPN complies with all Commonwealth and State privacy laws. Your GP will send a copy of your Mental Health Treatment Plan to PGPN who will record basic information from your referral in order to monitor payments to your Mental Health Practitioner.

PGPN does not keep copies of your referral or Mental Health Treatment Plan; this is forwarded to a suitable Mental Health Practitioner who in turn will contact you to arrange your first appointment. This Program is funded as part of a national initiative and will be evaluated to determine some basic data (age, sex, postcode etc). Your personal details will not be recorded as part of this evaluation and your confidentiality is assured.

6. What if I wish to see a different Allied Health Professional?

If you are not comfortable with the Mental Health Practitioner to whom you have been referred, you may ask your GP to transfer your referral to another who is eligible to deliver services under the ATAPS Program.

7. How do I make a complaint?

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of your mental health treatment you can do so by contacting the PGPN Mental Health Program Officer by email – s.pearson@pgpn.org.au by mail to PO Box 496, Frankston VIC 3199, via our website at www.pgpn.org.au or by phone 9708 8019. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 business days. Following a review of your complaint, the Mental Health Program Officer may refer the matter to the CEO or a senior mental health clinician of PGPN. PGPN will provide a written response to you within 30 days of receipt.

Patients Rights and Responsibility

It is your responsibility to:

- Make an appointment and attend the first session of treatment within four weeks of your GP making the referral
- Complete your treatment of 6 sessions within 6 months of the date of the referral
- Make an appointment to see your GP after you have completed the sessions with your Mental Health Practitioner
- Attend all allocated sessions or give at least **24 hours notice** if you are unable to attend
- Attend your appointments on time
- Provide enough information so that appropriate care can be given
- Ask questions if you do not understand any aspect of your treatment
- Follow advised treatment and tell your GP if you decide not to do so.

You have the right to:

- Receive appropriate care and treatment
- Take part in deciding what care is appropriate for you
- Be advised about your health care and treatment
- Privacy, respect and confidentiality
- A fair investigation and fair response to your complaints without it affecting your care
- Access to an interpreter or a culturally appropriate mental health practitioner
- Complete a confidential non-compulsory patient survey and return in the envelope provided

Peninsula GP Network ATAPS Provider or General Practice - stamp

