

Familiarisation Training Supplement

Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care

December 2002

Why a Supplement?

The Familiarisation Training Supplement provides new information on the *Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care* initiative. The Supplement is suitable for all who have participated in the Familiarisation Training and complements the *GP and Practice Manual* (developed in June 2002).

The Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care initiative

The *Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care* initiative aims to improve support to GPs in providing quality mental health care in general practice. The initiative has five main components: Education and Training for GPs, 3 Step Mental Health Process, Focussed Psychological Strategies, Access to Allied Health Services and Access to Psychiatrist Support.

How the initiative is progressing

"The initiative has been welcomed by the general practice community as a good start in supporting the valuable health care GPs provide everyday to patients with mental illness. More than 3300 GPs have completed the Familiarisation Training since commencement in June/July this year and at least 2000 have applied to the HIC for registration for Level 1.

The financial and other supports, particularly improved access to allied health providers and psychiatrists, will assist in providing greater access for the community to quality primary mental health care. Some Divisions running allied health pilots are already reporting better linkages between GPs and allied health providers due to improved referral processes. The initiative also supports consumers to participate actively in their treatment."

Dr Chris McAuliffe, ADGP GP Adviser, Mental Health

What's new?

New Medicare Item Numbers for FPS

Registering for FPS

Approved Courses for FPS

Training for FPS (Level 2 Mental Health Skills)

Recognition of Prior Learning for FPS (Level 2)

Ongoing Learning (Level 1 and 2)

Access to Allied Health Services

Access to Psychiatrist Support

INSERTS

- Questions and Answers

- MBS Items Descriptors

- GP Registration form for Level 2

"I have found the initiative very useful for patients who wouldn't ordinarily be able to access allied health professionals. I have referred several patients to a psychologist with good results. Patients are thrilled as they are receiving access to treatment they have needed for years and, as a GP, I found them easier to manage because of their improved mental health".

Dr Suzanne Scott, GP Logan DGP



Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS)

New Medicare Item Numbers for FPS

New Medicare item numbers providing a higher rebate for level C and D consultations for FPS were introduced on 1 November 2002. For further information refer to the:

- Medicare Benefits Schedule Book (November 2002) and Supplement insert for a description of the item numbers;
- GP and Practice Manual (page 21 and 41) for a list and description; and
- GPcare website www.gpcare.org (website of the Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression, a World Collaborating Centre) for a description of the strategies with reference to the evidence base and advice as to how they could be used.

Registering for FPS

To register with the HIC to access the new MBS items for FPS, GPs need to complete Level 1 and Level 2 mental health skills training and be practising from a PIP or accredited practice.

Level 1: mental health skills training for the 3 Step Mental Health Process.

Level 2: mental health skills training for Focussed Psychological Strategies.

A registration form for Level 2 is attached to this supplement and further copies can also be obtained from www.racgp.org.au. Send your registration form to the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (Standards Collaboration) either directly or through your local Division of General Practice.

Approved Courses for FPS

Refer to www.racgp.org.au or www.acrrm.org.au for approved courses. As programs are adjudicated by the Standards Collaboration they will be posted on these websites. Please check regularly for updates.

Education and Training

Training for FPS (Level 2)

Level 2 training should meet the *Criteria for Approval* for Focussed Psychological Strategies and incorporate:

- a coherent, whole program, to cover at least 4 of the treatment modalities from the MBS Item Descriptors for FPS*;
- a minimum of 20 hours of Level 2 mental health skills training; and
- a consumer, carer and mental health professional involved in the development of the educational activity.

*For instance an educational activity could provide skills training on psycho-education, problem solving, activity scheduling and motivational interviewing.

Copies of the *Criteria for Approval* can be obtained from www.racgp.org.au.



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Recognition of Prior Learning for FPS (Level 2)

If GPs have completed a course in the past that receives accreditation for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) they can gain exemption from the skills training required for Level 2.

Courses approved for RPL will need to meet the *Criteria for Approval* for Level 2.

The Standards Collaboration will adjudicate a course for RPL that:

- is a coherent program of a minimum of 15* hours, and
- has been completed within a reasonable timeframe (ie last two trienniums).

**Please note GPs who receive RPL for a 15 hour course will then need to complete a course of 5 hours to meet the 20 hour minimum requirement.*

Refer to your local Division to discuss whether the course you have completed is likely to receive accreditation for RPL.

Individual Application for RPL for FPS (Level 2)

GPs can also submit individual applications for RPL for Level 2 that include all three of the following:

- a personal letter detailing knowledge, experience and skills,
- evidence of relevant qualifications (copies of certificates required), and
- a registration form.

A copy of the registration form is attached and can also be obtained from www.racgp.org.au.

Ongoing Learning (Level 1 and 2)

In **addition** to the Familiarisation Training and mental health skills training required to access the initiative, GPs need to maintain an ongoing level of knowledge and skills in mental health in order to remain registered for this initiative.

GPs registered for **Level 1** or **Level 1 and Level 2** are required to:

- obtain 30 QA&CPD points for mental health activities across each triennium that include, reinforce and/or enhance the 3 Step Mental Health Process.

GPs who go on to do the training for FPS (Level 2) will be able to use the QA&CPD points obtained from the 20 hours training to meet the 30 points required for the triennium.

If participating in the QA&CPD program, GPs are already required to complete 30 points worth of Group 1 activities in each triennium. To meet the requirements of both College registration and mental health skills training for Level 2 at once, GPs may choose to focus their Group 1 activities on mental health by participating in a variety of learning activities, such as, small group learning, constructing a clinical audit, participating in a clinical attachment, 5 point per hour educational activities or developing a learning plan.

Contacting the Standards Collaboration (new email address)

For registering or identifying suitable mental health education activities, further information can be sought from the Mental Health Education and Development Officer on 03 9214 1576 and by email on gpmhsc@racgp.org.au

Access to Allied Health Services

Access to Allied Health Services is a very crucial and important component of the initiative and is designed to provide GPs, who are registered for the 3 Step Mental Health Process, with support from allied health professionals in treating people with a mental disorder. The Access to Allied Health Services component promotes a team approach to care and provides a 'top up' to the allied health services currently available for the delivery of psychological treatment in the local area.

Pilot Sites

In 2002-2003 funding will be rolled out through 16 pilot sites across 21 Divisions of General Practice and by early 2003 a further 12 sites are likely to be funded.

For further information and a description of the 16 allied health pilots currently operating refer to:

- www.adgp.com.au;
- PARC (<http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PARC>); and
- www.mentalhealth.gov.au.

Broader Roll Out of the Access to Allied Health Services Program

As suitable models are identified, the Access to Allied Health Services component will be rolled out through Divisions on a broader scale. By 2004-2005 it is planned that all Divisions who wish to participate in the Access to Allied Health Services program will be involved.

Submissions for Divisions to participate in the Access to Allied Health Services program for 2003-2004 close February 2003. Application forms were sent to all Divisions of General Practice in November 2002. For further information contact Dr Stephen Castle, Director, Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Department of Health and Ageing, phone 02 6289 3698, email stephen.castle@health.gov.au

**Seeking access to the Access to Allied Health Services program?
Divisions application forms are due 14 February 2003 for funding in 2003-04.**

Access to Psychiatrist Support

Arrangements will be developed to provide GPs with access to consultant psychiatrist assistance in emergency situations. This is the last component of the initiative to be developed and the feasibility of possible models is currently being explored. Suitable models will be considered by the Better Outcomes Implementation Advisory Group. It is anticipated that this component will be introduced by May 2003.

The ADGP website (www.adgp.com.au) will provide updates on this item after each Better Outcomes Implementation Advisory Group meeting.

Further Changes to Case Conferencing with Psychiatrists

Page 23 of the *GP and Practice Manual* refers to changes to consultant physician case conferencing. The number of health care providers required to be involved has reduced from 4 to 3, when the GP organises the case conference. Since the release of the November 2002 Schedule the number of health care providers required to be involved has also reduced from 4 to 3, when the psychiatrist organises the case conference. Both the psychiatrist and the GP are paid under consultant physician case conferencing.