Mental Health Care Plan for ADHD: A Clear Guide



A mental health care plan for ADHD can make the path from concern to support more manageable, particularly when you are trying to understand referrals, assessment, therapy and possible Medicare rebates at the same time. For a parent noticing ongoing attention or behaviour concerns, or an adult seeking clarity about long-standing difficulties with organisation, focus or emotional regulation, knowing how the Australian care pathway works can help you take the next practical step.

A plan is not a diagnosis, and it does not replace a comprehensive ADHD assessment . It is, however, an important part of accessing psychological care under Medicare when eligibility requirements are met.

What is a mental health care plan for ADHD?

The term mental health care plan is commonly used to describe a Mental Health Treatment Plan prepared by a GP. It documents mental health concerns, outlines a treatment approach and may support referral to eligible mental health professionals under the Medicare Better Access initiative.

For ADHD, a plan may be relevant where a person is experiencing difficulties that warrant psychological treatment. This might include problems with attention and executive functioning, emotional regulation, anxiety, low mood, behaviour, school or workplace functioning, relationships, or adjustment following an ADHD diagnosis. ADHD frequently sits alongside other mental health or developmental concerns, so a GP will consider the person's broader presentation rather than focusing on one symptom alone.

The plan does not confirm that someone has ADHD. A formal diagnosis requires a thorough clinical assessment by an appropriately qualified clinician. It also does not guarantee a Medicare rebate for every service. Eligibility depends on the referral, the practitioner, the service being provided and current Medicare requirements.

When a plan may be useful

A GP appointment is often a sensible starting point when ADHD is suspected or already diagnosed and the person would benefit from psychological support. The GP can discuss the concerns, consider relevant medical and mental health factors, and advise whether a Mental Health Treatment Plan and referral are appropriate.

For children and adolescents, parents or caregivers may raise concerns about distractibility, impulsive behaviour, learning, friendship difficulties, intense emotions or conflict at home. These concerns can have many possible explanations. A GP can help identify whether referral for further assessment or therapeutic support is

indicated.

Adults may seek help after years of feeling disorganised, overwhelmed by everyday demands, unable to sustain attention, or prone to procrastination and emotional reactivity. Some adults begin exploring ADHD after a child is assessed, while others do so after a significant change in work, study, parenting or health makes existing coping strategies less effective. A careful assessment can distinguish ADHD from, or identify its overlap with, conditions such as anxiety, depression, sleep difficulties, trauma-related concerns or learning differences.

A mental health care plan may support therapy for the functional and emotional impacts of these difficulties. Whether it is the appropriate referral pathway for an ADHD assessment itself should be discussed with the GP and the assessing service before an appointment is booked.

The difference between assessment and therapy

Understanding this distinction can prevent confusion about referrals and costs.

ADHD assessment

A comprehensive ADHD assessment is a structured clinical process. It commonly includes a detailed developmental, medical, educational, occupational and mental health history, along with standardised questionnaires or rating scales where relevant. For children, information from parents, schools and other professionals may form part of the picture. For adults, the clinician may explore childhood experiences as well as current functioning across work, study, home and relationships.

Assessment is designed to consider whether ADHD criteria are met and whether other factors could better explain, contribute to or occur alongside the reported difficulties. The exact process varies according to age, presentation, referral question and available history. It may involve more than one appointment.

Not all assessment components are covered by Medicare in the same way. Before proceeding, it is reasonable to ask the clinic what the assessment includes, whether a referral is required, and which parts may be eligible for a rebate.

Psychological therapy and ongoing support

Therapy focuses on practical strategies and emotional wellbeing. For people with ADHD, this may include behavioural approaches, cognitive behavioural therapy, parent support, skills for planning and task initiation, routines, problem-solving, sleep habits, communication, and managing anxiety or low mood.

Treatment should be individualised. A primary school child, a teenager navigating academic demands, and an adult managing a busy household and workplace will usually need different strategies. Where medication is being considered or prescribed, this is managed by an appropriate medical practitioner. Psychological therapy can sit alongside medical care as part of a broader, multimodal plan.

How to prepare for a GP appointment

You do not need to arrive with a complete explanation of what is happening. It is helpful, though, to describe the difficulties clearly and provide examples of how they affect day-to-day life.

For a child, this may include feedback from school, patterns at home, learning concerns, sleep, peer relationships and any previous reports or assessments. For an adult, it may be useful to note when the difficulties began, how they show up across different settings, any past mental health treatment, current medications and relevant family history.

If you are seeking a referral, ask the GP whether a Mental Health Treatment Plan is appropriate and whether the referral should name a particular psychologist or service. Check that the referral includes the information the clinic needs, as requirements can differ between assessment and therapy appointments.

It can also be useful to ask about review arrangements. Mental health care plans are generally reviewed with the GP over time, particularly if further treatment is being considered. Your GP remains an important part of the care team and can coordinate with other health professionals where needed.

Questions to ask before booking

A clear conversation with the clinic can help you choose a service that matches your needs. Ask whether the appointment is for diagnostic assessment, therapy, or both; what information should be provided beforehand; how many appointments may be involved; and whether telehealth is suitable for your circumstances.

You may also wish to clarify the clinician's professional role and the scope of the service. ADHD assessment can involve psychology, paediatrics or psychiatry depending on the person's age, needs and referral purpose. If medication assessment is part of your goals, ask the GP about the most appropriate medical pathway.

For Medicare matters, ask whether the clinician provides Medicare-rebatable services under an eligible referral and whether the referral needs to be received before the appointment. Medicare arrangements and individual circumstances can change, so confirming details before commencing care is preferable to relying on general information.

A coordinated approach matters

ADHD support is rarely just about attention. Difficulties can affect education, employment, family routines, confidence, sleep and relationships. They can also be shaped by anxiety, sensory needs, learning issues, developmental history and environmental demands. This is why a plan based only on a brief checklist may not provide enough direction.

A comprehensive clinical pathway considers the person's strengths, current pressures and goals, as well as the concerns that prompted the referral. For some people, the immediate priority is assessment and diagnostic clarification. For others, therapy for anxiety, emotional regulation or daily functioning can begin while assessment is being considered. There is no single sequence that suits everyone.

Behavioural Neurotherapy Clinic provides ADHD assessment and psychological therapy for children, adolescents and adults, with in-person appointments in

Doncaster and telehealth consultations available across Australia. A GP referral and Mental Health Treatment Plan may be relevant for eligible therapy services, depending on the clinical pathway and Medicare requirements.

If you are unsure where to begin, booking a longer GP appointment can create the space to discuss your concerns properly. Bring what you know, ask what you need to ask, and allow the next step to be guided by a careful assessment of the person rather than a rushed label.

For more information

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