



Involving Family or Carers in my Mental Health Treatment

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Medicare rebates are now available if you would like to involve a family member or carer in your mental health treatment under the *Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the MBS initiative* (Better Access).

Should I involve a family member or carer in my treatment?

Involving a family member or carer can help them support and care for you. The people closest to you often have information which can help your practitioner understand your treatment needs, and contribute to your wellbeing and recovery.

However, it is your decision whether to involve someone else in your treatment. You can discuss with your GP or treating practitioner, such as your psychologist, whether these services may be appropriate based on your circumstances.

Any sessions a family member or carer receives to help support and care for you **will count towards your allocation of 10 individual sessions per year** under Better Access.

How do I involve a family member or carer in my treatment?

If you are considering involving a family member or carer in your treatment you should speak with your GP or treating practitioner, such as your psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker.

Before delivering any services to a family member or carer you will need to provide consent. Your GP or treating practitioner must also be comfortable delivering the service to that person would be clinically appropriate and help with your treatment.

To help decide this, your GP or treating practitioner may ask you questions about your relationship with the person you would like involved, and how involved you would like them to be in your treatment.

Do I need a mental health treatment plan?

Before you can involve someone in your mental health treatment, you must have a referral from:

- a medical practitioner as part of a mental health treatment plan or psychiatrist assessment and management plan, or
- a psychiatrist, or

- a paediatrician.

See also 'How do I involve a family member or carer in my treatment?' above.

How do I consent to a family member or carer being involved in my treatment?

Before you consent to a family member or carer being involved in your treatment, your GP or treating practitioner must explain the service that will be delivered to your family member or carer. If you would still like the person to be involved, they will record in writing you have consented.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by letting your GP or treating practitioner know.

How many sessions can my family member or carer get?

A family member or carer can receive up to two sessions per year. Any sessions they receive **will count towards your allocation of 10 individual sessions per year** under Better Access.

If a family member or carer receives sessions, do I get less?

Yes. If you consent to a family member or carer being involved in your treatment any sessions they receive **will count towards your allocation of 10 individual sessions per year** under Better Access.

A family member or carer can receive up to two sessions per year. If they use both sessions, this means you will have up to eight individual sessions in total for the year.

Can I be there when my family member or carer has a session?

No. These sessions are only available to family members or carers if you are not there.

If you are not comfortable with this, you should speak with your GP or treating practitioner. It may be appropriate in some cases for them to come to one or more of your sessions with you instead.

Can I have more than one person involved in my treatment?

Yes. You can have more than one family member or carer involved in your treatment, however they can only receive up to two sessions per year in total.

You should speak with your GP or treating practitioner if you would like multiple people involved.

What happens if I no longer want my family member or carer involved?

You can withdraw your consent to a family member or carer being involved in your treatment at any time.

You will need to tell your GP or treating practitioner if you no longer want the person involved.

Do I have to pay for sessions my family member or carer receive?

The purpose of these sessions is to help your family member or carer support your treatment. Medicare rebates are available to you for these sessions.

You should speak with your treating practitioner to find out if the session will cost more than the Medicare rebate.

Can I involve someone who is not a family member or carer in my treatment?

Yes. You can involve anyone who is important to you in your treatment, and who you feel could support and contribute to your wellbeing and recovery.

I am a parent of a child receiving mental health treatment can I be involved?

If your child has capacity to provide consent, for example due to their age, then they must provide consent for you to be involved in their mental health treatment.

If your child does not have capacity to provide consent, then the general laws relating to consent to medical treatment apply. These may be different depending on where you live, and you should speak with your child's GP or treating practitioner.