

Huntingdale Psychology, Counselling & Clinical Hypnotherapy

Offices at Huntingdale & Perth (East)

7 Bronzewing St, Huntingdale, W.A. 6110 & 305 Pier St, Perth WA 6000

Colin Longworth – Psychologist, Counsellor & Clinical Hypnotherapist

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Phone 1300 50 67 68

(bookings)



May 2020¹ (Updated)

Medicare Telehealth COVID-19 Options Summary of Information for Clients & GP's

The following is a summary of how I see the situation for current, future and recent past clients and GP's, in relation to Medicare and this COVID-19 "Moving Feast".

1. I recognise that some clients do not wish to consider the recently expanded *Medicare Telehealth* availability, (because of COVID-19) however;
2. This is the only form of psychological therapy I am currently providing. (This takes into account the risks to both clients and myself.);
3. In addition I recognise that *Telehealth* is not the same as traditional "in-person" consultations. It is not the preferred option, but an adjustment for the current situation. I have used it with a number of new and current clients;
4. I have started using **DOXI.ME** for secure *Telehealth* sessions with clients, because it involves both sound and video, within a secure environment;
5. Clients do not need any special software, either just a "Smartphone" with internet access or access via a computer or Tablet, (also with fast internet) with a webcam;
6. Close to the time of the booking, I send the client an "invite" via either an SMS or email, they then click on the link and go into my electronic "waiting room" till I invite them in;
7. Telehealth as well as dealing with "Social Distancing" requirements and assisting in maintaining a Therapeutic alliance (i.e. a professional relationship with the client), it allows me to make use of my almost 40 years (since 1981) experience as a volunteer phone counsellor, in a specialised setting;
8. I provide this from my usual office location as; a.) I have direct access to client files and b.) resources, e.g. books etc that I may suggest to clients, are at hand;
9. As far as **Medicare** is concerned the following applies;
 - a.) A GP Mental Health Care Plan is still required, either a current one, or a new one, whether created in person or over the phone;

¹ I have ceased my arrangements with *Life Resolutions*, from Sunday 24th May, from then, calls will be taken in Perth and (as I understand it) the former Liferesolutions.com.au/Huntingdale website will not operate.

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- b.) The same time requirements apply, either a 50minute plus² consultation (the standard consultation) or one of at least 20minutes³;
- c.) The Medicare Telehealth rebates are the same for a 50 minute (\$86.15) or 20minute plus (\$61.05) consultation, compared with an "in-person" one;
- d.) For those cases where it is not possible to have a video Telehealth consultation, i.e. it is a phone only consult, (e.g. because of a lack of a smartphone and or computer internet access) the same time requirements and rebates apply;
- e.) The same limits to numbers of sessions per year still apply, i.e. any (in-person) sessions already conducted this year count towards the annual limit;

FEES – Updated from 20/4/2020:

- f.) To quote the Australian Psychological Society: " *The Federal Minister for Health has announced that from Monday 20 April, all of the mandated bulk billing restrictions on the Medicare items for COVID-19 telehealth services will be removed, for all psychologists. This means that it is no longer a requirement that psychologists bulk bill for services provided to clients aged under 16 years of age, concession cardholders, clients vulnerable to COVID-19, or any other group.*"
- g.) What this means is that most clients including Concession card holders, can as usual, expect to pay a "Gap" payment, (I'll take card details at the end of the session), claims will be lodged with Medicare after the session (fees, including concession rate fees are at the end of this document);

Any questions, please feel free to email me at admin@colinlongworth.com.au, or look at my www.colinlongworth.com.au/covid-19 website for downloadable resources about coping with social isolation and related matters along with links to reliable information.

As always bookings can be made via my booking service on **1300 50 67 68**, or via HealthEngine, recognising that regardless of whether it says the appointment is at *Huntingdale* or *Perth (East)* it will still be a Telehealth consultation.

Regards,

Colin Longworth

Psychologist & Counsellor

SAVE TIME - Book your next appointment online!



VISIT HEALTHENGINE.COM.AU



OR DOWNLOAD THE HEALTHENGINE APP



² Item No. 91170 – Telehealth attendance lasting at least 50 minutes (Rebate \$86.15)

³ Item No. 91169 - Telehealth attendance lasting at least 20 minutes but less than 50 minutes (Rebate \$61.05)