



### Did you know...

- Accredited Mental Health Social Workers are recognised under Medicare to provide counselling to patients referred by GPs, paediatricians and psychiatrists.
- There are many social workers in private practice in the community.
- In order to be eligible to offer Medicare rebates, social workers have had to provide evidence of extensive postgraduate training and experience in the field of mental health.

*So, if you are looking for a skilled and experienced private practitioner to provide a professional assessment, counselling, and a range of treatment and support options to your patients, you may wish to consider referral to an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker.*



### How can I find an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker?

Your Primary Health Network may have a list of Accredited Mental Health Social Workers in your area

or

You can search for Accredited Mental Health Social Workers in the AASW 'Find a Social Worker' online database:

[www.aasw.asn.au/findasocialworker](http://www.aasw.asn.au/findasocialworker)

### To find out more information about Accredited Mental Health Social Workers contact:

**The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW):**

Phone 03 9320 1000

Website [www.aasw.asn.au](http://www.aasw.asn.au)

Email [mentalhealth@aaasw.asn.au](mailto:mentalhealth@aaasw.asn.au)

Your local provider:



## Accredited Mental Health Social Workers

### Information for General Practitioners



## What is an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker?

Accredited Mental Health Social Workers are registered providers with Medicare Australia. They have been assessed by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) as having specialist mental health expertise.

An Accredited Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW) is eligible to provide services through the Commonwealth-funded Better Access to Mental Health Care and Chronic Diseases Management (Enhanced Primary Care) programs. Social workers are also providers in the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program.

Accredited Mental Health Social Workers have a breadth of experience in assessing and treating people who have mental health disorders, for example people with:

- Depression and other mood disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis
- Suicidal thoughts
- Relationship problems
- Life crises
- Adjustment issues
- Trauma
- Family conflicts

Accredited Mental Health Social Workers help individuals to resolve their presenting psychological problems, the associated social and other environmental problems, and improve their quality of life. This may involve family as well as individual counselling, and group therapy. Social workers recognise the broader implications of an individual having a mental illness and the impact on friends, family, work and education.



Like other allied health professionals, such as psychologists, Accredited Mental Health Social Workers use a range of interventions in helping people with mental health disorders, including the following focused psychological strategies:

### Cognitive behavioural therapy

- Behavioural interventions
- Cognitive interventions

### Relaxation strategies

#### Skills training

- Problem solving
- Anger management
- Social skills
- Stress management
- Parenting skills

### Interpersonal therapy

### Psycho-education (including Motivational Interviewing)

### Eye-Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR)

### Narrative therapy for clients of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

## Medicare Registered Providers

AASW Accredited Mental Health Social Workers are registered providers with Medicare.

## When should I refer to an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker?

Patients often approach their GP with concern about negative life circumstances, for example relationship breakdown, life crisis or social isolation. These often point to, or are accompanied by, significant and persistent mental health problems.

Accredited Mental Health Social Workers understand mental disorders, and have particular training, skill and expertise to assess and offer treatment.

Accredited Mental Health Social Workers are also experienced in working collaboratively with other health professionals.

## How do I refer?

Under government mental health care programs, the first step is for you to formulate a GP Mental Health Treatment Plan for your patient. You are eligible for a rebate fee from Medicare to complete this plan. Please check with Medicare for the billing item number to activate any referral.

A written referral letter is required for your patient, who can then contact an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker to arrange an appointment.

## What feedback will I receive?

It is a requirement of these programs that you will be provided with a written report providing information on:

- Assessments carried out
- Treatment provided
- Recommendations for future management.