

Referral Criteria

Clinical Services

FOCUS provides clinical services designed to meet the needs of patients who are experiencing mild to moderate levels of emotional or psychological distress. We retain Psychologists, Social Workers, Alcohol & Drug counsellors and a child and adolescent counsellor, all of whom have mental health training and experience. They are strategically located throughout the Gympie/Sunshine Coast district to ensure ease of access for your patients.

Their primary role is the provision of assessment and therapy in accordance with their knowledge and skills. Two clinicians focus especially on substance use. If our assessment indicates that another service is more appropriate, a referral will be made or recommended.

A Mental Health Treatment Plan must be prepared by the referring general medical practitioner if it is expected that the patient will be seen under the Better Outcomes or Better Access programs. There is no charge for persons who hold a Health Care Card but charges may apply for other patients depending on their circumstances and the services provided. No charge applies to persons seen by the Alcohol & Drug counsellors. To avoid confusion, it is recommended that contact is made with our office to seek clarification about fees.

Our service primarily targets people whose financial circumstances prevent them from seeking assistance under Medicare where gap charges may be incurred or from other fee for service providers. Bulk billing is available.

Appropriate referrals

The service is primarily designed to meet the needs of patients aged 15 years or older. However, an assessment and recommendations regarding treatment options will be provided for children and adolescents less than 15 years.

Referral criteria - general

Presenting problem:

1. Anxiety, mood disorders, depressive episodes, substance abuse and dependence.
2. Persons experiencing distress arising from challenging circumstances, e.g. grief and loss, ageing, retirement, relocation, relationship issues, chronic health problems, pain management and caring for a person with health or disability needs.
3. Post traumatic stress disorders and stress reactions.
4. Patients receiving ongoing pharmacotherapy for a psychological or health problem who require concurrent counselling or therapy
5. Psychotherapy for persons with controlled, non acute psychotic and personality disorders.

6. Patients requiring counselling in order to identify personal needs, options and the means by which they can assist themselves and improve their emotional state.
7. Patients whose financial circumstances prevent them from accessing services privately or via a Medicare arrangement.

Referral criteria – Suicide/Self Harm

To access the FOCUS Priority Service (FPS), patients must meet the following criteria:

1. Assessed as a *Medium* Risk of Self Harm / Suicide (based on the FPS Risk Assessment Tool)
2. Be voluntarily referred to the FPS
3. Not be diagnosed with a psychotic mental illness
4. Not a current patient of the SCCHSD Mental Health Service
5. Reside in Maroochydore & Surrounds
6. Aged between 18 and 65 yrs of age
7. Have a referral to the FPS frodefault01
8. m a General Practitioner

Persons for whom referral is not appropriate

1. Patients with acute, severe or crisis needs, e.g. florid psychotic illness, acute self harm, acute suicidal or homicidal ideation or intentions. Some of these patients may be eligible to be seen as part of a Priority Suicide program being run for a period of time by FOCUS. Enquiries regarding patient suitability should be directed to FOCUS on 5443 2100.
2. Patients who require intensive case management or substantial welfare assistance.
3. Patients who have a propensity for violence/aggression.
4. Patients requiring specialised medical, psychological, neurological, and/or developmental assessment.
5. Patients seeking assessment and reports pertaining to the Family Court or for any other legal or criminal matter.
6. Patients requiring detoxification or intensive medical management.
7. Patients who are eligible for assessment or treatment via local established services such as Disability Services, Mental Health Services, Child Health and Education Queensland.

N.B. Patients who are currently clients of the Queensland Health District Mental Health Service or another specialist mental health provider, will need to have a co-ordinated assessment and treatment plan developed that takes account of the role and responsibilities of the various services involved.