

FACT SHEET

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COUNSELLORS' INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS

Psychologists and counsellors' independent consultants (ICs) are registered psychologists or clinical members of the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Association of NSW (CAPA) and are experienced in the assessment, treatment and management of workplace injuries.

Independent consultants provide an independent peer review of treatment and an integral component of this review is consultation with the treating psychologist or counsellor.

Referral to an independent consultant is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- review of service delivery by expert treatment providers with clinical experience in the management of work-related injuries
- education and advice for insurers and treatment providers on a case-by-case basis regarding good treatment outcomes
- negotiation with the treatment provider to determine the best outcome for the injured worker
- control of costs by making recommendations for appropriate, effective treatment or recommending the cessation of service delivery that is not reasonably necessary
- assistance to insurers and employers to better understand when and how much psychological treatment and/or counselling is reasonably necessary.

It is expected that referral to an independent consultant will occur where a treatment provider requests more than 12 sessions for an injured worker. The review by the independent consultant may include:

- excessive sessions proposed without progress towards achieving treatment and return to work goals
- the reasonable necessity of treatment
- the ongoing need for treatment.

A TREATMENT PROVIDER MAY ALSO REQUEST THE INVOLVEMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT.

Where an independent consultant review is required, the insurer selects an independent consultant from the list and forwards a referral to the consultant, including any relevant documentation.

Following review of the documentation, the consultant may contact the treatment provider to discuss treatment. If both parties agree that ongoing treatment is to continue for a specified period or is to cease, the independent consultant will inform the insurer and the treating treatment provider of this in writing.

If the independent consultant and the treatment provider cannot agree that the proposed treatment is reasonably necessary, the independent consultant will advise the insurer who will arrange for the worker to be assessed by either the same independent consultant or an alternative independent consultant.

On completion of this assessment, the consultant will again contact the treatment provider. The independent consultant will then provide a written report to the insurer and the treatment provider with recommendations regarding future treatment requirements, indicating if these recommendations are agreed by the treatment provider.

The insurer's decision about funding of future treatment will take account of the recommendations of the independent consultant as well as the information available at the time. The recommendations of the independent consultant are not binding but assist in guiding decisions about future treatment.

FEES

Independent consultants have the cost of their services paid by the insurer, as a claims cost.

CONTACTS

For more information about psychologists and counsellors, you can contact WorkCover's Provider Services Group by calling 1800 801 905 or by email to provider.services@workcover.nsw.gov.au

Disclaimer

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au) or by contacting the free hotline service on 02 9321 3333.

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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