

Dearest Clients,

Starting January 1st 2024, there will be a slight fee adjustment to my range of services. Acknowledging that additional costs might pose a challenge, I've delayed this change as much as possible. To facilitate this transition, I've divided the fee adjustment into two increments. The first was on July 1st, 2023, and the following as stated bellow will be on January 1st, 2024. My fees will also now include GST within the below amounts. .

For a breakdown of how I calculate my fees, please refer to the information below.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions, I encourage you to get in touch with me to discuss them further. I am always open to negotiating a sliding scale price depending on your circumstance.

Fee Increase for 1h Services

January 1st, 2024	Current Fee	New Fee 2024
Individual	\$125	\$140
Couples*	\$170	\$180
Men's Coaching	3 Month Coaching Subscription by Negotiation	
Group Facilitation	\$400	\$500

** First sessions in Couples therapy are 90 minutes in length and are \$200.*

The [PACFA Guidelines for Fee Structure](#) recommend up to \$160 as at 2021. My fees are now mid range for psychotherapists, low range for coaching and remain substantially under the **recommended fees for Psychologists of \$300** for individual sessions. Private Health rebates will be available where applicable by July 1st 2024. I am still currently accepting payments via cash, card or EFT. For clients who have a Mental Health Treatment Plan (MHCP) from their GP, the average out of pocket cost per session is \$116.35. This is the gap payment after receiving the Clinical Psychologist Medicare rebate of \$131.65 and is only available for 10 sessions per year. Psychologists are also not supposed to deliver couples therapy using the MHCP rebate.

Please read the below article to help you understand a little more about how my fees are calculated. Remember, there are other options for accessing lower cost or free mental health support in our community and please ask if you would like some recommendations.

Many Blessings ~
Michael Vaccaro

BCouns, GradCertAppMind, CertMedHolCouns

Why is Psychotherapy and Psychology Expensive?

(shared from my colleague Sean Tonnet and adapted from an online article by Rachel Foorde)

“The point of this article isn’t to present psychotherapists and psychologists as under-privileged, or hard-done by! Their incomes are usually above the Australian average. However, hopefully this article will provide some more insight into the reasons that contribute to high therapy costs.

Anecdotally, we know that the cost of private psychotherapy and psychological support is one of the barriers to people reaching out and seeking individual therapy. The Australian Psychological Society (or the APS), which is the peak body representing psychologists in Australia, has set their recommended fee at \$300 for a 45-60 minute consultation. We know this is a LOT of money for most people. When you multiply this rate by a few sessions per day, times a few days per week, over most weeks of the year, you’ll likely come out with an astronomically large estimated sum of what your Therapist might earn per year.

However, there are a few myths and misconceptions about this figure. You might be surprised by the breakdown, and it might provide extra information about why individual session rates are so high.

Most psychotherapists work in a private practice and operate as ‘sole traders’. At least 33% of their split would go to paying Tax and an additional 10% if they have crossed the GST threshold, and your therapist is most likely also contributing to their own superannuation (another 12%). There are costs of renting or owning office space, relevant bills (such as electricity, water, internet, etc.), maintaining the materials and resources for therapy (such as furniture, computers, whiteboards, etc), paying for the right to use a variety of standardised mental health resources, other salaries for administration support, and relevant taxes. Your therapist would also then have a range of expenses – including their own insurances, their own clinical supervision (usually monthly), compulsory professional development training, their own registration and professional membership fees. These are all required to remain legally practising, and are often in the thousands of dollars per year.

Most significantly, your therapist also only gets paid if they have a session. This session rate must cover their time for outside of session work, such as keeping notes, contacting other relevant health professionals, planning, writing and sending resources, and writing reports. They don’t get paid leave, so their session fees must also cover their expenses when not working, and taking holidays, study leave, or sick/carers leave. This is also why therapists have a cancellation fee for late cancellations or non attendance.”

As a proud Byron Bay based service I would like to acknowledge the Arakwal Bumberlin people of the Bundjalung Nation who are the Traditional Custodians of this land which I live, work, and stand on.