



# Australian Register of Counsellors & Psychotherapists

- A partnership project of the peak bodies for the counselling and psychotherapy profession:
  - Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation (PACFA)
  - Australian Counselling Association (ACA)
- Regulates counsellors and psychotherapists through:
  - A National Register of qualified practitioners
  - High ethical standards
  - Complaints handling processes
  - Supervision & professional development requirements

# About counselling and psychotherapy

- Counselling and psychotherapy aim to:
  - Prevent mental illness
  - Provide psychotherapeutic interventions for psychological difficulties
  - Promote mental health and wellbeing
- We utilise an interpersonal relationship to support people to explore and resolve their difficulties and make changes in their lives
- There is a large body of evidence that counselling and psychotherapy are effective

# About counselling and psychotherapy

- Counselling and psychotherapy are interdisciplinary activities provided by a range of professionals such as:
  - Psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists
  - Nurses, doctors, psychiatrists
  - Counsellors and psychotherapists
- Counselling and psychotherapy are not ‘owned’ by any one of these professional groups
- There are no valid reasons for government-funded counselling services to be limited to psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists

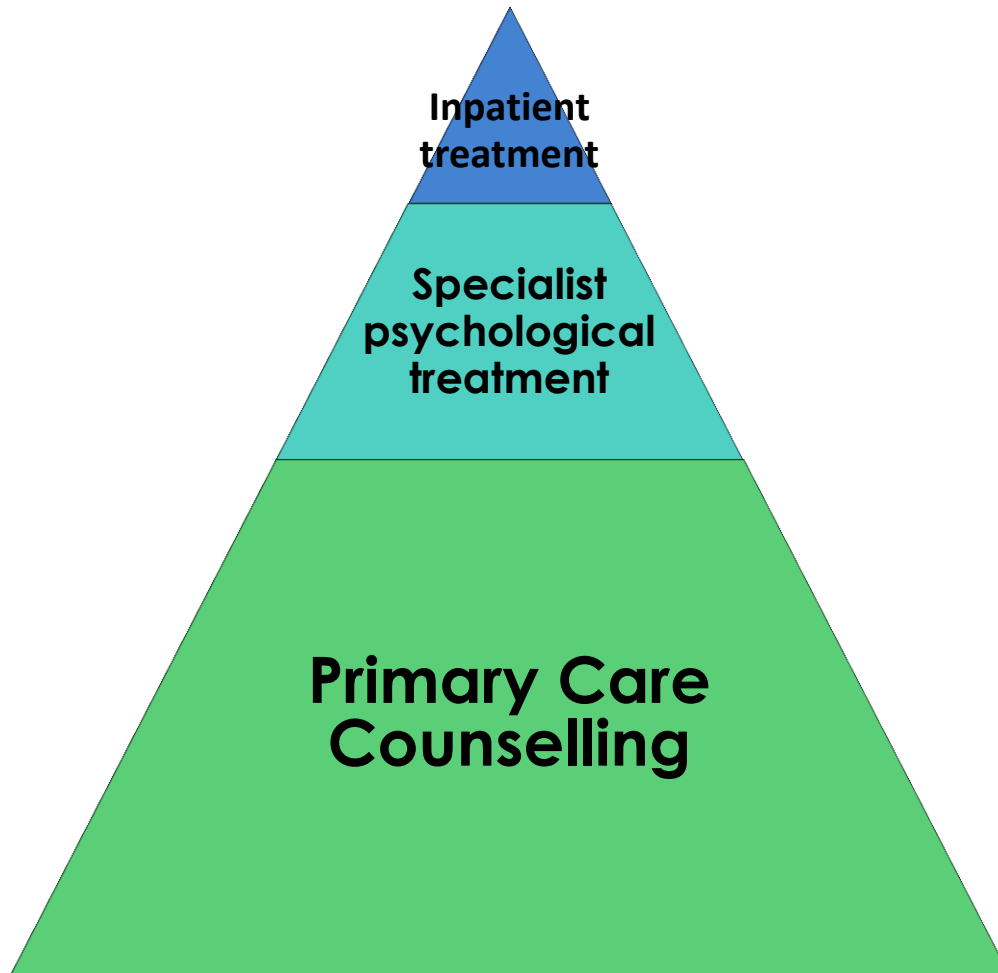
# How do we differ from other practitioners?

- We have a different training route from psychologists and social workers
- We are trained to degree or post-graduate level
- Our training focuses on the theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy
- Training for psychologists and social workers focuses on psychology or social work, not counselling and psychotherapy practice
- We are often better trained than psychologists and social workers to deliver psychotherapeutic interventions

# ARCAP proposals to improve the Better Access Initiative

- The Better Access Initiative is an unsustainable program that is not meeting consumer needs
- Counsellors and psychotherapists have been excluded from recognition by government
- Counsellors and psychotherapists are part of the solution to Australia's mental health needs:
  - 3000 registered practitioners qualified to degree or post-graduate level
  - Qualified to deliver primary care counselling
  - Wide geographic coverage including rural areas
  - An affordable alternative to psychologist treatment

# A clear role for Primary Care Counselling



Hospitalisation for serious mental disorders

Specialist psychological treatment only when required

Accessible & affordable mental health services for high prevalence disorders e.g. depression and anxiety

# Next Steps

- ARCAP representatives are available to meet with parliamentarians
- They can provide information about ARCAP proposals to improve the Better Access Initiative that will:
  - Save approximately \$100,000,000
  - Deliver an extra 411,868 counselling sessions
  - Provide more accessible and affordable services
  - Improve outcomes for consumers

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