

What are focussed psychological strategies (FPS)?

FPS are specific mental healthcare treatment strategies, derived from evidence-based psychological therapies.

Medicare has approved a range of acceptable strategies for use by a GP in providing FPS under the Better Access initiative, including:

- psychoeducation, including motivational interviewing
- Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including behavioral interventions and cognitive interventions
- relaxation strategies
- skills training, including problem solving and training, anger management, social skills training, communication training, stress management and parent management training
- Interpersonal therapy (IPT).

What are the benefits of being a registered provider of FPS?

Many benefits of FPS exist for patients as well as the wider community. The delivery of FPS by a GP enables members of the community to receive psychological interventions where shortages or lack of access to psychologists and psychiatrists exist, particularly in rural and remote settings.

The effectiveness of FPS has been demonstrated in treating people with depression and anxiety. FPS is also effective in meeting the immediate needs of patients in an acute medical situation when delivered by a FPS accredited GP.

Delivery of FPS by GPs, particularly in rural and remote locations, can have a significant role to play in providing psychological support for communities that are affected by disasters and mass adversities.

GPs skilled in FPS are better equipped in managing stressful situations and supporting individuals experiencing difficulties with their mental health, such as post-traumatic stress disorder or people encountering an exacerbation of a pre-existing mental illness.

Requirements to access FPS mental healthcare MBS items



How do I become a registered provider of FPS?

Please note that completion of a mental health skills training (MHST) activity is a prerequisite before undertaking FPS skills training (FPS ST) to become a registered GP provider of FPS.

GPs must complete and forward the *Application to register as a GP provider of focussed psychological strategies with Medicare Australia form* to the GPMHSC. This form is located on the GPMHSC website.

GPs are eligible to deliver FPS even if they do not work in practices accredited by the RACGP, provided that the GP has met the requirements listed above.

What are the MBS item numbers that I can use once registered?

GPs can access MBS items 2721, 2723, 2725 and 2727 for attendance in or out of surgery.

For further explanation of these item numbers, please refer to MBS online (www.mbsonline.gov.au) or contact the Medicare Australia provider enquiry line on 13 21 50.

Are there any ongoing requirements to maintain registration as a provider of FPS?

Continued recognition as a registered GP provider of FPS is dependent on the GP completing a FPS continuing professional development (CPD) training activity.

A FPS CPD activity must be completed each subsequent triennium following the triennium the FPS ST was completed.

Further information

For further information relating to the process of becoming a registered GP provider of FPS, contact the GPMHSC Secretariat on **03 8699 0556**, email gpmshc@racgp.org.au or visit www.gpmhsc.org.au.