



**THERAPY
NEAR ME**

PATIENT & CARER RESOURCE

Mental Health Support After Hospital Discharge

Australian Guide for Patients and Carers

A practical guide for the transition home

This resource is designed for people recently discharged from a mental health admission or emergency department presentation, along with families, carers and hospital teams seeking a plain-English support guide. Therapy Near Me is not a crisis or emergency service.

CREATED BY Therapy Near Me

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WEB VERSION therapynearme.com.au/discharge-guide

IMPORTANT SAFETY

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 000 immediately or go to your nearest emergency department.

If you need urgent mental health crisis support, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or another appropriate crisis service.

If there has been an overdose, serious self-harm, a severe medication reaction, or another urgent medical concern, seek emergency medical assistance immediately.

This guide provides general information only. It is not medical advice and does not replace your discharge plan, GP, psychiatrist, hospital team or treating clinician.

About This Guide

This guide explains the practical next steps after a mental health hospital discharge, day program discharge, or emergency department presentation.

It covers GP follow-up, Medicare Mental Health Treatment Plans, private therapy options, NDIS considerations, telehealth, family and carer support, and when to seek urgent help again.

If you were given a discharge plan, safety plan or follow-up instructions by the hospital or treating team, follow those instructions first.

What This Guide Can Help With

- Understanding next steps after discharge
- Preparing for GP follow-up
- Arranging psychology, counselling or other support
- Knowing when to seek urgent help
- Supporting a family member or carer
- Understanding Medicare, private and NDIS pathways

Contents

- 01 Before you leave hospital or shortly after discharge
- 02 The first 24–72 hours after discharge
- 03 The first week after discharge
- 04 When to seek urgent help again
- 05 Seeing your GP after discharge
- 06 Medicare Mental Health Treatment Plan
- 07 Medicare mental health and other free services
- 08 Private psychology and counselling
- 09 NDIS and psychosocial disability
- 10 Support for families and carers
- 11 Telehealth after discharge
- 12 Questions to ask before booking a psychologist or counsellor
- 13 Support while waiting for an appointment
- 14 Useful Australian crisis and support contacts
- 15 Citation, sources, disclaimer and publication details

The First Days After Discharge

Before You Leave Hospital or Shortly After Discharge

- Arrange practical supports such as meals, transport, childcare, work or study communication, or support coordination.
- Check that you have your discharge summary or know how it will be sent to your GP.
- Make sure you understand your safety plan, medication plan, crisis contacts and follow-up appointments.
- Write down the contact details for your psychiatrist, case manager, community mental health team or hospital service, if relevant.
- If you want a carer or support person involved, ask how they can be included where your consent allows.
- Ask what warning signs should prompt you to seek help early and what to do if symptoms return.

The First 24–72 Hours After Discharge

- Keep your discharge plan, medication list and appointment details in one place.
- Book or confirm a GP appointment as soon as practical.
- Organise your medications and check that you understand how to take them.
- Avoid major decisions if possible while you are settling back home.
- Identify one or two safe support people who can help with practical tasks or check-ins.
- Reduce alcohol and non-prescribed drug risks where relevant.
- Know who to call if symptoms return or your safety worsens.

The First Week After Discharge

- Attend a GP review to discuss mental health, sleep, appetite, medication, referrals and safety.
- Discuss whether a Mental Health Treatment Plan may be appropriate.
- Check medication side effects and ask for help if you are worried.
- Connect with counselling, psychology, social work or other community supports where appropriate.
- Organise work, school, university or Centrelink documents if needed.
- Consider carer or family support if that would be helpful.
- Revisit your safety plan and make sure it is easy to find.

When to Seek Urgent Help Again

Seek urgent help if symptoms are worsening or safety is becoming difficult to manage.

Contact your GP, psychiatrist, case manager, hospital team or local mental health service if:

- Symptoms are returning or escalating.
- You are not sleeping and symptoms are worsening.
- Anxiety, depression, agitation, paranoia or confusion is increasing.
- Medication side effects are concerning.
- You are struggling to follow the discharge plan.
- Family or carers are worried about your safety.

Call 000 or go to the nearest emergency department if:

- You may seriously harm yourself or someone else.
- There has been an overdose or serious self-harm.
- You cannot stay safe or someone else cannot be kept safe.
- You are severely confused, disoriented or extremely agitated.
- You are hearing or seeing things that feel unsafe or overwhelming.
- You are having a severe medication reaction or another urgent medical concern.
- There is immediate danger.

GP Follow-up and Medicare

Seeing Your GP After Discharge

GP follow-up is often one of the most important steps after hospital or emergency mental health care. A GP can help link your hospital discharge plan with community care, medication review, referrals and practical supports.

Take These Items to Your GP Appointment if Possible:

- Your discharge summary
- Your medication list
- Your safety plan
- Any hospital letters or follow-up information
- Questions about symptoms, medication, work, study or certificates
- Your Medicare card and NDIS details, if relevant
- A support person, if you want one there

Questions You May Want to Ask Your GP:

- Do I need a medication review?
- What side effects should I watch for?
- Do I need a psychiatrist referral or community mental health follow-up?
- Am I eligible for a Mental Health Treatment Plan?
- What should I do if symptoms return?
- Do I need physical health checks, blood tests or certificates?

Medicare Mental Health Treatment Plan

A Mental Health Treatment Plan may be prepared by a GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician for a person with a mental health condition. It may allow Medicare rebates for appointments with an eligible psychologist, eligible mental health social worker or eligible occupational therapist.

- The plan is created by your doctor if clinically appropriate.
- A referral is then made to an eligible mental health professional.
- Medicare can cover up to 10 individual sessions and 10 group sessions per calendar year.
- An initial referral commonly covers up to 6 sessions before review.
- Medicare does not always cover the full fee.
- Not all clinicians bulk bill, so a gap fee may apply.

Before booking, ask about the total session fee, the Medicare rebate, the out-of-pocket gap, payment arrangements and the cancellation policy.

Medicare Mental Health and Other Free Services

Medicare Mental Health is a free Australian Government service that can help people understand support options and connect with local services. It does not require a referral or Mental Health Treatment Plan. Availability of local services varies by location.

- Medicare Mental Health: 1800 595 212
- Hospital outpatient or community mental health services
- Medicare Mental Health Centres or other local supports, where available
- Primary Health Network-funded services
- Carer Gateway and other support services for families and carers

Therapy, NDIS and Carer Support

Private Psychology and Counselling

Some people access private therapy after discharge, especially when they want ongoing support or when public wait times are long. Private psychology or counselling may help with adjustment after crisis care, anxiety, depression, trauma, rebuilding routines and relapse planning alongside GP or psychiatrist care.

Private therapy is not a replacement for emergency care, crisis services, medication review or psychiatric treatment when those are needed.

Important points:

- Psychologists are regulated health professionals.
- Counsellors may provide supportive therapy, but Medicare rebate eligibility varies.
- Fees and rebates vary. Ask about the full fee and any gap payment before booking.

NDIS and Psychosocial Disability

Some people leaving hospital may already have an NDIS plan. Others may later explore NDIS access if they have a long-term psychosocial disability that affects daily life. NDIS support is based on disability-related functional impact, plan goals and what is included in the person's plan.

Important points:

- The NDIS does not replace hospital care, GP care, psychiatrist care, medication review, crisis care or other clinical treatment through the health system.
- Plan-managed and self-managed participants may be able to choose suitable providers where the requested support is appropriate and within the participant's plan.
- NDIA-managed participants generally need to use registered NDIS providers.
- Some support types may have additional provider or registration requirements.
- Support coordination, psychology, counselling, social work or behaviour support may be relevant depending on the plan and support type.
- Therapy Near Me may be able to support self-managed and plan-managed NDIS participants where the requested support is appropriate and within the participant's plan.

Support for Families and Carers

Families and carers often help with appointments, medication collection, transport, routines and safety planning. Support should respect the person's consent, privacy and autonomy.

- Ask the person what support they want.
- Keep the discharge plan and crisis contacts accessible.
- Help book or attend appointments if the person wants that support.
- Watch for warning signs such as worsening mood, unusual behaviour, not sleeping, severe agitation, confusion or safety concerns.
- Do not put yourself at risk. If there is immediate danger, call 000.
- Seek support for yourself through services such as Carer Gateway or your own GP.

Telehealth After Discharge

Telehealth means receiving care by phone or video. It may be useful when travel, rural location, disability access needs, fatigue, anxiety or appointment availability make in-person support difficult.

- Telehealth can improve access for rural and remote communities.
- It can help people who have disability access barriers or difficulty leaving home.
- A private space and reliable phone or internet connection are helpful.
- Telehealth may not be enough if there is immediate risk, severe deterioration or a need for hospital-based care.

Planning Support and Crisis Contacts

Questions to Ask Before Booking a Psychologist or Counsellor

- Do you have experience with my concern?
- Are you available soon?
- Do you offer telehealth?
- What are the fees?
- Can I use Medicare rebates?
- Can I use NDIS funding if I am plan-managed or self-managed?
- What happens if I deteriorate between sessions?
- Do you communicate with my GP or psychiatrist if I consent?

Support While Waiting for an Appointment

Waiting for follow-up can be stressful. Keep following your discharge plan and seek help early if symptoms worsen.

- Keep your discharge plan visible.
- Attend GP or treating-team appointments.
- Take medication as prescribed unless advised otherwise.
- Keep crisis numbers available.
- Ask a trusted person to check in.
- Keep routines simple and prioritise sleep, food and hydration.
- Contact Medicare Mental Health for support finding services.
- Use carer supports if you are a family member or support person.

Do not wait for a future therapy appointment if safety is worsening. Contact your GP, treating team, local mental health crisis line, 000 or the nearest emergency department, depending on the level of urgency.

How Therapy Near Me May Be Able to Help

Therapy Near Me provides psychology, counselling, behaviour support and telehealth services. It may be able to help with non-urgent support after hospital discharge, including psychology, counselling, telehealth and plan-managed or self-managed NDIS-funded therapeutic supports where appropriate.

For non-urgent enquiries, call 1800 632 763 or visit therapynearme.com.au.

Therapy Near Me is not a crisis or emergency service and does not replace hospital care, emergency services, a GP, psychiatrist, community mental health team or other treating clinicians.

Useful Australian Crisis and Support Contacts

Service	Contact
Emergency services	000
Lifeline	13 11 14
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
13YARN	13 92 76
Medicare Mental Health	1800 595 212
Carer Gateway	1800 422 737
1800RESPECT	1800 737 732

Citation, References and Disclaimer

Easy Citation

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Official Australian Sources Used in Preparing This Guide

- Healthdirect - Mental health crisis support
- Healthdirect - Mental Health Treatment Plan
- Healthdirect - Mental health helplines
- Healthdirect - Going home from hospital
- Services Australia - Mental health care and Medicare
- Medicare Mental Health
- NDIS - Psychosocial disability and mental health supports
- Lifeline, Beyond Blue, Suicide Call Back Service, Kids Helpline, 13YARN and Carer Gateway

Disclaimer

This guide provides general information only. It is not medical advice, crisis support, legal advice or financial advice. Therapy Near Me is not a crisis or emergency service. Always follow your discharge plan and speak with your GP, psychiatrist, hospital team, case manager or treating clinician about your personal circumstances.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 000 or go to the nearest emergency department.

Medicare rebates, NDIS funding rules, service availability and eligibility can change. Listing hospitals, government services, crisis lines or support organisations does not imply endorsement by those organisations.

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Official webpage:

<https://therapynearme.com.au/mental-health-support-after-hospital-discharge/>