

At the ABIA we are committed to offering families individualised support.

The ABIA currently employ two Registered Psychologists who are specialists in the Autism Field. Both psychologists have several years experience in working with parents, carers and children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The Psychology & Counselling Service offers support to families in the following areas:

Counselling for parents/Carers

Having a child diagnosed with ASD is a very stressful time. As a parent you may experience a range of emotions including sadness, anger (why me?), grief for the loss of the child you thought you would have and perhaps even self blame (Did I cause this? Why didn't I notice sooner?). Talking through these feelings with a trained Psychologist can help many parents in coming to terms with their child's diagnosis.

The psychologists at our centre help parents understand what ASD is and the impact it will have on their child. We are committed to helping parents develop proactive coping strategies for parenting a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Behaviour Management

Development of individualised behaviour management plans for home, school and the community. In addition to individual sessions, the ABIA offer an intensive 6-week group behaviour management program. Confident Parenting Program— cost: \$440/\$490

Anxiety Management

The ABIA offer a six week anxiety management program for children 9-12yrs. Parents are required to attend two information sessions to enable them to follow through with the strategies at home. Cost: \$450/\$500

Alternatively, there is a six week anxiety management program aimed at teaching parents how to reduce anxiety in the younger child. Parents are required to attend all six sessions and children are required to attend two sessions. Cost: \$450/\$500

Sibling support

Having a sibling with ASD can be an enormous challenge for brothers and sisters. It is important that siblings are supported in terms of understanding what ASD is and how to manage their brother or sisters behaviours. Discussing these issues with a Psychologist will assist parents and siblings by promoting open communication about their brother or sisters diagnosis.

Counselling Fee Structure

ABIA Members: \$100.00 per hour

Non members: \$140.00 per hour

Rebates:

Members and Non Members are encouraged to contact their Private Health Care Fund for information on whether they are entitled to a rebate for Psychological Services.

In addition members and non members may also be eligible to apply for a Medicare rebate through either the Better Access to Mental Health Care Initiative or The Enhanced Primary Care Program.

Medicare initiative 1:

The Enhanced Primary Care Program

This program provides limited Medicare rebates for individuals with a 'chronic condition', defined as persisting for more than 6 months (therefore, Autism Spectrum Disorder qualifies). The program enables parents to obtain a rebate of \$47.85 per session, for up to 5 sessions per calendar year.

To access the rebates, an 'enhanced primary care plan' needs to be written for the child by a GP. Some parents who suffer depression or other ongoing medical conditions can also obtain a care plan for themselves, meaning more session rebates.

Parents may choose to access the rebates for speech pathology or occupational therapy services to complement their ABA program.

Medicare initiative 2:

Better Access to Mental Health Care Initiative.

This initiative provides for rebates for individuals with a mental health concern (eg. depression, anxiety, conduct disorder, attention deficit disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, sleep disorders). Some children have these in addition to their ASD diagnosis. The program enables families to access rebates of \$78.40 per session, for up to 12 individual sessions per calendar year. There are also rebates for group sessions.

To access the rebates, a referral is required from a GP. Again, if a parent is affected by any of the conditions above, they can also obtain a care plan and access the 12 session rebates for themselves, as well as the 12 sessions for the child.

For more information contact the ABIA on 03 9830 0677, or email info@abia.net.au.