

## Mental Health Check In

# Medicare Mental Health Check In Health professionals guide for multicultural patients

**With over a quarter of people in Australia born overseas or with a parent born overseas, it is likely you will have patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.**

Experiences and understanding of mental health, wellbeing and mental illness vary across cultures. Every individual has a different understanding about mental health and mental challenges shaped by their unique knowledge and experiences.

People from different cultural backgrounds can experience mental health differently. This consultation guide is designed to support you in having conversations about mental health with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and to consider Medicare Mental Health Check In as a service option as part of a stepped-care approach.

### **What is Medicare Mental Health Check In**

Medicare Mental Health Check In is a new digital service offering free and confidential support to help people manage mild mental health challenges, like stress, anxiety, and low mood.

The service helps people build practical skills to manage and improve their mental health through evidence-based, low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (LiCBT).

The service is free and is delivered through online tools. People have the flexibility to move at their own pace and can choose to connect with a qualified mental health practitioner via telehealth along the way.

**The service is free and confidential, providing timely access to support for people aged 16 and over living in Australia.**

People can choose how to work through the online tools, so care is personal, flexible, and responsive to their needs.

### **Guided service**

People can connect with a qualified mental health practitioner in a safe and supportive space to talk about what they are experiencing and work through the online tools together.

Guided sessions can provide motivation and professional guidance for people who need a more structured style of support.

### **Self-guided service**

For those who prefer to work on their own, or need more flexibility, the online tools can be completed individually, anywhere, anytime.

The self-guided pathway helps to empower people, working through online tools that can be used in their daily life for improving sleep, managing worries or solving everyday problems.



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### Accessing support in another language

People can access interpreting services and Auslan for guided support. Interpreting services are available in more than 150 languages.

The Medicare Mental Health Check In website offers resources translated in the top 10 languages spoken in Australia to support people that speak languages other than English.

When people call Medicare Mental Health on 1800 595 212, they can ask for an interpreter.

### Discussing mental health with multicultural patients

- Be mindful that mental health may be influenced by migration, trauma or resettlement experiences, particularly for refugee and humanitarian populations.
- Many patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may prefer to talk about stress, sleep, worry and coping, rather than “mental illness”. Using this language can help start conversations and reduce stigma.
- Consider whether a patient’s physical symptoms may be linked to mental wellbeing.
- Seek to understand the patient’s cultural identity.
- Ask questions to understand your patient’s cultural perspective in relation to stress, emotions and worry (e.g. how do people usually talk about stress in your community? Who do you usually speak to for support?).
- Explore how your patient’s culture and community can support wellness (e.g. what has helped you cope with difficult times in the past?).
- Be aware that people express emotions in many ways and that the vocabulary for emotions and feelings varies greatly across cultures. Emotions can be expressed in other ways too, in words and silences, in tone and volume and via body language.
- Explain that Medicare Mental Health Check In is a low-intensity, short-term support option for mild mental health symptoms, not a crisis or high-intensity service, so patients know what to expect.

- Highlight that information may be available in patients’ preferred languages, including translated resources.
- For patients with limited English, encourage them to use an interpreter (e.g. via the Translating and Interpreting Service or TIS) or bring a trusted support person, and show them where to find in-language information about Medicare Mental Health Check In.
- Clarify that the service is free and confidential for people aged 16 and over living in Australia.
- For patients who appear to have more intensive or urgent needs, explain that Medicare Mental Health Check In may not be suitable and guide them to other supports. This may include calling Medicare Mental Health (1800 595 212) to be referred to a more suitable service, visiting a Medicare Mental Health Centre, their GP or emergency services.

### More information

To find out more about Medicare Mental Health Check In visit:

- [mentalhealthcheckin.gov.au](https://www.mentalhealthcheckin.gov.au) or scan the QR code
- [mentalhealthcheckin.gov.au/other-languages](https://www.mentalhealthcheckin.gov.au/other-languages) for translated information
- call 1800 595 212 (8:30am to 5pm weekdays, excluding public holidays)



Medicare Mental Health Check In is part of the broader Medicare Mental Health services, which includes the:

- Medicare Mental Health website [www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au](https://www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au)
- Medicare Mental Health phone service Ph: 1800 595 212
- Medicare Mental Health Centres
- Medicare Mental Health Kids Hubs.