

# Telepsychiatry Service

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Who is Dokotela?

Dokotela offers telehealth appointments with different Mental Health Specialists and has been funded to provide Psychiatry services to some clients at no cost to the client. This funding is applicable for clients living within the South Western Sydney, Central and Eastern Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains and Healthy North Coast Primary Health Networks, subject to eligibility criteria. Appointments are conducted via a secure video conferencing platform.

Further details on the eligibility criteria and process can be found at:

<https://www.dokotela.com.au/phn/healthy-north-coast-phn>

### Psychiatrists: How do they help and what happens during an appointment?

Psychiatrists are doctors that specialise in mental health. They make a thorough assessment based on taking a comprehensive history from you regarding the symptoms you have been experiencing. They will then recommend suitable treatment. Mental illness can be treated and many people recover well or even completely.

Your first appointment with a psychiatrist will usually be approximately 1 hour. During this appointment your psychiatrist will: ask you about your concerns and symptoms ask questions about your general health ask about your family history and patterns of behaviour may ask you to fill out a questionnaire or gather some other information. The long appointment gives the psychiatrist time to ask all required questions, listen to you and understand each aspect of your situation.

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They might also want to speak with other health professionals or members of your family. Your psychiatrist may order some more tests to help them understand what is going on. It might take one or more appointments for your psychiatrist to make a diagnosis. The next step is to work out a treatment plan. A treatment plan is a combination of therapies that suit your health, preferences, family situation and age. Usually (but not always) the treatment plan will include some medication, psychological therapies and lifestyle changes. You and your psychiatrist will work together to develop a treatment plan that's right for you.

### How long is my appointment?

Appointment lengths vary depending on the specialist you are seeing, but the below gives you an indication:

Psychiatrist: Initial Appointment 60 minutes

Psychiatrist: Subsequent Appointment 30-60 minutes

### What is telehealth?

Telehealth is a virtual consultation that is completed over a video platform such as Zoom or CoviU. Appointments are performed from either a GP clinic or from the patients home. It is not a phone call, the Specialist must be able to both see and hear you for a consultation.

### What do I need to book an appointment?

Psychiatry appointments require a referral from your GP to one of our specialists.

Further details can be found at:

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### **Is an appointment by video conference as good as seeing someone in person?**

For some people and in some situations, telehealth (seeing someone by video or telephone), can be just as effective or more effective than in-person care. The benefits of telehealth is access to a specialist for your healthcare needs anywhere, anytime, without having to travel long distances. Everyone has individual preferences.

Some people prefer telehealth because it is more convenient and they feel they find it less intimidating than going to a doctors office. Other people prefer to sit in the same room as the person they are talking to. The best way to know is to try it out!

### **Where will my appointment take place?**

You can have your appointment from your home. We will engage your relevant psycho-social provider to also be involved in the appointment, if possible.

Alternatively, you can have your video conference appointment from your GP clinic. Please contact them to discuss when you can go to their practice for your appointment.

### **Can I have the appointment from my referring clinician's office instead?**

If your referring clinician is able to facilitate your telehealth appointment then yes absolutely. Please contact your clinician to check when their office is available for you to have your appointment.

If you need assistance, please call our practice on 02 8003 7668 so we can help you book this in.

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### How much will my appointment cost?

Your appointment is funded by the Primary Health Network in the region you live and/or Medicare. There is no fee for clients to access this service.

### What is the wait time for an appointment?

For current wait times, please see: <https://dokotela.webflow.io/#time>

### How do I know if my appointment is booked?

Once you have completed your online booking, you will receive a confirmation SMS to your mobile number (please allow 5-10 minutes). This will contain all information including day and time of your appointment, the specialist you will be seeing, and instructions for the appointment (whether it is over video call). You will also receive an SMS reminder a few days before your appointment.

### How do I confirm my appointment?

You will receive an SMS reminder 10 days prior to your appointment, please reply "Yes" if you are able to attend or call us if you are unable to attend and we can re-book for another day.

### How do I connect to my appointment?

Download our instructions [HERE](#)

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### **What should I bring to an appointment?**

We recommend you bring a support person – this is a family member or friend, anyone you feel comfortable with or trust. Please bring any medication you are currently taking and if you have been to hospital lately any discharge summaries that you have available.

### **Who should I bring as a support person and why?**

A support person can be either a professional assisting you with your mental health or a family member/friend/carer you feel comfortable with and trust.

### **There are a number of benefits for both the client and the Specialist:**

- Gives you confidence that you have someone who can help you communicate all of the relevant information
- There is a great deal of information provided during the appointment and it can be difficult to remember it all.
- Having someone that knows you well can provide additional information for the Specialist and can be helpful for the Specialists diagnosis and treatment recommendations.
- This person can support you on your journey to recovery after the appointment

### **What if I need to change or cancel my appointment?**

You are able to change or cancel your appointment anytime up until 48 hours before your appointment by filling our contact form at <https://www.dokotela.com.au/contact> or calling 02 8003 7668. If you do not provide the required notice (48 hours) you will be unable to access the service again without additional support. This is because appointments are difficult to fill at short notice and Psychiatrists set aside 30-60+ minutes to spend with you.

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### **What happens if I am having technical difficulties?**

Please call (02) 8003 7668 and one of our friendly clinic staff will assist you to troubleshoot. A live chat option is also available from our website if you are having technical difficulties and a team member will be on hand to give you a call to assist.

### **What happens after your Psychiatry appointment?**

Most patients require at least two appointments – one to establish a diagnosis and put in place a treatment plan and a second appointment to review your progress and ensure you are happy with your progress. However, other patients may require multiple appointments. Your specialist will discuss this with you at the end of the appointment and answer any other questions you may have.

Once your Psychiatrist has established a diagnosis and treatment plan, they will send this to your GP. If required, your Psychiatrist will write scripts and order pathology. Please ensure you book an appointment to see your GP to discuss your treatment plan. Your GP may also write any prescriptions you require.

### **What if I have side effects from the medication my Specialist prescribes?**

If you have any concerns regarding your medications, please see your GP. They will be able to advise you of how to manage these side effects and can contact your Psychiatrist directly if required.

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### **What do I need to do if my script runs out?**

You should speak with your specialist at the time of your appointment. They will make another appointment for you or recommend your GP write the next prescription (including repeats). If your specialist has recommend you see them again for your next script, it is your responsibility to ensure a follow up appointment is booked with plenty of time before your medication runs out. Our specialists are booked in advance so we may be unable to facilitate an urgent appointment if you have run out of your medication, however you can complete a request for an urgent appointment at <https://www.dokotela.com.au/existing-patient/getting-started>.

### **What if I need a report or other documents completed by the Specialist?**

This service is intended for treatment only. Requests for legal documentation, workers compensation documentation, driving assessments or firearms assessments are strictly not included.