Dietitians Australia

Mental health - Briefing paper

Our position

We call for greater access to the services of Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) to prevent and treat mental illnesses. Given dietary strategies can be an effective management tool, and people suffering with mental illness are at greater risk of serious health conditions, APDs are uniquely qualified to provide support and assistance to anyone struggling with mental illness.

We call for dietitians to be included in the:

- Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS)
- Better Access initiatives (Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners)

Anyone who is prescribed antipsychotics and other psychotropic medications with known metabolic side effects should be referred to a dietitian for support.

Background

Half of all Australians experience a form of mental illness throughout their lives, this includes illnesses such as:

- anxiety
- personality disorders
- psychotic episodes
- substance use
- eating disorders

These conditions are a significant economic cost to society, and a huge mental burden on all those impacted.

APDs can provide effective, evidence-based dietary interventions to improve symptoms of mental illness and to prevent, treat and manage the physical illnesses associated with these conditions. This will reduce the economic cost to society, and should be equal and accessible for all Australians.

For more, download our full briefing paper on Mental Health.

Get in touch

If you have questions about this position statement, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au