



A workers' guide to accessing The Royal Children's Hospital Mental Health Service

Royal Children's Hospital Mental Health Service (RCH MHS) is for children and adolescents from birth to 15 years, and their families, who are in need of mental health services. We are a publicly funded, non-fee paying service which helps children and adolescents with emotional, social, behavioural and developmental problems.

RCH MHS is for families living in these municipalities:

- Brimbank
- Hobson's Bay
- Hume
- Maribyrnong
- Melton
- Moonee Valley
- Moreland
- Wyndham.

Our centres can be found at the following locations:

- Travancore
- Parkville (Royal Children's Hospital)
- Broadmeadows
- Hoppers Crossing
- Sunshine
- Footscray (Banksia inpatient unit).

Who works at the service?

The service is made up of staff from a variety of professional backgrounds:

- Psychologists
- Family therapists
- Social workers
- Occupational therapists
- Psychiatrists
- Child psychotherapists
- Speech pathologists
- Nurses
- Psychiatric nurses.

What services and programs do we provide?

The service provides consultation, assessment and treatment services, including individual and family therapy, autism assessments, group programs and inpatient treatment.

Outpatient assessment and treatment

Clients and their families attend one of our community teams for assessment and treatment/management.

Secondary consultation

Consultations can be provided to professionals and agencies regarding general issues or individual cases. Regular consultation to an agency can also be arranged.

Inpatient service (Banksia)

A 12 bed inpatient service provides assessment and treatment for young people aged between 12 to 18 who require more assistance than can be offered in an outpatient setting.

To enquire about a referral to Banksia, contact the unit on **8345 7500** during business hours. Emergency after hours referrals to Banksia are managed through the Emergency Department of the Royal Children's Hospital.

CGP

The Community Group Program (CGP) runs groups for children in schools and community health centres. Referrals can be made through both Student Services Support Officers (SSSO's) in the school and RCH MHS case managers.

The program uses traditional therapeutic methods plus art, music, drama and adventure-based activities to engage group participants.

Autism Assessment

This is an assessment service for children who may have autism or related developmental problems. These children may have difficulties in speech and language development, play, and social interaction.

Consultation and Liaison

This is a service for children and adolescents who are patients of the Royal Children's Hospital and their families/carers. They provide assessment and treatment to children who are experiencing emotional and behavioural problems associated with significant medical and/or surgical conditions.

Who do we see?

Young people with:

- An emerging psychosis, suicidal, self harming behaviours
- A severe incapacitating mental health disorder for example severe depression, severe anxiety, severe OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder)
- A moderately severe disorder where there are two or more significant risk factors, for example, homelessness, family breakdown, school expulsion, substance abuse, etc.
- A moderately severe mental health problem.

Why refer to the RCH MHS?

If you feel that a child's problems in one or more of the following areas can no longer be managed in a community setting, you may wish to make a referral to the service.

Severe psychological symptoms

Hallucinations, delusions, seeming to be out of touch with reality, paranoia, habitual and obsessive behaviour.

Behavioural problems

School refusal, poor self-control, tantrums, behaviour dangerous to themselves or others, lying, stealing, aggressive behaviour.

Persistent emotional problems

Severe stress reactions, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts.

Relationship problems

Significant social withdrawal, family conflict, poor peer relationships.

Developmental problems

Poor social skills, learning difficulties, attention and/or concentration difficulties, unusual play behaviours.

General health and well being problems

Eating disorders, severely disturbed sleeping patterns, poor self care, self injury, physical symptoms caused by emotional distress.

Referral process

To make a referral or enquire about suitability for a referral, call the Intake Team between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday on (free call) **1800 44 55 11**.

You will be asked for the following information about the child:

- Age
- Home suburb
- A brief summary of your concerns.

If the referral is not accepted

You will be given information about other services in your area that would be more appropriate.

If the referral is accepted

A referral form will be sent for you to complete and return. A letter will then be sent to the parents requesting them to contact Intake to discuss making an appropriate appointment.

An appointment cannot be made until the parents/guardians have contacted the service and agree to make an appointment.

Parents will be asked:

- For their consent to the referral
- About their understanding of the problem
- The name of their family GP and if information can be sent to them
- The child's school and if it can be contacted for information about the child's progress.

Intake will advise you if the family do not respond to the initial letter regarding your referral.

Interpreter service

An interpreter can be arranged for clients at Intake and for appointments. Please advise Intake if this service is required.

In some instances there may be a waiting list for appointments. The length of this waiting time can vary. The intake worker can give details of the current waiting time when you call. Let the intake worker know if you would like a secondary consultation by phone whilst the client is waiting for their appointment.

During clinic hours, the intake worker will make an assessment of the urgency of response required. If an urgent response is required they will contact the clinician on call.

After hours

For after hours referrals/emergencies call the Royal Children's Hospital Emergency Department on **9345 6153**. Alternatively, families can bring their child to the Emergency Department of the hospital.

