

Registered Psychologist

Jennifer Black, BPsych (Hons), Assoc. MAPS

Referral Information for Medical / General Practitioners

I am a Registered Psychologist trained at the University of Newcastle, NSW with clinical experience gained in Community Mental Health Service (adult, child and adolescent services), education, and non-Government community organisations. I am holistic and creative in my approach, and strongly believe in working alongside my clients to empower them to problem-solve and find the solutions to overcome the challenges in their lives.

My consulting rooms and private practice in Moonbi – the **Blue Moon Centre for Wellness, Creativity and Growth** - provide innovative and creative psychological and personal development services for the people of Tamworth and New England region. I deliver a range of evidence-based therapeutic modalities including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Solution-Focused Therapy, and skills training in Mindfulness, relaxation, assertive communication and self-awareness. I also offer Family Therapy and Equine Assisted Therapy and Personal Development (EAT), along with various group programs for adolescents, adults and corporate teams.

My clinical practice has provided me with extensive experience in mental health assessment, treatment planning and evaluation. I have provided psychological support and interventions for individuals of all ages and backgrounds with a range of presentations including anxiety, depression, PTSD, addiction, family and relationship challenges, personality difficulties, anger issues, chronic illness, grief and loss, social and behavioural disorders. I have also delivered corporate workshops, including stress management, learning styles, and team development, and facilitated team building events utilising equine assisted learning for organisational groups.

At the Blue Moon Centre for Wellness, Creativity and Growth we are committed to making services accessible to Tamworth region community members by:

- keeping service fees below the recommended industry rates
- accepting various payment options (cash, cheque or direct deposit)
- offering flexible appointment arrangements including after hours (when available)
- allocating a limited number of bulk bill sessions for financially disadvantaged clients
- providing a transparent and fair fee structure.

We provide confidential and compassionate care that is of the best quality. We abide by the Psychological Board of Australia (PsyBA), Australian Psychological Society (APS) and Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) Code of Ethics.

How to refer your patients for individual counselling.

Clients can be referred by General or Specialist Medical practitioners, support and health services, or clients may self-refer. Fees are based on APS recommendations and Medicare rebates may apply if referred with a current Mental Health Treatment Plan (MHCP). You will find further information and referral form on my website www.bluemoonwellness.com.au

Psychological Services - Incorporating Equine Assisted Therapy – “CBT with Horses”

Please consider “CBT with Horses” as an option for delivering counselling to clients who may be difficult to engage or have an aversion to office bound “talk therapy”, or an adjunct therapy for clients already engaged in counselling or psychological treatment.

With over 5 years experience and advanced level training, I am skilled at using the Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association (EAGALA) model of equine assisted therapy (EAT) as a framework for delivering interventions utilising Focused Psychological Strategies (FPS). Consistent with the EAGALA team approach, all EAT sessions are conducted by myself with the assistance of Equine Professional, Louise Campbell, (also trading as Women Under a Blue Moon).

Important information about EAGALA model equine assisted therapy

EAGALA model EAT involves clients undertaking interactive activities with horses. *It does not involve riding or horsemanship, and does not require previous experience with horses.*

EAGALA model EAT incorporates horses experientially for human personal growth, learning, and skills development. All sessions are facilitated by a treatment team consisting of a Mental Health Professional/Psychologist, a qualified Equine Professional, and a small herd of horses. The Psychologist and Equine Specialist are EAGALA Certified which requires completion of specialised training in this model, ongoing continuing education, and adherence to high standards of practice. In brief, the Psychologist is responsible for the emotional and psychological safety of participants, and facilitating the change process and integration of learning experiences. The Equine Specialist focuses on the physical safety of horses and participants, setting up appropriate activities, and understanding horse behaviours. The horses’ job is to just be themselves.

EAT sessions are conducted at the Blue Moon Centre for Wellness, Creativity and Growth, Moonbi. This is a private property. *Please do not supply this address to your clients.* Clients will be provided with details following completion of the referral process and prior to their initial session. Clients will require their own transport and be willing to work in a natural, outdoor setting. They will be required to attend an initial assessment to ensure they are suitable for this modality, and sign a Release and Waiver of Liability prior to the commencement of EAT sessions.

Incorporating EAT in the management of diagnosed mental disorders

EAGALA model EAT is based on sound psychological principles that have research evidence to support their use. Our approach is an experiential, problem-solving model of change utilising therapeutic metaphor to look at perceived limitations, allow behavioural practice and facilitate cognitive restructuring. Focused psychological strategies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are incorporated into the framework of EAGALA model EAT for individual and group sessions.

CBT combines principles of cognitive and behavioural therapy to assist clients understand the thoughts and feelings that underlie emotional and behavioural disturbances, and assist them to develop more helpful ways of thinking and behaving. Incorporating CBT principles into EAT sessions provides frequent opportunities for clients to learn about the interrelationship between their thoughts, emotions and behaviours. This increases awareness of underlying thought distortion and negative behaviour patterns that may

maintain psychological impairment. Activities with the horses present opportunities to explore and discuss these processes, and for the client to identify, develop and practice (in and out of sessions) behavioural changes, greater self-management and improved coping skills which combine to improve general functioning.

Effectiveness of EAT

Various studies have explored the effectiveness of EAT and consistently found statistically significant positive changes on clinical outcome measures including in a recent RCT that found significant reduction in aggressive behaviours in psychiatric patients (Nurenberg, et al., 2013). Australian studies of the EAGALA model have found significant improvements in functioning for adolescents who experienced sexual abuse & trauma (Kemp, et al., 2013); and significant decreases in compassion fatigue and burnout, with increases in compassion satisfaction, emotional awareness and emotional management (Black, 2016). Recent research has also supported physiological benefits of EAT such as lower cortisol levels (Pendry, Smith & Roeter, 2014) and increase in oxytocin (Beetz et al., 2012). For further details please refer to links to articles on the research page of our website www.bluemoonwellness.com.au or EAGALA website www.eagala.org

How does this approach facilitate change for your patients?

- Development of a greater understanding of their thoughts, feelings and consequent behaviours in difficult situations
- Understanding their problem-solving style and ways of improving it
- Development of new skills for managing unhelpful thoughts, feelings and physical reactions
- Becoming clearer in their communication and increasing their assertiveness
- Understanding personal boundaries and how to maintain them
- Developing plans for the maintenance of new behaviours and overcoming obstacles and challenges they may hinder their implementation
- Improving self-image, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-compassion
- Incorporation of exercise and other activities that support health and wellbeing

Equine Assisted Therapy may assist patients experiencing:

- Anxiety, depression and stress
- Anger, bullying and domestic violence
- Grief and loss
- Social and behavioural disorders
- Eating disorders
- Problems related to misuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Relationship and interpersonal difficulties
- Life adjustment and transition
- Managing complex or chronic illness or disease.

Provision of Focused Psychological Strategies (FPS) Services

The following strategies identified in the Medicare Benefits Schedule can be incorporated in EAT sessions and adapted to individual needs and treatment goals:

Cognitive-Behavioural therapeutic strategies:

- Cognitive restructuring
- Future-focused cognitions and forward planning
- Identifying emotional triggers
- Mindfulness and relaxation techniques
- Changing maladaptive behaviour patterns
- Behaviour experiments
- Avoidance prevention
- Exposure treatment
- Increase adaptive coping strategies
- Problem solving and decision making
- Activity scheduling and motivation

Other strategies that may be incorporated include, but are not limited to:

Skills Training:

- Problem-solving skills and training
- Mindfulness
- Relaxation and stress reduction
- Emotion regulation skills training
- Interpersonal communication

Social Skills and Communication training:

- Boundary setting in relationships
- Assertiveness rather than aggression or passivity
- Giving clear instructions
- Listening skills
- Negotiation and joint decision making
- Identifying personal styles of conflict resolution

Anger Management training:

- Identifying emotional triggers
- Increasing awareness of the impact of aggression on others
- Increasing individual's ability to tolerate/accept frustration
- Assertiveness rather than aggression or passivity
- Listening skills
- Identifying personal styles of conflict resolution
- Balancing the focus between achieving tasks and relationships

Parent management training:

- Assertiveness rather than aggression or passivity
- Balancing the focus between achieving tasks and relationships
- Understanding the role of anxiety within the family system
- Motivating and supporting others
- Developing or enhancing trust
- Encouraging team work within the family

Please incorporate these items in the Mental Health Care Plan you develop for your patient.

Please forward referrals directly to **Jennifer Black, Registered Psychologist**

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Please note your clients will be invoiced directly in accordance with Medicare requirements.
