



Dr Carl Dreher Clinical Psychologist

Practice Information for Clients during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Welcome and Inspiration

Fulfilling growth requires practice over time. I enjoy supporting you on your journey. Whether we're doing therapy, counselling, coaching, peer consultation, or supervision, you get out of this endeavour what you put into it. So I invite you to connect with what inspires you to live the life you find fulfilling.

To achieve your goals, you will need to take an active role and be doing most of the work. Please be prepared to engage in daily practices and commit to regular sessions. We often begin with 6 fortnightly sessions, and then review how best to continue (e.g., 4 monthly sessions). So I encourage you to choose a time when you can attend regularly. If not, we can discuss pausing until you can.

It's important to work with someone who is a good enough fit for you. We can often determine this in the first 3-4 sessions. If there is not a good enough fit, I can suggest other psychologists to consider.

Psychological Services in the New Normal

At present, all psychologists are experiencing an unprecedented sustained high demand for services.

Wherever possible, please book appointments that can work for telehealth (video or phone) if needed.

Due to the demonstrated unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 virus, restrictions on how we live are likely to be periodically part of our new normal for the foreseeable future.

The government has directed: during a recent lockdown, that psychologists must offer telehealth (i.e., video or phone) consultations, and; during restrictions masks must be worn when outside of home. People are advised to stay home and get tested if feeling unwell (e.g., cold/flu/COVID-19 symptoms).

Masks present challenges for in-person consults. So much of psychological services involves the non-verbal communication of being able to see each other's face (e.g., warmth and understanding).

While we can meet in person as often as possible, my practice caters for people for whom telehealth is appropriate, and who are willing to meet by telehealth where necessary due to COVID-19 events (e.g., lockdowns, masked restrictions, quarantine, isolation, mild cold/flu/COVID-19 symptoms, etc.).

I understand that for some people telehealth sessions can be more difficult to organise, and many people naturally prefer in-person sessions, and so opt to wait until we can meet in person again.

However, for psychologists to continue to be of best service to our clients and the community, we need to accept that a session conversion from in-person to telehealth might at times be necessary. Missed appointments can interrupt the process that supports you in the changes you are seeking. It also means people waiting in need of services can miss out on unused appointments.

So I ask that people do convert to telehealth appointments where necessary if possible and appropriate. If telehealth conversions do not work for you, please let me know, and I will suggest other services you can consider that might be a better fit. In finding a good client-service fit, we need to consider those who are in need of support and able to engage consistently with the service.

When you are ready to finish working together, future planning is best done in a concluding appointment, because choosing a way forward is a very personal decision-making process.

If a telehealth session conversion is required, please see the telehealth guide section below, and:

- I will send you a revised Halaxy reminder (SMS & email) inviting you to a video appointment.
- Please SMS me on 0421 775 909 if you would prefer phone instead.

During a COVID-19 event (e.g., lockdowns, masked restrictions, quarantine, isolation, mild cold, etc.):

- Please be aware that I offer priority to clients with the flexibility to do telehealth where needed.
- There is no late cancellation fee for declining a telehealth conversion of an in-person appointment, though I may discuss with you whether this service is a good fit for you currently.
- Due to COVID-19's unpredictability, cancelled in-person appointments will be rescheduled when they become possible again. Please contact me when the particular situation has passed.

In-person and Telehealth Consultations

- COVID-19:** For physical distancing, please enter the waiting room at your appointment time. Where possible I am disinfecting and/or cleaning surfaces between appointments. The room is well ventilated. I am using digital documents only. You can send files to me using the secure file upload instructions available [here](#).
- Parents:** Please stay with or nearby your child or adolescent who is being seen. Thank you.
- Hours:** From mid-morning to 4:30pm weekdays.
- Out of Hours:** Weekdays after 4:30pm, Saturdays, and public holidays.

Mount Hawthorn

- Location:** On Anzac, 58 Anzac Rd, Mount Hawthorn WA 6016. Entry and free parking are at the rear of the building. Directions are pictured [here](#). When driving, please use Oxford St via the laneway next to Aubrey Rose Bridal.
- Days:** Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and fortnightly Saturdays. Days may vary with notice. Public holidays are considered by request.

Telehealth

- Location:** <https://doxy.me/DrCarlDreher> from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.
- Required:** A private place without interruption and with good internet and phone reception. See the Telehealth Requirements section below for instructions and guidelines.
- Punctuality:** To test the connection, please arrive five minutes before your session.

Session Fees

I am informed by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) recommended fees, reviewed as required.

Fees:

- \$267 for 46-60 minutes. \$328 for 61-75 minutes. \$387 for 76-90 minutes.

Out-of-Hours:

- An out-of-hours fee of \$35 applies on Saturdays, public holidays, and from 4:30pm weekdays.

Appointment Duration:

- Appointments are 60 minutes (3-10 min admin; 50-55 min consult), with longer durations per the above fees. I know concerns and interests can have momentum. However, continuing past the booked duration disadvantages others. Therefore, if you continue past the booked duration once I have called time, a higher fee may be charged (e.g., \$328 for 61-75 min).

Administration:

- I attend to administration (referrals, forms, payment, rebates, & bookings) briefly at the start.
- To reduce admin time, please review your bookings on Halaxy's portal before the appointment, and please ensure your card has sufficient funds. All fees are due during the appointment.
- Please send your referral and complete your online forms one week before your appointment.

Payment:

- I use Halaxy online secure payments (Braintree by PayPal) to provide contactless payment.
- Please include your credit/debit card details in the online forms, or [here](#) for PDF forms.
- Halaxy's online secure payments use Braintree by PayPal. Their T&Cs are [here](#) (see "Part A - Patient payment terms"). Your credit/debit card details are required for payment and further bookings. Medicare requires your bank details to deposit your rebates.

Session Rebates

Private Health

Many private health insurers have extended their existing psychology coverage to include telehealth during the pandemic, as described [here](#). Please check your coverage with your provider. To claim, you can take your paid invoice directly to your insurer. Private health rebates and Medicare rebates cannot be claimed for the same appointment.

Medicare

A valid referral under a Mental Health Treatment/Care Plan or an Eating Disorder Plan gives you a Medicare rebate of \$129.55 for Clinical Psychology sessions of 50+ minutes, including telehealth. Halaxy online claiming is available for your convenience in processing Medicare rebates by completing the online authority form. For co-payment Medicare items, you need to pay the full fee before you receive your rebate. Please see a summary for GPs on Medicare's referral requirements [here](#).

Cancellation Policy

If I am fully booked when you would like to attend, ask me to put your name on the cancellations list. While it is your responsibility to remember your appointment, two automated courtesy appointment reminders will be sent (an email at least 9 days before and an SMS 5 days before your appointment), with a request for you to confirm or cancel. If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please give as much notice as possible by texting me (at any time of day) on 0421 775 909. To avoid a late cancellation fee, please give 8 or more days' notice when cancelling/rescheduling. Informed by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) recommended cancellation policy, late cancellation fees may apply as follows when cancelling/rescheduling: 0 to 24 hours' notice or missed appointments, full fee; 24 to 48 hours' notice, 50% of fee; 48 hours' to 7 days' notice, 25% of fee.

In addition to the APS recommendations, consideration is given to emergencies and medical conditions for yourself or your child; the late fee may be waived on occasion. The following also apply.

1. I look to waive late cancellation fees if another person attends the appointment, however this is often not possible; there may be no one requesting that day, and many people find it hard to change schedules (e.g., re work or childcare) to attend an appointment with less than a week's notice.

2. During the pandemic if your appointment is in person, and you have signs of a cold/flu/COVID-19, then please either request a video/phone session or cancel your in-person session, giving as much notice as possible; there will be no late cancellation fee for this; though please give as much notice as possible so I can offer it to someone else in need.

3. There will be no late cancellation fee for declining a telehealth conversion of an in-person appointment that I request before an appointment during a COVID-19 event (e.g., lockdowns, masked restrictions, quarantine, isolation, mild cold/flu/COVID-19 symptoms, etc.), though I will discuss with you whether this service is a good fit for you currently.

4. However, if you attend an appointment in-person and are unwell with cold/flu/COVID-19 symptoms, please be prepared to leave the in-person session, for the wellbeing of all; I will invite you to continue by telehealth if possible; in this circumstance the full fee may still apply even if we cannot continue by telehealth; the rebate will not apply if we cannot continue by telehealth.

If you would like a late cancellation fee to be reviewed, please cancel by calling (rather than SMSing or emailing) me on 0421 775 909 to advise of the reason, and we can discuss the situation. Otherwise, if the fee applies it will be charged by Halaxy online claiming or invoice for EFT. Unfortunately, cancellations that are not received still attract cancellation fees. You are welcome to call to confirm. Outstanding payments are overdue 24 hours after the appointment or invoice being sent. If payment is overdue, unfortunately your next appointment may be offered to someone else in need. An SMS or email will advise if your appointment has been cancelled. Frequent cancellations/rescheduling or non-attendances (e.g., 3 in 3 months) may mean this is not the right time for you to be able to commit to the process. This may be discussed and you may be asked to give yourself a break and return at a better time.

Emergencies, Personal Crises, & Phone Support

I do not provide an emergency or crisis service. For emergencies, call 000, or present to an Emergency Department, or contact your GP, Psychiatrist, or an agency that is able to provide in-patient support.

For 24/7 phone support regarding distress or personal crisis (e.g., thoughts of self-harm or suicide), please call one of the following:

- Lifeline, 13 11 14, www.lifeline.org.au
- Samaritans Anonymous Crisis Support line, 13 52 47, thesamaritans.org.au
- Beyond Blue, 1300 22 46 36, www.beyondblue.org.au
- Kids Helpline (aged 5-25), 1800 55 1800, kidshelpline.com.au
- Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL), 1300 555 788.

I offer brief, occasional SMS or phone support (e.g., 5 min). Frequent or longer (e.g., 10 min) support calls attract a pro-rata fee. My number is generally monitored during business hours on consulting days, and I can usually respond within the next two or three business days. The pandemic has increased our administration significantly. I now look to do what administration we can at the start of the session. I appreciate your patience with my replies to your emails and messages.

Report and Correspondence Requests

Please inform me if you currently have, or may possibly have, any compensation, insurance, or legal claims or cases. I do not provide assessment or report writing services for court, compensation cases, insurance cases, or other legal matters. If you require a written report for other reasons (i.e., non-medicolegal), please discuss this with me. I may not be able to accommodate your request. There are additional fees for provision of reports. I cannot specify completion dates for reports, as my service is focused on consulting via appointments.

Please discuss with me in session any request for correspondence (e.g., letters or forms to educational institutions, employers, etc.). Please email the request (& any forms) a week before your appointment. Please allow at least a week after your appointment for the request to be provided. There are additional fees for requested correspondence that is not written during session time. There are no standard fees for professional letters to referrers regarding client treatment needs (e.g., GP Medicare referrals). Please allow a week after your appointment for these to arrive to your referrer.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Access to Client Information

All services offered are conducted in accordance with the Australian Psychological Society (APS) code of ethics (see www.psychology.org.au). Psychologists uphold your confidentiality as a high priority.

Privacy

In providing a psychological service to you, I will need to collect and record relevant information about your personal circumstances and the services provided. You do not have to give any personal information you do not wish to. Not providing certain information may mean the service may not be able to be provided to you, or it may influence the outcomes you achieve.

Confidentiality

All information you provide to the practice is confidential, securely stored, and only accessed by myself as your psychologist (as above re detailed personal information) and our staff (as below re demographic information). Some demographic information you provide may be shared with our staff, including: other practitioners in considering who is the best clinician available to see you, and; our virtual reception staff taking your calls.

Access to Client Information

In keeping with our professional code of ethics, information regarding services can only be provided to another party with your written permission, a court subpoena or summons, or in the event that your psychologist forms a professional opinion that either you or another individual is at significant risk. If these occur, I will attempt to discuss the release of information with you in advance where possible. To help offer the best possible service to you, I may also share non-identified information with colleagues in peer consultation as required by our code of ethics. You can always ask me about the information kept on file. You can access the information about you kept on file, subject to the conditions of the National Privacy Principles of the *Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000*. Please ask me to discuss with you what forms of access may be appropriate.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Government requirements for COVID-19 contact tracing mean that in the event of a COVID-19 incident, psychologists may be required to share the contact details of relevant clients with the authorities. Therefore, my conditions of service include the following agreement: "I understand that in the event of a COVID-19 incident, Dr Carl Dreher will be required to share my contact details with the authorities, to assist them in the process of contact tracing, for the wellbeing of all". If you do not consent to this, let me know and please do not attend in-person sessions. If suitable, we can proceed with telehealth appointments, or I can suggest other psychologists for you to consider.

Feedback and Informed Voluntary Consent

This service is a partnership where you make informed decisions about the process of how best to work on the issues that matter to you. You have the right to withdraw consent at any time without affecting your right to future services. I welcome any feedback about what does and doesn't work well for you. After reading all of the information herein, if you are unsure or concerned about anything, please discuss it with me. When you are satisfied to do so, please sign the accompanying Confidential Client Information and Consent Form, indicating that you have read and understand all of the information herein. Please retain this service information sheet for your future reference.

Telehealth Requirements and Instructions

Telehealth is using digital technology (e.g., video & phone) to enable services between a health professional and a client.

Rights and Responsibilities

Your rights and responsibilities for telehealth services are the same as for in-person services, with the additional responsibility for you to follow the requirements below. By participating in telehealth, you are agreeing to the conditions of service described herein.

Benefits and Risks

Research supports that telehealth is effective. Telehealth is particularly useful for clients who are unable to access in-person services due to health complications, restrictions of movement, rural/remote location, and transport issues. Telehealth has been recommended by Australian psychology governing bodies as a suitable medium to enable vital continuity of care for all clients requiring psychological assessment, treatment and/or support during the COVID-19 pandemic. If for any reason we cannot meet in person and telehealth is not appropriate to your needs, we can discuss this, and if possible I will suggest other services for you to consider.

I use a securely encrypted, privacy compliant telehealth service, doxy.me. All practices to protect your privacy and confidentiality are adhered to for telehealth, in keeping with the Privacy section herein. This requires your participation to help keep your sessions private and effective. Equally, I do not permit pictures, or audio or visual recording of our sessions; the session is for you and not for others.

Potential risks with telehealth may include, but are not limited to, the possibility, despite reasonable efforts on my part, that: the transmission of services could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures; misunderstandings may occur (e.g., with poor transmission), and/or possible confidentiality breaches if someone should walk into your room while in session. These guidelines aim to minimise these risks.

Telehealth Platform Instructions

To use doxy.me, click <https://doxy.me/DrCarlDreher> from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. You will then enter my waiting room, and I will invite you into session. Please ensure that you:

- Have a good broadband internet connection or a device with a good cellular connection at home or at a location appropriate for services.
- To protect your privacy, ensure your software is updated and do not use public Wi-Fi.
- Enter the waiting room 5 minutes prior to your session to enable your camera and microphone. You can test your system requirements with the “pre-call test” button on the bottom left.
- You can read a 1-page guide describing how to check in to doxy.me by clicking [here](#).
- To test your internet speed, click [here](#). Videoconference works best with: download speeds of more than 1 Mbps; upload speeds of more than 0.5 Mbps; latency (ping) less than 50ms.

Alternatively, if you prefer telephone, I will call you at the time of our scheduled appointment.

Session Structure and Guidelines

Sessions will be conducted in the same way as in-person sessions are. In order to have effective telehealth sessions, the following guidelines are recommended.

- Your device should be placed on a steady surface throughout sessions, and not held in your hand if it can be avoided. If it must be in your hand, please hold it as steady as possible.
- You should be in a set location and not moving about.
- Make sure that you are in a private location where your sessions cannot be overheard by others. Ensure that you adjust the volume on your device to protect your privacy.
- Please do not invite others into session without discussion with me first. You are required to inform me if anyone is in the room with you, or who you believe may overhear the session.
- Try to have proper lighting that lights your face so that I can best communicate with you.
- You should be appropriately attired, fully dressed and in an appropriate setting.
- Try to minimise background noise and distractions. Turn off televisions, music or other sounds.
- You should not be driving, on social media, playing video games, or working on other things.
- Make sure that pets, children, household members and roommates will not be distractions.
- If the connection is broken, I will call you by phone until we can re-establish the video.