

Clinical neuropsychologists and mental health

Up to 75% of people with mental illness experience cognitive deficits, including in attention, memory, and problem-solving

These difficulties are a risk factor and consequence of mental illness...

Cognitive impairment in childhood or adolescence is associated with a **2-3 times greater risk** for developing any mental disorder later in life



Cognitive impairment **can impact important areas of life**, including work, study, relationships and independent living

Timely assessment is critical for tailoring treatment and is recommended in Australian Clinical Practice Guidelines for mental illnesses, including mood and psychotic disorders

Clinical neuropsychologists

are specialists in assessment and management of cognitive impairment

Assessment in mental health settings leads to **many positive outcomes**, including:

- Support with diagnostic clarification
- Identifying the likely causes of difficulties
- Improved understanding of cognitive issues for clients, their support network, and treating teams
- Facilitating referrals to services based on a patient's unique needs and circumstances
- Recommendations to optimise psychological treatments
- Provide cognitive rehabilitation to address functional recovery
- Track cognitive impact of psychiatric treatments over time



Nevertheless, neuropsychological services in mental health settings are scarce

Mental health services report that **one-third** of young people could benefit from neuropsychological assessment... but **only 1 in 10** are able to access this service

Thus, there is an urgent need for government to prioritise the expansion of the clinical neuropsychology workforce in mental health settings to meet the treatment needs of Australians living with mental illness