

## Primary Care Psychology Referral Guidelines

Guidelines from the HSE and ICGP (1) suggest primary care psychology is suitable for patients with mild to moderate psychological problems. In general, patients with relatively non-complex problems who have some level of family/social support are more suitable for psychological intervention in primary care. Patients with severe and complex mental health difficulties (see Table below) are not considered suitable. Such patients will almost certainly need treatment and management by secondary mental health services. The Table below differentiates between the type of problems appropriate to referral in primary care psychology and adult mental health services

**Differentiation between Referrals to Primary Care Psychology and Adult Mental Health (1)**

<b>Primary Care</b>	<b>Secondary Mental Health</b>
<b>Mild to moderate problems</b>	<b>Moderate to severe problems</b>
Depression ; reactive	Depression: biological / endogenous
Anxiety, General, Mild phobias	Severe Anxiety Disorders
Relationship Difficulties	Personality and Behaviour Disorders
Loss	Eating Disorders
Coping with injury/illness	Schizophrenia and related disorders
Life cycle developmental issues	Bi-polar disorder
Adjustment Problems	Addiction
	Cognitive impairments and Dementia .
Stress and trauma	Severe Complex Trauma
Psychosexual difficulties	ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorders

(1) *Guidance Document on the Provision of Counselling in a Primary Care Setting (HSE & ICGP, 2006)*

- **Patients DO NOT need a medical card to be seen by primary care psychology. The service is open to all eligible residents in the catchment area.**
- **NB: Primary Care Psychology CAN NOT accept referrals for patient's currently attending local psychiatric services. Referral to the clinical psychologist on those Adult Mental Health Teams is at the discretion of that consultant psychiatrist.**
- **When referring, please also consider all possible available services:**
  1. **Counselling in Primary Care Service (CIPC):** 6-8 sessions for patients with medical cards only.
  2. **National Counselling Service/AVOCA:** for victims of childhood sexual abuse
  3. **Addiction Services:** Any co-morbid addiction issues need to be addressed first
  4. **Intellectual Disability Services**
  5. **Primary Care Clinical Psychology** (no medical card necessary)
  6. **Adult Mental Health Services** including Adult Mental Health and Intellectual Disability team and Older Adult Psychiatric Team

