



BRUNSWICK NORTH WEST
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Childhood and adolescence can be a difficult and challenging time for some students. Fortunately, our school has connected with allied health services to help students deal with these challenges.

Counseling services are available at Brunswick North West Primary School. This service is available to students and their families at no cost under the GP Health Plan, as long as you hold a medicare card. This will entitle the eligible student/family member to a maximum of 12 individual sessions in a 12-month period under the CAREinMIND program with **Bernie Beyer**, a counselor and nurse practitioner in mental health.

To reduce the waiting period for your child, we encourage you to follow these easy steps to obtain a GP referral and return the required paperwork to **Deb Robins** via the school office as soon as possible:

- Complete the referral form attached
- Book an extended appointment with your GP, bring the referral form with you
- Talk to your GP about your concerns regarding your child's emotional wellbeing
- Ask your GP to create a mental health care plan for your child, including a referral for Bernie Beyer at CAREinMIND
- Bernie will then be in contact with you to arrange a meeting for yourself and your child *(please note, due to COVID restrictions appointments are currently telehealth only)*

Adults are also welcome to also seek counseling under the CAREinMIND service, however adults need to meet a set eligibility criteria. If you are a low-income earner or have a healthcare card and reside in the North West of Melbourne, you may be eligible for services.

For further information about supports available, please contact Deb, Hannah or Keir through the school office.

Sincerely,

Deb Robins
Wellbeing Leader



COUNSELLING FAMILY INFORMATION

Parents and caregivers help their children from the moment they are born. Sometimes, a child will face problems that parents and caregivers don't understand and have trouble helping them with. We understand that being a parent and feeling unable to help your child can leave you feeling powerless.

As a parent, you are never powerless.

Students learn skills every day that help them succeed in life. At school, they learn many skills such as numeracy, literacy, artistic, physical and social skills. Some students learn at a fast rate and some at a slow rate. When a student falls behind, schools provide intensive teaching to remediate slow learning rates in literacy and numeracy. Children also learn social, cognitive and emotional skills. If students are not developing these vital skills, psychologists can help them with intensive skill development activities.

Seeking help in these situations can be of great benefit to parents and their child.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the benefits of my child seeing a counsellor?

Bernie is an expert in her field. She offers professional help with simple problems like making friends to complex mental health issues, such as:

- Dealing with bullying
- Fears, phobias & anxiety
- Behaviour problems at home and at school
- Self-harm, alcohol & substance abuse
- Depression
- Stress around learning and relationships
- Managing anger
- Attention deficit & hyperactivity
- Social skills
- Eating disorders
- Grief and loss
- Autism Spectrum Disorder

Bernie can also offer individual skills training:

- Communication skills
- Problem solving
- Stress management
- Anger management
- Negotiation skills
- Relaxation
- Social skills training
- Bully proofing
- Motivation
- Parenting

Who is the psychologist attending Brunswick North West?

Bernie is a passionate psychologist who works with both children and adolescents who are experiencing a range of issues such as anxiety and mood disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, interpersonal, learning and behavioural disorders, self harming and adjustment difficulties (social & situational).

Bernie is a Nurse Practitioner which means she is a Registered Nurse with advanced skills and qualifications and endorsed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (AHPRA) to assess, diagnose and prescribe treatments for clients presenting with symptoms related to mental health. She also has a Masters Degree in Relationship Counselling and a Diploma in Art Therapy.

Bernie firmly believes that a collaborative approach will produce the most successful outcomes for a child.

How much is this going to cost us?

Where students have a doctor's referral, sessions are free. Parents will not have to pay for this support.



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How long will it take before Bernie can see my child?

Once a health plan from your GP is sought, follow the easy steps on the first page of this pack and Bernie will make a consultation time with you shortly after. Depending on demand, this may be between 1-2 weeks.

For emergencies always contact 000.

Is Bernie going to snoop into our family?

Bernie assists students to learn new skills and develop new ways to deal with the demands of their life. She does not collect confidential information for the sake of it. When she does discuss sensitive family matters, Bernie will treat this information with professional confidentiality.

Do we have anything to fear from our children seeing Bernie at Brunswick North West?

Bernie works with children to help them, however in all states, professionals are required by law to report suspected abuse.

What if I need to contact Bernie urgently?

Always ring 000 in emergencies. However if the problem is not an emergency, ring the school and discuss your concerns and they can organise a meeting with Bernie for you.

Can I join in with the sessions?

In most cases Bernie will welcome your attendance during the sessions, but please discuss this with Bernie as there are cases where this procedure would not work well.

What changes can we expect?

Positive change can sometimes be obvious very quickly. This is often caused by the positive effect of the extra attention. Real and long term positive behaviour change may take longer. Discuss this question with Bernie as there is no simple answer to this question.

What can we do to help?

In virtually all cases parents and caregivers can help their child at home by reinforcing the messages and skills developed in sessions. Please ask Bernie how you can help at home.

Do we get any feedback?

Bernie will send you a letter to give to your referring doctor after 6 and 12 sessions. She will also aim to communicate regularly with parents.

Do we need to go back to the doctor?

Extending the program beyond 6 sessions for a further 6 sessions will require you to return to your doctor for a further referral.

What if I need help?

Bernie frequently works with parents and caregivers who have a referral for their own treatment. Please discuss this with her if you believe this would be beneficial.

What if my question is not listed here?

Please feel free to contact Keir or Hannah through the school office, to discuss any other questions you may have.