

**DRAFT LETTER from BGS to students requiring counselling**

14 June 2000

Dear

**REQUEST FOR COUNSELLING ASSISTANCE**

I understand from the Student Counsellor, Ms Kerry Hurd, you wish to have counselling to assist with issues arising out of your involvement with the former Student Counsellor, Mr Kevin Lynch.

The School is prepared to facilitate, and meet the cost of, counselling where it is considered appropriate. We have arranged for Dr Joan Lawrence, Consultant Psychiatrist, to oversee this counselling service. Whether or not counselling is appropriate and the nature and extent of the counselling to be provided will be at the sole discretion of Dr Lawrence. The School will have absolutely no role in that decision making process.

This counselling service will be provided by the School within the following guidelines:

- 1 Initially, you will attend a consultation with Dr Lawrence, or someone else appointed by her if you are unable to attend at her rooms in Brisbane. Dr Lawrence will assess whether or not counselling is appropriate and the nature and extent of the counselling which should be provided.
- 2 The cost of that initial assessment will be paid by the School. All information provided to Dr Lawrence will remain confidential. The only information to be provided to the School by Dr Lawrence will be:
  - Confirmation that you consulted her;
  - Whether she considered further counselling is appropriate; and
  - The name of the psychiatrist or other health professional to whom you have been referred.

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- 3 If, following the initial consultation, Dr Lawrence is of the opinion further counselling or treatment is appropriate she may elect to provide that counselling/treatment herself or she may refer you to another psychiatrist or health care professional. Dr Lawrence may discuss her assessment and recommended treatment with the psychiatrist to whom you are referred.
- 4 It is a matter for you whether you accept Dr Lawrence's assessment and referral. You are, of course, not obliged to attend the further counselling and you may withdraw from the counselling at any time.
- 5 It is anticipated that the cost of treatment/counselling by any psychiatrist involved in the program will be partially met by Medicare. The School will be responsible for paying any "gap" between the Medicare refund and the actual fees charged by the practitioner concerned. If there is no Medicare refund then the School will be responsible for all fees incurred.
- 6 If Medicare is involved you will need to either:-
  - (a) pay the amount in full then apply to Medicare for their refund and arrange with Dr Lawrence for reimbursement of the gap payment from the School; or
  - (b) submit the doctor's account to Medicare, then either pay the gap amount to the doctor and arrange reimbursement through Dr Lawrence, or request that Dr Lawrence arrange for the School to pay the gap directly to the doctor.

For both of these options you will have to submit the Medicare cheque (which is made out to the doctor but sent to you) to your doctor.

- 7 As with Dr Lawrence, the treatment/counselling will attract the usual doctor/patient confidentiality. Treating psychiatrists or other health care professionals will not have any communication with the School and will not provide any reports to the School. If requested by Dr Lawrence or other treating psychiatrists the School will provide details of your attendance at the School.
- 8 Dr Lawrence will review progress of your treatment from time to time.
- 9 The School will be guided by the recommendations of Dr Lawrence at all times in relation to the need for treatment, and whether the need for treatment is as a result of your dealings with Mr Lynch. The School will meet the cost (subject to the Medicare rebate) of any treatment approved by Dr Lawrence. Similarly, if Dr Lawrence is of the view that treatment/counselling is not appropriate or no longer required, or that any

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treatment required does not relate to matters involving Mr Lynch, funding of treatment by the School will be terminated.

If you wish to take up the School's offer of counselling would you please sign the copy of this letter provided and return it to me to confirm that you accept the terms upon which counselling is to be provided. I will then provide a copy of that signed letter to Dr Lawrence and you should contact Dr Lawrence's rooms (telephone No....) to make an appointment.

If you have any queries in relation to this proposal, or wish to discuss any related matter at any time, please telephone the School's current counsellor, Kerryn Hurd (telephone No 3834 5303).

Finally, on behalf of the School, I would like to again express regret in relation to these matters. Although the School does not accept any legal liability for any inappropriate behaviour by Mr Lynch, it does acknowledge its clear moral responsibility to all of its students, both past and present. The decision to facilitate this counselling is, we hope, a sign of the School's sincerity in meeting that moral responsibility.

Yours faithfully

**Dr Peter Lennox**  
**BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL**