

What is mental health stepped care?

WAPHA commissions activities to operate within a stepped care approach to primary mental healthcare. Stepped care is a model of mental healthcare delivery where service intensity is matched to an individual's treatment need and severity of their mental health issues, covering the full spectrum of interventions from self-help, digital and low-intensity interventions, to primary and specialist clinical treatment and psychosocial disability support.

Stepped care promotes person centred care and adopts the principle of using the least intensive treatment option appropriate to the individual's needs.

In a stepped care approach, a person is offered interventions and supports at an intensity that best meets their needs and preferences. When these needs and preferences change, the treatments and supports are changed accordingly. It is preferable the same provider focus on adjusting care when an individual's needs and preference's change, rather than requiring the individual to change service, team or provider.

About the Steps

There are five steps. The steps are levels of intensity seen in terms of the provider's cost and time (they don't represent different services, teams or providers).

Level 1 – Self Management. This level includes publicly available mental health information and self-help resources.

Level 2 – Low Intensity. This level includes self-help resources and low intensity interventions, including digital mental health, group and peer supports.

Level 3 – Moderate Intensity. This level includes a mix of self-help resources, including digital mental health and low intensity interventions. It also includes psychological services for individuals who require them.

Level 4 – High Intensity. This level includes face-to-face clinical services through primary care, backed up by psychiatrists where required. It also includes self-help resources, clinician-assisted digital mental health services and other low intensity interventions.

Level 5 – Acute and Specialist Community Mental Health Services. This level includes specialist mental healthcare usually involving intensive team-based specialist assessment and intervention (typically state mental health services). It also includes supports via the National Disability Insurance Scheme and multiagency care.

WAPHA commissions activity relating to the second, third and fourth steps. Refer to Figure 1 overleaf.

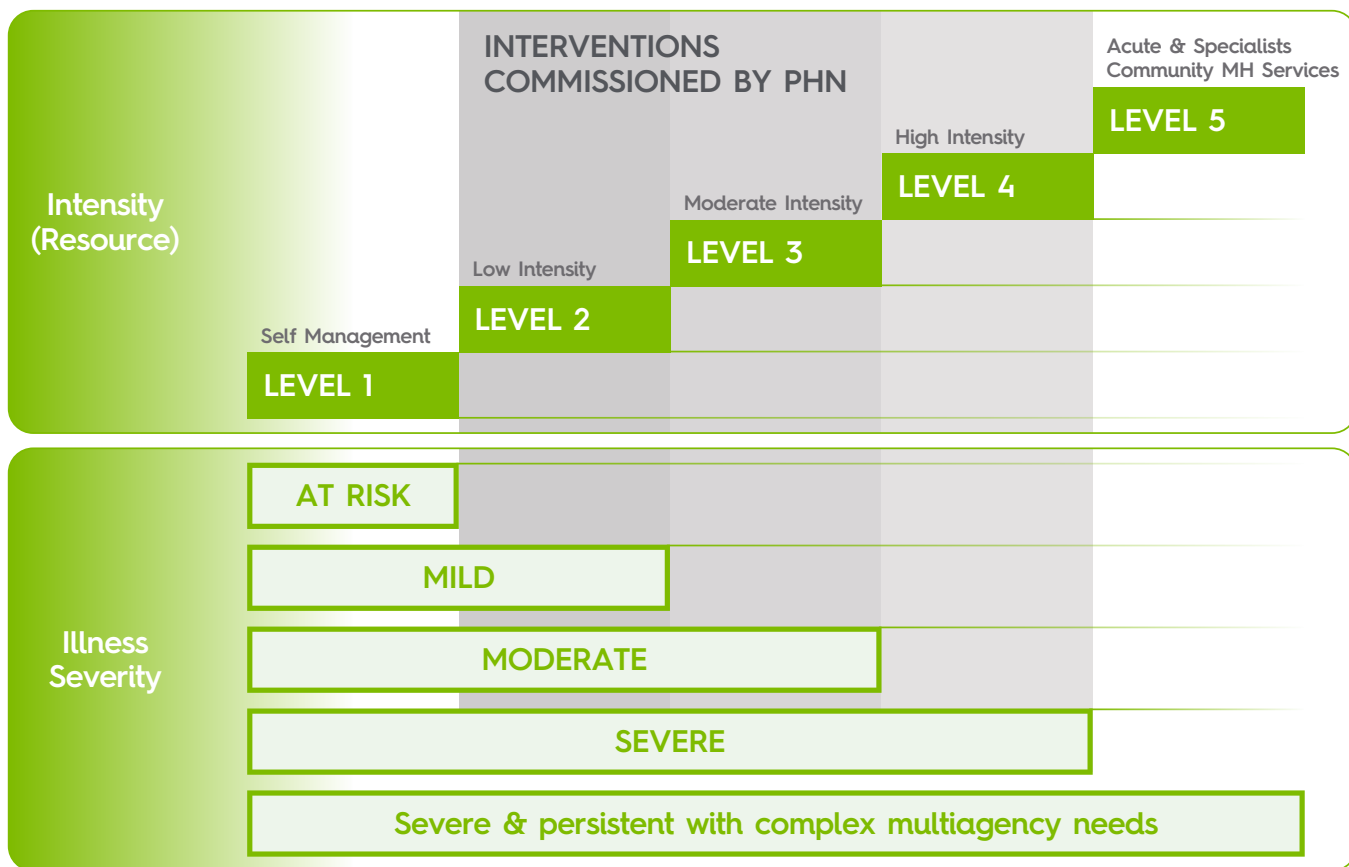


Figure 1: The stepped care approach



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This is one of a series of factsheets regarding mental health and primary health care, developed by WAPHA. Further factsheets and other resources can be found at www.wapha.org.au/mental-health-framework. The information in this factsheet is current at December 2020.