
Mental health services - case managers

A case manager is a mental health professional employed by a community mental health service. Their responsibility is to look after your interests while you are a client of public (government) mental health services. They act on your behalf to make sure you get the best services you need to recover.

Your case manager will make sure you are helped by public mental health services, including disability support services. They will work with you for as long as it takes for you to receive the best services necessary for your recovery. They are there to help you make the best use of mental health services and to ensure that the services respond to your needs quickly and efficiently.

Case managers help you with assessments and care needs

Your case manager will make sure you receive a full assessment, which includes:

- A mental state examination
- A physical examination
- Assessment of your need for services.

Treatment plan

Your case manager and other members of the treating team will prepare a treatment plan that is designed to meet your specific needs. You will be involved in planning your treatment and they will take your preferences into account. If you have dependent children, then you can expect your health service case manager to help and support you in ensuring their wellbeing.

Help to manage day-to-day issues

Part of the working relationship with your case manager involves looking at areas that may cause stress in your daily life and how you can manage them. The assessment will include:

- Your emotional and mental wellbeing
- How you deal with stress and illness
- Your safety and the safety of others
- Your friendships and relationships
- Your work, leisure and education
- Your daily living skills
- Your physical health
- Your income and housing
- Your rights and advocacy.

If you don't want to talk about all of these areas straight away, the case manager will respect your privacy. Some matters may be less important than others and may be discussed at a more appropriate time.

Your individual service plan

An individual service plan is a working plan put together by you and your case manager. It is a written summary of your goals and strategies. The plan may vary in length, depending on the types of needs you have and the time it is going to take for these needs to be met.

Carrying out the individual service plan

The case manager will work with you to look at:

- Your current situation
- Establishing goals you want to work on to improve your situation
- The strategies needed to reach those goals
- Who will be involved
- How you will review your individual service plan, including a date for that review.

What happens at the review

At the review of your individual service plan, you and your case manager will:

- Check that the individual service plan goals and strategies are working for you.
- Review the goals or strategies and make any necessary changes.
- Discuss with you whether your individual service plan goals have been met and if you still need a mental health service.

How to end your involvement

A decision to finish your involvement with public mental health services is made with you and your family, carer or chosen advocate. Your case manager will:

- Refer you to other agencies with your consent (for example, a GP, disability support service or family support service)
- Explain to you, your family and/or carer and other professionals why you no longer need an individual service plan with public mental health services
- Send you a letter, which confirms that your involvement with public mental health services has been completed
- Inform your family and others that your involvement with the service has finished and how you can use public mental health services again if you need to.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Health care professional

Things to remember

- A case manager looks after your interests while you are a client of public mental health services.
- The case manager will prepare an individual service plan setting out your goals and strategies.
- Your case manager may look at areas causing stress in your daily life and how you can manage them.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Department of Health - Victoria's Mental Health Services

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