A case manager is a mental health professional employed by a community mental health service. Their responsibility is to help you to attain your recovery goals 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 help you to access appropriate public mental health services, including community-managed mental health services if required. They will work with you to receive the best services necessary for your recovery. This will include offering you a range of treatments, including recreational and rehabilitation activities.

They are there to help you make the best use of mental health services and to make sure 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
- co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns
- assessment of your need for services.

Preparing a mental health treatment plan

Your case manager and other members of the treating team will work with you to prepare a treatment plan that is designed to meet your specific needs. You and your nominated person, family, carer or advocate will be involved in planning your treatment.

You are able to make an Advanced Statement, which also provides the service with your preferences. If you have dependent children, then you can talk to your health service case manager to help you to plan for the services and support your family may need.

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.

Individual service plan or recovery plan

An individual service plan or recovery 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 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 to expect at a case 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.

Ending involvement with mental health services

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 doctor, disability support service, alcohol and other drug services or family support service)
• explain to you, your family, or carers 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 nominated person, 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

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Things to remember

- A case manager is an individual appointed to help you with your recovery while you are a client of public mental health services.
- The case manager will prepare an individual service plan with you setting out your goals and strategies.
- A plan will be developed by you and your case manager. Your nominated person, family or carer may be consulted if you are a young person, or if you consent to their involvement.
- Your case manager may look at areas causing stress in your daily life and how you can manage them.