



Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care

As required under Section 547 of the Mental Health Act 2014

Standard: Assessment

The Mental Health Act 2014 requires the Chief Psychiatrist to be responsible for overseeing the treatment and care to a range of users of mental health services. The Chief Psychiatrist is required to discharge that responsibility by publishing a set of standards for treatment and care provided by Mental Health Services and overseeing compliance with those standards.

The Chief Psychiatrist of Western Australia has accepted two sets of standards as the overarching standards relevant for the Mental Health Act 2014.

- For clinical mental health services: [National Safety and Quality Health Service](#) (NSQHS) Standards.
 - Implemented from 1 November 2023
- For other mental health services: [National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations](#) (NSQMHS for CMOs).
 - In the process of implementation. Until implementation is complete, the accepted standards remain the [National Standards for Mental Health Services](#).

In addition, the Chief Psychiatrist has published the Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care. These standards have been developed within the following context:

- The specific Chief Psychiatrist's Standards are not designed to replace the NSMHS but enhance them where local development is identified as needed.
- They cover certain areas the Chief Psychiatrist deems to be either of central importance or requiring local jurisdictional focus.
- They are designed to leverage quality clinical care and are purposefully and predominantly targeted towards clinical practice.
- They are designed to be easily and quickly read by clinicians, and also by consumers and carers - hence they are relatively brief, not exhaustive.

Version

Purpose	Statutory Requirement under the Mental Health Act 2014
Relevant To	All Mental Health Service Providers
Approval Authority:	Dr Nathan Gibson Chief Psychiatrist
Effective Date:	30 November 2015
Responsible Group:	Chief Psychiatrist Standards and Guidelines Working Group
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Standard: Assessment

This Standard applies to all public and private mental health services as defined by the Mental Health Act 2014.

Definition

Assessment: Process by which the characteristics and needs of a consumer and their family or carer are evaluated and determined so that they can be addressed. The assessment forms the basis of treatment, care and recovery planning.¹

Purpose

To provide comprehensive individualised assessment of the consumer to ensure holistic care planning.

Context

1. A comprehensive assessment may occur over a number of treatment sessions.
2. The consumer will be involved in all aspects of their assessment.
3. Carers have the right to contribute to the assessment of the consumer.²
4. An assessment may include components provided by a range of multidisciplinary clinicians.
5. Cultural, language and social diversity will be taken into account in both the process and understanding of the assessment.^{3 4 5 6}
6. Timely and appropriate reassessment will occur as required.⁷
7. Assessment will be undertaken in the context of trauma informed care principles.⁷
8. If a consumer is under the legal care of a parent or guardian,⁸ the clinician must involve the parent or guardian in the assessment.
9. There may be an exception to this Standard where an assessment is being conducted for an additional specific or specified purpose.

Criteria

1. Assessments conducted:
 - 1.1. Are age-appropriate.
 - 1.2. Use broadly accepted methods and tools.
 - 1.3. Have regard to internationally accepted disease classification systems used in clinical practice.⁹
 - 1.4. Will consider biopsychosocial and cultural aspects of an individual's life.
2. Assessments must:
 - 2.1. Be written in plain English.
 - 2.2. Be legible.
 - 2.3. Be compliant with service documentation standards.
3. A comprehensive assessment must include a mental state examination and documentation.

¹ Mental Health Act 2014, Part 6 Division 2

² Carers Recognition Act 2004

³ Mental Health Act 2014, Part 4 s.11

⁴ Schedule 1: Charter of Mental Health Care Principles

⁵ Mental Health Act 2014, Part 6 Division 2 s50

⁶ National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010, Standard 4 Diversity responsiveness

⁷ Review of the admission or referral to and the discharge and transfer practices of public mental health facilities/services in Western Australia, Prof Bryant Stokes July 2012

⁸ Guardianship and Administration Act 1990

⁹ National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013, Standard 6

4. Assessments will contain a succinct summary of prior treatment – it is generally not appropriate to use the phrase “see previous summary”.
5. Assessments are conducted by mental health clinicians and where possible in the consumer’s preferred setting with consideration for the safety of all involved.¹⁰
6. A timely assessment is to be made in accordance with risk, urgency, distress and dysfunction.¹¹
7. Assessments of consumers will include communication where available with:
 - 7.1. Primary care clinicians.
 - 7.2. Specialist clinicians.
 - 7.3. Other workers involved in the consumer’s care.¹²
 - 7.4. Significant members of the consumer’s cultural community with consumer’s consent.¹³
8. The assessment must be of sufficient depth and breadth to be able to inform treatment, care and recovery planning.
9. The assessment must include consideration of dependents and commitments of the consumer. This is to include children and other caring roles.
10. The assessment must include consideration of the needs of the carer in the context of their caring role.
11. Physical health care needs will be identified with equal priority.¹⁴
12. A risk assessment and management must accompany the initial assessment.¹⁵
13. Assessments will include a written integrated formulation of the issues and an associated diagnosis.
14. Assessments will consider co-occurring issues particularly alcohol, other drug and other health issues including physical, intellectual and developmental disability.¹⁶

Future/Potential Measures

1. Completion of standardised or equivalent assessment tool.

¹⁰ Risk Assessment and Management Standard 2014

¹¹ National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010, Standard 10 Delivery of Care

¹² Physical Health Care of Mental Health Consumers Standard 2014

¹³ A National Framework for Recovery-oriented mental health services 2013.

¹⁴ Schultz C, Walker R, Bessarab D, McMillan F, MacLeod J & Marriott R (2014) Interdisciplinary Care to Enhance Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing. In Australian Government (2013) National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce

¹⁵ Social and emotional wellbeing framework 2004-2009

¹⁶ Western Australia Mental Health Bill 2014

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