

Mental Health Phase of Care

The concept of mental health phase of care provides information describing the complexity of a consumer's presentation and the primary goal of care, which is reflected in the consumer's mental health treatment plan. Mental health phase of care is a prospective assessment of the primary goal of care at the time of collection, rather than a retrospective assessment. The mental health phase of care is independent of both the treatment setting and the designation of the treating service and does not reflect service unit type. An episode of care may have multiple mental health phases of care and the consumer's mental health care needs may change as they move between different phases of an episode and accordingly, the goal of care and the need for resources may change.^{1,2}

The four mental health phases of care are:

Acute

The primary goals of care are intended to reduce high levels of distress, manage complex symptoms, contain and reduce immediate risk.

Functional gain

The primary goal of care is to improve personal, social or occupational functioning or promote psychosocial adaptation in a patient with impairment arising from a psychiatric disorder.

Intensive extended

The primary goal of care is prevention or minimisation of further deterioration, and reduction of risk of harm in a patient who has a stable pattern of severe symptoms, frequent relapses or severe inability to function independently and is judged to require care over an indefinite period.

Consolidating gain

The primary goal of care is to maintain the level of functioning, or improving functioning during a period of recovery, minimise deterioration or prevent relapse where the patient has stabilised and functions relatively independently. Consolidating gain may also be known as maintenance.

Assessment only has been removed as a *mental health phase of care* and redefined as an administrative data item. How this is captured within information systems will vary across states and territories. Assessment only is used when the review outcome does not lead to the consumer being placed in one of the four mental health phases of care immediately after. If the assessment outcome leads to the acute, functional gain, intensive extended or a consolidating gain phase being selected, then the assessment is included as part of the phase chosen.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023) Episode of care – mental health phase of care, code N. Retrieved 22 May 2023 from <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/744325>.

² Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority. (2023) Australian Mental Health Care Classification – Mental health phase of care guide Retrieved 22 May 2023 from https://www.ihacpa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/australian_mental_health_care_classification_mental_health_phase_of_care_guide.pdf.