



## Glossary of key terms

**Acute mental health services:** Acute mental health services provide specialist psychiatric care for people who present with acute episodes of mental illness. These episodes are characterised by recent onset of severe clinical symptoms of mental illness that have potential for prolonged dysfunction or risk to self and/or others. The treatment effort is focused upon symptom reduction with a reasonable expectation of substantial improvement. In general, acute services provide relatively short term treatment.

**Advocacy:** Representing the concerns and interests of consumers and carers, speaking on their behalf, and providing training and support to enable them to represent themselves.

**Carer:** A person who has a caring role for a person with a mental health problem or mental illness. They could be family, friends or staff and be paid or unpaid. The role of the carer is not necessarily static or permanent, and may vary over time according to the needs of the consumer and carer.

**Carer consultants:** People who have experience of caring for a person with a mental illness. They are employed by mental health services, and have knowledge of the mental health system and the issues that are faced by families and other carers. They work with mental health staff in developing service responsiveness to the needs of carers and families.

**Consumer:** A person who uses or has used a mental health service.

**Consumer consultants:** Consumers who are employed to advise on and facilitate service responsiveness to people with a mental health problem or mental illness and the inclusion of their perspectives in all aspects of planning, delivery and evaluation of mental health and other relevant services.

**E-mental health:** Mental health services or information delivered or enhanced through the Internet and related technologies. E-mental health can include mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment, relapse maintenance and emergency services. E-mental health solutions can also facilitate professional training for the mental health workforce.

**Forensic mental health services:** Refers to mental health services that principally provide assessment, treatment and care of people with a mental illness who are in the criminal justice system, or who have been found not guilty of an offence because of mental impairment. Forensic mental health services are provided in a range of settings, including prisons, hospitals and the community.

**Mental health problem:** Diminished cognitive, emotional or social abilities but not to the extent that the criteria for a mental illness are met.

**Mental health services:** Refers to services in which the primary function is specifically to provide clinical treatment, rehabilitation or community support targeted towards people affected by mental illness or psychiatric disability, and/or their families and carers. Mental health services are provided by organisations operating in both the government and non government sectors, where such organisations may exclusively focus their efforts on mental health service provision or provide such activities as part of a broader range of health or human services.

**Mental illness:** A clinically diagnosable disorder that significantly interferes with an individual's cognitive, emotional or social abilities. The diagnosis of mental illness is generally made according to the classification systems of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

**Non-government mental health sector:**

Private, not-for-profit, community managed organisations that provide community support services for people affected by mental illness and their families and carers. Non-government organisations may promote self help and provide support and advocacy services for people who have a mental health problem or a mental illness, and their carers, or have a psychosocial rehabilitation role. Psychosocial rehabilitation and support services provided by non-government community agencies include housing support, day programs, pre-vocational training, residential services and respite care.

**Peer support:** Social and emotional support, frequently coupled with practical support, provided by people who have experienced mental health problems to others sharing a similar mental health condition. Peer support aims to bring about a desired social or personal change and may be provided on a financial or unpaid basis.

**Performance indicator:** Refers to a quantitative measure that is used to judge the extent to which a given objective has been achieved. Indicators are usually tied to specific goals and serve simply as 'yardsticks' by which to measure the degree of success in goal achievement. Performance indicators are usually expressed as a rate, ratio or percentage.

**Prevalence:** The proportion of individuals in a particular population who have an illness during a specific period of time.

**Primary care services:** Community based services which often constitute the first point of contact for people experiencing a mental health problem or a mental illness and their families. The primary care sector includes general practitioners, emergency departments and community health centres.

**Private sector specialist mental health**

**services:** The range of mental health care and services provided by psychiatrists, mental health nurses and allied mental health professionals in private practice. Private mental health services also include inpatient and day only services provided by privately managed hospitals, for which private health insurers pay benefits, and some services provided in general hospital settings.

**Psychiatric disability:** Refers to the impact of a mental illness on a person's functioning in different aspects of a person's life such as the ability to live independently, maintain friendships, maintain employment and to participate meaningfully in the community.

**Recovery:** See the various definitions that have been described on page 26.

**Social inclusion:** Contemporary concepts of disadvantage often refer to social exclusion. Social inclusion refers to policies which result in the reversal of circumstances or habits which lead to social exclusion. Indicators of social inclusion are that all Australians are able to secure a job; access services; connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community; deal with personal crisis; and have their voices heard.

**Social and emotional wellbeing:** An holistic Aboriginal definition of health that includes: mental health; emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing; and issues impacting specifically on wellbeing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities such as grief, suicide and self harm, loss and trauma.

**Step up/step down:** These are clinically supported services which are delivered through staffed residential facilities and offer short term care to manage the interface between inpatient and community settings. They provide an alternative to hospital admission (pre-acute) and provide bridging support following discharge from hospital (post-acute).

**Supported accommodation:** Safe, secure and affordable community based housing combined with non-clinical and clinical supports and services which enable people with mental health problems and mental illness to live independently in the community.

**Targets:** A target (or benchmark) refers to the desired standard of performance to be achieved on a given performance indicator. Whereas performance indicators are the measurement tools used to gauge the extent to which a goal is met, targets represent the 'marks' on those indicators that define the desired levels of performance. Targets may be set on the basis of objective evidence, expert consensus, values or simple averages.

**Wrap around services:** The term refers to individualised and integrated services provided through a single coordinated process to comprehensively meet the needs of a person with a mental illness.