

FAQs FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

November 2020

Q. How will HeadtoHelp help general practices?

This is an extra service option to support GPs managing increasing numbers of patients experiencing stress and anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ✓ HeadtoHelp can help GPs find the most suitable mental health support for their patients.
- ✓ HeadtoHelp can support GPs who are unsure of the severity of the problem by providing a comprehensive patient assessment to identify the appropriate type and intensity of support needed for their patient.
- ✓ HeadtoHelp can find support for patients who are not eligible for Medicare, such as international students, refugees or people seeking asylum.

Please note, HeadtoHelp is not a crisis service and patients requiring immediate care or crisis intervention should be managed through the local mental health triage or 000 if there are immediate safety concerns.

Q. What is the pathway for a patient?

1. The person (or their GP or other clinician) calls the HeadtoHelp central intake number, 1800 595 212.
2. The HeadtoHelp intake team does an initial assessment to inform the level or intensity of care most suited to the person's situation.
 - Intake uses the **Initial Assessment Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST)** which determines level of need from Level 1 to 5.
 - If a person presents at a hub, intake is done by a team member there using the same IAR tool.
3. The person is then referred to the appropriate service(s) for their level of care. This might include service at a hub, PHN commissioned services such as CAREinMIND™, or other no-cost or low-cost service, or a service that they consent to pay for.
4. The HeadtoHelp intake team follows up with the person or if the person is referred to a mental health hub then, if they consent, the hub team will also inform the referrer of the initial assessment outcome and referral decision.

Q. How does HeadtoHelp fit in with CAREinMIND™ services?

- ✓ You can still refer eligible patients to CAREinMIND. And you don't have to change how you refer you patents to CAREinMIND. The CAREinMIND service is an important part of the PHN's stepped care model.
- ✓ The HeadtoHelp intake may also refer eligible patients to CAREinMIND services. HeadtoHelp intake will create a referral for CAREinMIND services in a similar way a GP would.

Q. What is the difference between HeadtoHelp intake and the mental health hubs?

The HeadtoHelp service comprises a central 1800 595 212 intake line plus the mental health hubs, currently in 15 locations across Victoria. We are encouraging people to call the 1800 595 212 number first. However, if someone goes direct to a hub, intake will be completed by the team there.

The HeadtoHelp central intake 1800 595 212 – assess, advises and connects

- ✓ The intake team's trained mental health professionals assess a person's current needs, advise them on the best support and connects them with the most appropriate local services, which may be an existing service or at a HeadtoHelp mental health hub.
- ✓ The intake team uses the Initial Assessment and Referral decision support tool (IAR-DST) that uses clinical and social questions to work out what level of service intensity (from 1 to 5) a person needs. Level 1-2 will be referred to existing online or phone services. Level 5 will be connected to an acute specialist service. Only Level 3 & 4s will, if there is no other suitable services, be referred to a HeadtoHelp hub.
- ✓ The HeadtoHelp intake teams have knowledge of a wide range of local services, from low to high intensity, across the mental health care system. This includes government (local, state and federal) as well as private services and supports. These services may be online, face to face or by telehealth.

HeadtoHelp mental health hubs

- ✓ Primary Health Networks have commissioned health service providers to operate the HeadtoHelp mental health hubs. The hubs accept referrals from the HeadtoHelp central intake and support people with moderate and complex mental health issues, especially those who may struggle to access services through other pathways. (These are Level 3 and 4 under the IAR-DST.)
- ✓ If a person attends a hub directly, the hub team will conduct the intake using the same IAR tool used by the 1800 595 212 central intake team.
- ✓ Hub services includes individual interventions, group work, care coordination and service navigation for patients and medication reviews.
- ✓ As HeadtoHelp hubs are scaled up they will include multidisciplinary teams of mental health practitioners. Each hub team is different and may include mental health nurses, psychologists, peer, social or alcohol and other drug workers and other allied health workers such as occupational therapists who can support people onsite at a hub, through telehealth.
- ✓ HeadtoHelp hubs will coordinate with the patient's regular GP – or help them find a regular GP if they do not have one.

Q. Do I need to write a referral for my patients for this service?

No. In the first instance, please call HeadtoHelp central intake on 1800 595 212. Our HeadtoHelp intake team may request further information to assist your patient into the most appropriate care. If your patient is going to receive care in the hub, you will be contacted for further information and shared care planning.

Q. Will I receive feedback on my patient's care from other providers?

Yes, if your patient is treated at a HeadtoHelp mental health hub we encourage the use of shared care plans through a consumer's mental health journey.

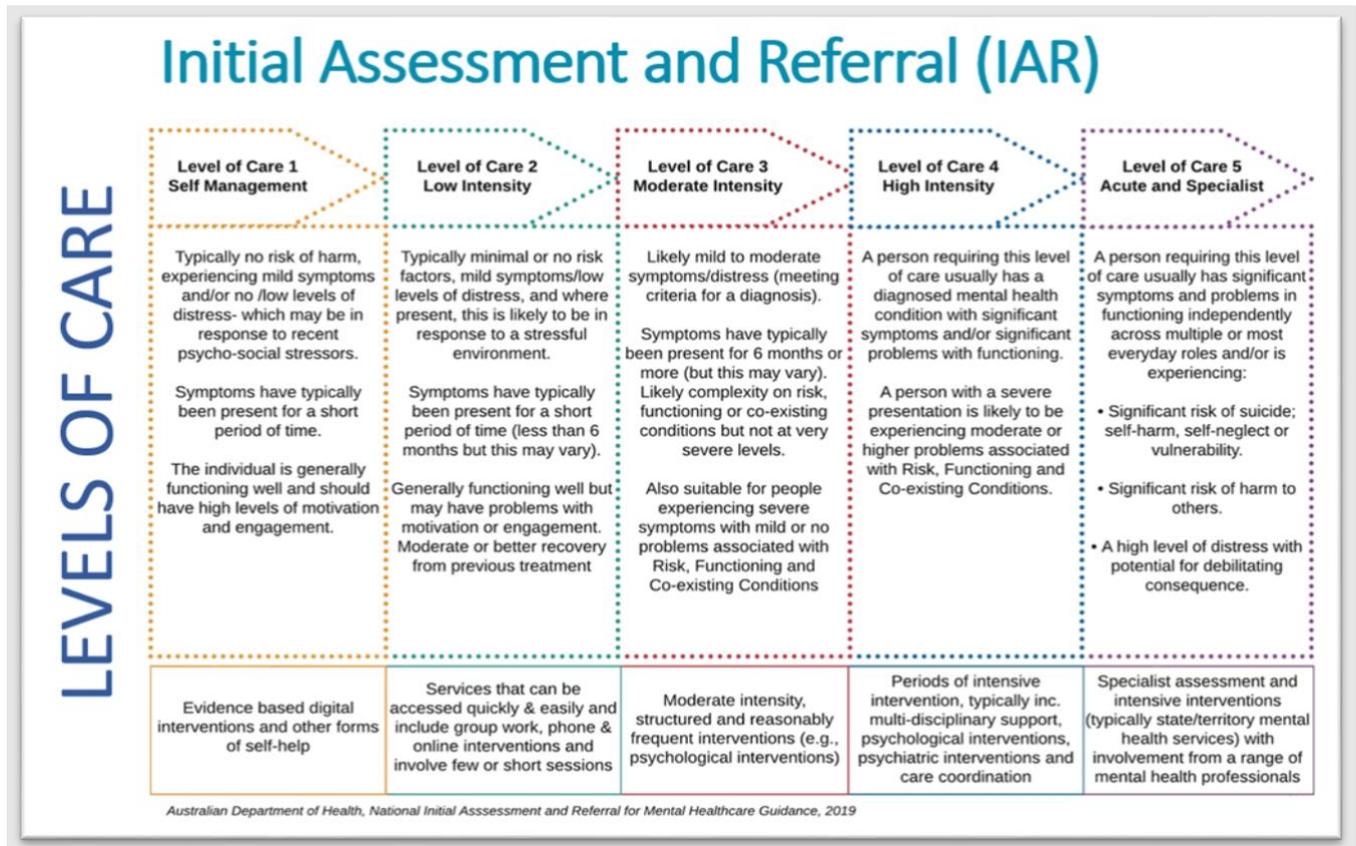
Q. Will my patients need a mental health care plan to access HeadtoHelp services?

No, not in the first instance. However, should your patient need a mental health treatment plan to access other mental health services, a HeadtoHelp team member will be in contact with you.

Q. What type of assessment and referral will be used by HeadtoHelp?

HeadtoHelp uses the Initial Assessment and Referral decision support tool (IAR-DST). This determines level of need from Level 1 (low intensity) through to Level 5 (acute). Whether intake is done through the central 1800 595 212 number or direct at hub, the same tool will be used.

- ✓ People with Level 1 and 2 needs will be connected with existing lower intensity services, usually phone or online support
- ✓ Those with Level 3 and 4 needs may receive care at the hubs, either onsite or through telehealth, or other more suitable services, including MBS funded psychological services.
- ✓ Level 5 will be connected to specialist or acute mental health services, including into emergency care or into an area mental health triage.



Q. My patient is not eligible for Medicare, can they access HeadtoHelp?

Yes. All people living or working in Victoria (or within a Victorian Primary Health Network catchment such as border towns) are able to access HeadtoHelp, regardless of residency status. This includes international students, refugees and people seeking asylum. The HeadtoHelp intake clinicians will identify the appropriate type and intensity of service. Services recommended will be informed by the persons individual circumstances and may include low or no cost services or, private fee-based services depending on the patients capacity to pay fees.

Q. Will support for my patient be face-to-face or is there an option for telehealth?

Yes, there are telehealth options. We will help to determine the level of care your patient needs – this may include online, telehealth or face-to-face options as suitable. Our face-to-face services will be held in a COVID-safe environment.

Q. Is HeadtoHelp only for patients experiencing COVID-19 distress?

No, HeadtoHelp welcomes everyone who needs mental health and wellbeing support, whether their mental health issues are pre-existing or have emerged during the pandemic.

The surge in people seeking support due to COVID-19 was the stimulus for setting up the HeadtoHelp service. The central intake and 15 hubs opened on 14 September and are currently funded for 12 months.

As part of an integrated primary care response, and to support continuity of care, people will be encouraged to also see their regular GP, or will be helped to find a regular GP if they don't have one.

Q. If my patient already has a private psychologist, can they access the HeadtoHelp services?

HeadtoHelp was set up to assist people who may need mental health support but are not currently receiving care. To avoid duplication, the HeadtoHelp intake team will encourage people to reconnect with existing care providers.

Q. Does this service help me manage my patients who already have a mental health treatment plan?

For someone with moderate to high-intensity needs already on a mental health treatment plan, the intake team may recommend they attend a HeadtoHelp hub to receive multidisciplinary team care including psychosocial support and care coordination, which is distinct from one to one psychological therapies.

Q. Is this a free/low-cost service?

Yes, there is no cost for assessment and advice through HeadtoHelp central intake or if receiving services at a HeadtoHelp hub. But not everyone will be suitable for treatment at a hub.

There may be fees for recommended services. The HeadtoHelp central intake team will take into account a person's financial concerns when recommending services or support. The most suitable service option may include fee-based services where it is determined that someone has the capacity to pay a fee (including gap fees for MBS services).

We will find free or low-cost services if that is what a person needs. This may include at a HeadtoHelp hub if the person has moderate to high-intensity mental health needs, as determined by the Initial Assessment and Referral decision support tool, and cannot afford to access suitable service elsewhere.

Q. If I send my patient to HeadtoHelp, will they receive free counselling services?

Not necessarily. Whether your patient rings the 1800 595 212 or turns up at a hub, they will have an initial assessment done and the most suitable service option will be recommended. This may include fee-based services where it is determined that someone has the capacity to pay a fee (including gap fees for MBS services).

Q. Where are the hubs?

The hubs are part of an initial network of 15 hubs in Victoria. Details of each location are on the [HeadtoHelp.org.au](https://headtohelp.org.au) website. North Western Melbourne PHN's three hubs are in **Wyndham Vale (operated by IPC Health)**, **Broadmeadows (operated by DPV Health)** and **Brunswick East (operated by Clarity Health Care)**.

The locations and providers for the hubs were chosen based on data and health needs analysis and the capacity of primary care settings to rapidly mobilise and deliver appropriate workforce and governance by 14 September 2020 when the hubs opened, less than a month after the Prime Minister announced them on 17 August.

Q. Are patients zoned to the closest hub?

Access to hubs will not be restricted by the location of the person. If a person goes to a hub directly, rather than calling the 1800 595 212 intake line, the initial assessment will be done there. However, the 1800 595 212 central intake may advise the person that another hub will be more appropriate, for example they might have a clinician who works with a particular cohort or has a more appropriate type of service.

Q. What hours are the hubs available?

HeadtoHelp hubs and intake are not crisis services, so initially our services will operate during business hours 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

If the intake team is engaged, callers during business hours will be given the option of leaving a message and receiving a call back. After hours callers will hear a recorded message asking them to call back during opening hours and giving them Beyond Blue's 1300 number if they want to speak with someone right away.

From 9 November, [HeadtoHelp.org.au](https://www.headtohelp.org.au) will have a "call back" request form that people can submit after hours or if they cannot get through on the 1800 595 212 number.

For further information please contact HeadtoHelpIntake@nwmpnh.org.au

Finding services

A comprehensive list of mental health service and wellbeing support services are available on [HealthPathways Melbourne](#). Or you can refer to our [system of care](#) for a range of mental health, alcohol and other drug, and suicide prevention services commissioned by North Western Melbourne PHN in our region.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

HeadtoHelp is a collaborative initiative of the Victorian Primary Health Networks and funded by the Australian Government.