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DRAFT YOUTH PSYCHOSOCIAL
SUPPORT PACKAGES MODEL
OF SERVICE

ORYGEN SUBMISSION

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Orygen welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Western Australia Mental Health Commission's draft Youth Psychosocial Support Packages Model of Service.

ABOUT ORYGEN

Orygen is the world's leading research and knowledge translation organisation focusing on mental ill-health in young people. At Orygen, our leadership and staff work to deliver cutting-edge research, policy development, innovative clinical services, and evidence-based training and education to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the treatments and care provided to young people experiencing mental ill-health.

Orygen conducts clinical research, runs clinical services (including specialist services and five headspace centres), supports the professional development of the youth mental health workforce and provides policy advice relating to young people's mental health. Our current research strengths include: early psychosis, mood disorders, personality disorders, functional recovery, suicide prevention, online interventions, neurobiology and health economics.

FILLING A SERVICE GAP

The draft Youth Psychosocial Support Packages Model of Service will provide access to psychosocial services for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who have signs and symptoms of moderate to severe mental health issues, including those young people with co-occurring problematic alcohol and other drug use issues.

By focusing on moderate to severe symptoms the model of service will meet some of the needs of the 'missing middle'. The 'missing middle' is made up of young people whose illness complexity is assessed as beyond the service scope of the primary care services and not meeting the threshold for specialist mental health services.

Access to psychosocial services can support engagement with mental health services and improved social and functional outcomes. However, if young people are not accessing mental health care this may limit the potential benefits of psychosocial support.

Orygen proposes that the role of Support Coordination Provider should include referral to screening and assessment with community-based specialist mental health services for young people accessing a psychosocial support package but not mental health support.

PROVIDING A RANGE OF SERVICE LEVELS

Service funding will be provided across three ranges, low, medium and high. These levels are determined by a young person's ability to live independently within the community. The draft model of service also sets out that the decision to accept a referral includes ensuring the young people with the highest needs can access the service. This goal recognises the challenges that young people who would qualify for a high level of support may face accessing services. In meeting this need, steps need to be taken to ensure that young people with low and medium service needs do not inadvertently miss out.

Orygen proposes that the model of service should provide service need guidelines based on prevalence data to ensure equitable delivery of services across the three levels. These guidelines would support services to enrol a population mix that reflects community support needs.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The model of service is underpinned by the principle of shared decision making which can empower young people in their service choices. This includes goal setting and being able to choose from a panel of providers for a support service. The model of service identifies the need to conduct regular and ongoing assessments during the period of service and to be as flexible as possible to support a young person's changing needs. The degree of flexibility in the model to meet changing needs and the setting of transition planning at the start of service access appear to be limitations in the model.

It is not clear how this flexible approach will accommodate changes in the type of support a young person may need. Presumably, service providers are contracted to provide a service, but how a contract could be amended to enable a change in service provider to enable the most appropriate support type is not detailed in the model of service.

Orygen proposes that the model set out a service guarantee for funded service provision to ensure a young person can move between services if required.

Recognition that monitoring support needs and the flexibility to respond to changes will benefit a young person is not reflected in the transition planning approach set out in the draft model of service. The draft states that a plan for transitioning out of the service will be made 'as part of a plan determined at the commencement of support'. The fixed planning approach does not take into account the variation in outcomes that young people will experience and how appropriate a transition plan up to 12 months old will be when it is time to be implemented.

Orygen proposes that transition plans be reviewed as part of the regular assessment process. The model of service should define the timeframe for 'regular' assessment, with three months being practicable and timely in terms of the maximum 12-month service duration.

ACHIEVING SET GOALS

The draft Youth Psychosocial Support Packages Model of Service is goal-oriented. Outcome measures should measure the achievement of the goals young people have. In addition to the two draft outcomes, two further outcome measures should be included.

The model of service includes housing and education, training and employment support. Safe, secure and stable housing and participation in education, training or employment support young people's mental health. Therefore, outcome measures should be included for these domains.

Orygen proposes that outcome measures for housing and education, training or employment be included in the evaluation of outcomes identified in service agreements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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