

HEAD TO HEALTH

An important update to the Short-Term Therapies program

About the Short-Term Therapies program

The Short-Term Therapies (STT) program provides access to free, short-term psychological therapy for people with mild-to-moderate mental health difficulties, who would benefit from short-term focused psychological therapy.

The STT program is funded by the Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NTPHN) and coordinated by the Integrated Centralised Referral Assessment Service (ICRAS).

The ICRAS is the central point for entry into the STT program and is delivered by Neami National's Connect to Wellbeing team forming part of the broader Head to Health initiative.

What has changed?

The STT guidelines have recently been revised. Key stakeholders including GPs, STT providers, community members and consumers of the STT service, were invited to participate in consultation about the changes to the program.

GPs referring to the STT program will need to be aware of a number of changes, clarifications and updates to the program.

Changes, clarifications and updates to the Short-Term Therapies program include:

- **Referrals to STT - Provisional Pathways – section 3.2**
In specific circumstances, a provisional referral can be made to streamline access to the STT program for the individual. In addition to the current pathways for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Suicide Prevention stream referrals, an additional pathway for individuals that reside in remote (MM6) and very remote (MM7) communities as defined by the Modified Monash

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Model (Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, 2019) has been created.

Please note that while Appendix A of the referral form can be completed by mental health and community sector staff for provisional referrals, a MHTP is required within four weeks of commencement of treatment.

- **Program eligibility – clarification of financial hardship – Section 6.2**
Indicate on the STT referral form the reason for financial hardship. If the consumer does not hold a current Health Care Card, Low Income Health Care Card, or Pension Card, please specify reason for financial hardship. Please be mindful of circumstances beyond a consumer's employment status that may still qualify someone for consideration of financial hardship (for example being on extended unpaid leave due to illness, experiencing domestic violence and inability to access bank accounts.)
- **Clarification of Suicide Prevention program eligibility criteria –Section 7.2**
Eligibility for the Suicide Prevention service includes:
 - people who, after a suicide attempt have been discharged into the care of a GP from hospital or released into the care of a GP from an emergency department
 - people who have expressed strong suicidal ideation to their GP or a mental health clinician
 - people who are considered at increased risk in the aftermath of a suicide.

Other internal or external factors placing a person at increased risk of suicide may also be considered. Be mindful that consideration should be given to the short-term nature of the STT program, and whether the individual is more appropriately supported by acute mental health services or any other suitable wrap around after care programs available in the community.

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- Communication with GPs regarding a referral – sections 5 and 6
 - GPs will be notified once a referral has been processed and sent to a commissioned STT provider. GPs will also be notified if the STT triage team or the STT provider was unable to contact the consumer to process the referral or book a therapy appointment.
 - If the STT provider determines that additional therapy sessions are required (after the initial block of 6 sessions), the STT provider will send the referring GP a detailed written report, including recommendations for the future management of the individual's mental health difficulties.
 - Please note that while a review of the consumer by the GP after the initial 6 sessions is recommended, it is no longer a requirement for a GP to instigate a request for additional sessions.
 - If a GP disagrees with a STT provider's recommendation regarding additional sessions, the GP must notify the STT triage team and the commissioned STT provider at the earliest convenience.
 - On completion of treatment the STT provider will send a session outcomes report/treatment complete report to the referring GP within two weeks of the final session, or within 2 weeks of the decision to no longer follow up a consumer who did not attend follow up appointments or after multiple attempts remains uncontactable.

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When will these changes take effect?

The changes to the STT program will be implemented from 1 July 2023.

More information and referrals

The complete guidelines and updated referral form for the STT program is available at: www.ntphn.org.au/programs/psychological-therapies/

Please send all completed referrals inclusive of a referral form and Mental Health Treatment Plan via:

Email: headtohealthnt@neaminational.org.au

Fax: 08 7906 2260

Medical Objects: HEAD TO HEALTH NT (TH0820000A0)