Glossary of 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 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. ¹

**Carer:**
A carer is a person who (without being paid) provides ongoing care or assistance to another person who has a disability, a chronic illness or a mental illness, or who is frail.

**Community mental health services:**
Those services and teams that are delivering care outside of inpatient settings across the child and adolescent, adult and older people sectors. ²

**Consumer:**
A person who uses or has used a mental health service or who has experienced/is recovering from a mental illness. ³

**Court diversion:**
Court diversion or intervention programs recognise that a person has reached a crisis point when they appear in court charged with an offence. In partnership with community based services, court intervention programs address the issues that underpin a person’s offending behaviour in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. ⁴

**Early intervention:**
Responding early in life, early in the course of a mental health disorder or illness, and early in an episode of illness, to reduce the risk of escalation, have positive impact in the pattern of illness and minimise the harmful impact on individuals, their families and the wider community. ⁵

**Evidence based practice:**
Developing responses based on identified client needs and the best available evidence on effectiveness through research and evaluation. ⁵

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⁴ The Law Reform Commission of WA, Court Intervention Programs, Project No. 96, 2009.
⁵ Because Mental Health Matters, the Victorian State Government, 2009.
Forensic mental health services:
Refers to mental health services that principally provide assessment, treatment and care of people with a mental health problem and/or 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.¹

Individual coordination:
Individual coordination provides a locally based approach to supporting people with mental health issues and their families to navigate, plan and coordinate access to the services and supports needed to live a good life.

Mental health:
A state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.⁶

Mental health promotion:
Any action taken to maximise mental health among populations and individuals. It aims to protect, support and sustain the emotional and social wellbeing of the population. It is applicable across the entire spectrum of mental health interventions and is focused on the promotion of wellbeing rather than illness prevention or treatment.⁷

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.¹

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).¹

Outreach services:
An outreach service refers to a program or initiative that provides mental health services in a location removed from a central management site.

Peer support and peer support workers:
Social and emotional support, frequently coupled with practical support, provided by people who have experienced mental health problems and/or mental illness to others sharing a similar mental health condition. Peer support aims to bring about a desired social or personal change.¹

Perinatal mental health:
The emotional and psychological wellbeing of women, encompassing the influence on infant, partner and family, and commencing from preconception through pregnancy and up to 36 months postpartum.⁸

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**Person centred mental health services:**
An approach to service which embraces a philosophy of respect for, and a partnership with people receiving services. A collaborative effort consisting of patients, patients' families, friends and mental health professionals.  

**Prevention:**
Strategies to maintain positive mental health through pre-emptively addressing factors which may lead to mental health problems or illnesses. These strategies can be aimed at increasing protective factors, decreasing risk factors or both, as long as the ultimate goal is to maintain or enhance mental health and wellbeing.

**Recovery:**
A personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life.

**Resilience:**
The positive capacity of people to cope with stress and adversity.

**Social inclusion:**
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 individuals 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.

**Stepped care:**
A service system that is organised as a range of steps from the least intensive to the most intensive. The system is balanced by ensuring there is sufficient capacity at each of the less intensive service steps so as to limit the need for more intensive options. Costs are likewise graduated across the steps from the least expensive to the more expensive.

**Stigma:**
Stigma is a mark or label that sets a person apart. Stigma can create negative attitudes and prejudice which can lead to negative actions and discrimination.

**Whole of Government services:**
Whole of government denotes public agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues. Approaches can be formal and informal. They can focus on policy development, program management and service delivery.

**Wraparound:**
An approach that envelopes a person with mental health problems and/or mental illness (usually someone with complex and multiple challenges), and where relevant their family, with an array of integrated supports and services to build and maintain the person's (and their family's) strengths and address holistic and specific needs.