

Core and Specialist Skills Assessment

AREA 5: Practice Area – Older Persons Mental Health

Scope and Objectives

- Build on their knowledge and skills within an *Older Persons Mental Health Service (OPMHS)*. This includes understanding their professional role within an OPMHS, whilst also building on core skills of mental health allied health practitioner working with this consumer group.
- Develop a sound understanding of older persons mental health practice and the opportunities and challenges in providing this service to consumers, significant others, families and carers living in the community.
- Develop a sound understanding the interaction between mental health and physical health in older persons.
- Develop a sound understanding of older persons assessment, intervention and the provision of case management/care coordination to consumers, families and carers living in the community.

This CSA at should be used in conjunction with professional supervision and the Allied Health MHAOD New Graduate Program Framework. The framework and associated resources are available at: <https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/allied-health/mental-health>

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The CSA at reflects best practice and agreed process for conduct of the task at the time of approval and should not be altered. Feedback, including proposed amendments to this published document, should be directed to the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer (OCAHO) at: OCAHO-MHAODS@health.qld.gov.au

Prior to use, please check <https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/allied-health/mental-health> for the latest version of this CSA at.

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An electronic version of this document is available at <https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/allied-health/mental-health>

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Requisite training, knowledge, skills and experience

Training opportunities

- Training as outlined in the New Graduate Framework “Graduate Training Schedule and Record”.
- [Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network \(AMHOCN\)](#) Older Persons training.
- Internal linkage opportunities within the HHS:
 - Senior or advanced clinical roles of each profession within the team.
 - Connect with services provided for older persons within the HHS which may include Single Assessment Service, Transition Care Program, Geriatric Rehabilitation services, Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM), and GEM Rehabilitation (GEMR), Residential Aged Care Homes etc.
- External linkage opportunities:
 - Other government agency linkages may include Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, My Aged Care, Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland Public Trustee, Office of the Public Guardian.
 - Local community supports, social infrastructure and organisations which offer sustainable community connections. These might include:
 - Common support pathways including Support at Home, Home Support Program, Residential Aged Care Homes.
 - Community centres and Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) which offer groups, activities and psychosocial supports such as senior citizens clubs and University of Third Age (U3A).
 - Carer focused supports such as Carer Gateway/Carers Queensland.
- Graduate Reflective Learning Sessions or peer learning groups and supervision.

Clinical knowledge/evidence

The following are examples of demonstrating content knowledge by an allied health professional:

- Demonstrates an understanding of the variety of consumer presentations encountered by a OPMHS team, utilising a rights-based, person-centred approach with an understanding of the aging process, including prevalent diagnoses, levels of complexity and risk, and the treatment and referral pathways for care within the community.
- Demonstrates an understanding of aging process on physical health, function, social participation and cognition.
- Engages with the older persons significant other, family and carers to provide psychoeducation and information to navigate supports.
- Links consumers with:
 - General Practitioner (GP) and other healthcare providers, encouraging regular monitoring of physical and mental health.
 - Other community-based support providers which may include support to navigate and access and appropriate sharing of relevant clinical information.
- Utilises older persons outcome measures (HONOS 65+, LSP-16, MHI, RUG-ADL) as a therapeutic engagement tool encouraging the consumer, significant other, family and carers to reflect on their health and wellbeing through comparing results over time.

References and supporting documents

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (second edition) alignment



1. Clinical Governance Standard



2. Partnering with Consumers Standard



4. Medication Safety Standard



5. Comprehensive Care Standard



6. Communicating for Safety Standard



8. Recognising and responding to Acute Deterioration Standard

National

- Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network (AMHOCN).
- The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and Australian Government National Mental Health commission publish strategies and frameworks including:
 - [Aged Care Act](#). (2024).
 - [Aged Care Act Rules](#). (2025).

Queensland

- Clinical guidelines, policies and resources developed by the Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch (the Branch) supports the statewide development, delivery and enhancement of safe, quality, evidence-based clinical and non-clinical services in the specialist areas of mental health and alcohol and other drugs treatment. Key documents include:
 - [Advance health directive for mental health: Guide and form for completing an advance health directive](#). (2021).
 - [Comprehensive Care - Partnerships in Care and Communication](#). (2020).
 - [Co-occurring substance use disorders and other mental health disorders: policy position statement for Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Service](#). (2021).
 - [Strengthening the state funded mental health alcohol and other drugs \(MHAOD\) service response for people from culturally and linguistically diverse \(CALD\) communities](#). (2023).
- Additional resources available via [Insight](#), Queensland Health.

Assessment: performance criteria

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Name:

Position:

Work Unit:

Assessment criteria		Applicable (Y/N)	Date achieved	Assessor initial
1	Completes OPMHS assessment including mental state, risk assessment and brief intervention with an older person, their significant other, family or carers and documents this accurately in the health record.			
2	Demonstrates an understanding of the role of graduate's profession within OPMHS including their scope of practice, assessments, professional formulation and treatments provided with consideration of both the older person and their significant others, family or carer.			
3	Develops a therapeutic relationship with OPMHS consumers, including building trust, rapport and positive communication skills, with consideration of relevant communication aids.			
4	Demonstrates an understanding of key considerations for older persons populations including housing and independent living, capacity and cognition, driving, mobility and falls risks, co-occurring diagnoses and polypharmacy, grief and loss.			
5	Explains risk considerations for working with an older person. Examples may include elder abuse, recognising and responding to a deteriorating person (RRDP), domestic and family violence, mobility and frailty, driver safety, bereavement, capacity, etc.			
6	Completes consistent, high quality clinical documentation relevant to older persons in alignment with the MHAOD comprehensive care resource guide e.g. Mental Health Assessment, Advanced Care Planning, RUDAS and care review summary.			
7	Demonstrates the ability to identify risks or RRDP such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognising early warning signs and symptoms of deterioration physical health concerns including UTI/dehydration etc medication toxicity while in the community and implements agreed management strategies as per their recovery and care plan or uses appropriate clinical escalation pathway.			
8	Demonstrates an understanding of the signs of cognitive decline and the assessment and treatment strategies used to address this.			
9	Provides a range of psychoeducation sessions for core diagnoses and clinically significant outcomes e.g. systems navigation, grief and loss, maintain physical health & fall prevention.			
10	Demonstrates sound knowledge of other service providers (e.g. home support program, residential care facilities, etc) and non-government organisations that work with the OPMHS team to deliver a seamless/integrated service to consumers.			
11	Demonstrates a sound understanding of the local process required when <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop safety plans that balance identified risks, safety and recovery philosophies. urgent outpatient assessment e.g. Acute Care Team (ACT)/Intake team direct admission to the inpatient unit (if available) admission via the Emergency Department (if available). 			
12	Demonstrates an understanding of the Mental Health Act (2016) and the requirements of an allied health professional within a OPMHS setting e.g. explaining a Treatment Authority (TA), ECT provisions and MHRT tribunals.			
13	Demonstrates awareness of referral pathways with respect to aged care services in alignment with the Commonwealth Aged Care Act (2024) such as the Single Assessment Service and completes relevant profession specific assessments to support future care planning.			
14	Demonstrates understanding of the purpose and roles of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) the Queensland Public Trustee; And relevant legislation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aged Care Act (2025); Public Guardian Act (2014); Guardianship and Administration Act (2000); The Public Trustee Act (1978). 			

Reflective practice		Date achieved	Assessor initial
R1	Reflects on how to integrate discipline specific models and tools into older person's practice.		
R2	Reflects on how care provided can enhance quality of life and support the person to "keep being me", while considering the impact of the aging process and independence in the home.		
R3	Completes a clinical case study and reflects on experience/perspective of the older person on care provided and professional practice learnings.		

Comments:

Record of assessment competence:					
Assessor name and signature:		Assessor position:		Competence achieved:	/ /
Assessor name and signature:		Assessor position:			
Assessor name and signature:		Assessor position:			