



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 HeadtoHelp 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 mental health services at a HeadtoHelp hub, or other no-cost or low-cost service, or a service that they consent to pay for.

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

The HeadtoHelp service comprises of a central intake line (1800 595 212) 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 – assesses, advises and connects

- ✓ The intake team's trained mental health professionals assess a person's current needs, advises 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.

- ✓ 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 – multidisciplinary team care for moderate to high intensity cases

- ✓ 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, or through telehealth.
- ✓ HeadtoHelp hubs will coordinate with the patient's regular GP, with their consent, – 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 from a hub, with their permission, 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 by a HeadtoHelp mental health hub we encourage the use of shared care plans through a consumer's mental health journey.

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 a 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 from a hub, 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. 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. 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, including Victorian border communities) are able to access HeadtoHelp, regardless of residency status. This includes international students, refugees and people seeking asylum.

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 2020 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 HeadtoHelp hub services 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's central intake or if receiving services from a HeadtoHelp hub. But not everyone will be suitable for treatment from a hub.

There may be fees for recommended services. The intake team will take into account a person's financial situation 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 from 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. Addresses for each location are on [our location page](#). 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.

Q. Are patients zoned to the closest hub?

Access to hubs will not be restricted by the location of the person. If a person seeks help directly, rather than calling the 1800 595 212 intake line, going to the nearest hub is the best place to start. However, the 1800 595 212 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.

There is also a "call back" request form on the website. A HeadtoHelp team member will call people back during operating hours.