

Guidelines on co-occurring conditions: Quick guide

What are the Guidelines?

The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing-funded **‘Guidelines on the management of co-occurring alcohol and other drug and mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings’ (3rd edition)** (the Guidelines, **Figure 1**) aim to provide alcohol and other drug (AOD) workers with evidence-based information to assist with the identification, management and treatment of co-occurring AOD and mental health conditions.

The Guidelines are based on the best available evidence and were developed by researchers at [the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use](#), University of Sydney, in consultation and collaboration with clinicians, researchers, carers and people with lived experience from across Australia.

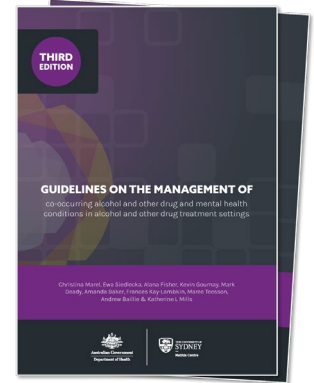


Figure 1. The Guidelines on co-occurring conditions

The Guidelines are intended to increase knowledge and awareness of co-occurring mental health conditions in AOD treatment settings, improve the confidence and skills of AOD workers, and increase the uptake of evidence-based care.

By increasing the capacity of AOD workers to respond to co-occurring mental health conditions, it is anticipated that the outcomes for people with co-occurring mental health conditions will be improved.

What is in the Guidelines?

The Guidelines are made up of three sections (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Guidelines contents

Part A: About co-occurring conditions	Part B: Responding to co-occurring conditions	Part C: Specific population groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: What are co-occurring conditions? • A2: How common are co-occurring conditions and why are they of concern? • A3: Guiding principles • A4: Classification of disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Holistic health care • B2: Trauma-informed care • B3: Identifying co-occurring conditions • B4: Assessing risk • B5: Coordinating care • B6: Approaches to co-occurring conditions • B7: Managing and treating specific disorders • B8: Worker self-care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • People who identify as gender and sexual diverse • Sex workers • Rural and remote populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness • Women • Men • Coerced clients • Incarcerated clients • Young people • Older people

What resources are available to help translate the Guidelines into practice?

A variety of resources have been developed to support AOD organisations and workers to implement Guidelines recommendations into practice (**Figure 3**). All resources can be accessed via the Guidelines website (comorbidityguidelines.org.au).

Figure 3. Guidelines resources

Resources for AOD organisations

Implementation toolkit to support AOD organisational leaders in translating Guidelines recommendations into practice for their treatment setting.

Resources for AOD workers

Online self-paced learning modules to provide essential foundational training for trainees and workers on identifying, managing and treating co-occurring mental health conditions.

Skills-based training for more in-depth training for AOD workers to further promote the uptake of best-practice in the field.

Train-the trainer program for workers with advanced clinical and training experience in AOD and mental health.

Online community of practice where members can make connections, access valuable resources and engage and collaborate with other professionals to enhance their practice.

Continuing professional development webinars.

Guidelines on co-occurring conditions: Overview of the implementation process

The [Guidelines on co-occurring conditions implementation toolkit](#) guides organisational leaders through a **five-step implementation process** for translating Guidelines recommendations into practice. An overview of the implementation process is outlined in **Table 1**. Further detail on each step is outlined in the [implementation toolkit](#).

Table 1. A step-by-step approach to implementing Guidelines recommendations into practice

Step	Tasks
Step 1. Implementation planning	1.1. Familiarise yourself with the Guidelines 1.2. Choose which recommendations to implement 1.3. Implementation project planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose team • Define aims and scope • Consider timeline
Step 2. Identify current evidence-to-practice gaps	2.1. Choose implementation indicators 2.2. Choose how to look for implementation indicators 2.3. Identify where the gaps are within service delivery 2.4. Determine implementation status 2.5. Prioritise which gaps to include in work plan
Step 3. Identify barriers to implementation	3.1. Choose how to define barriers 3.2. Choose how to look for barriers 3.3. Prioritise which barriers to focus on
Step 4. Choose implementation strategies and tools	4.1. Choose how to define implementation strategies and tools 4.2. Identify organisational strengths 4.3. Map implementation strategies and tools to barriers 4.4. Prioritise which implementation strategies or tools to include in work plan
Step 5. Implement and evaluate change	5.1 Develop implementation workplan 5.2 Carry out and revise work plan as needed 5.3 Sustain and scale improvements