

# Australian Mental Health Care Classification

The Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA) is responsible for the development of the classification systems that provide the healthcare sector with a nationally consistent method of classifying all types of patients, their treatment and associated costs.

## Overview

**The Australian Mental Health Care Classification (AMHCC) was developed to provide more accurate and consistent data about the services provided across different mental healthcare settings. It is a clinically relevant classification that explains resource consumption (costs) at the consumer level.**

## Variables

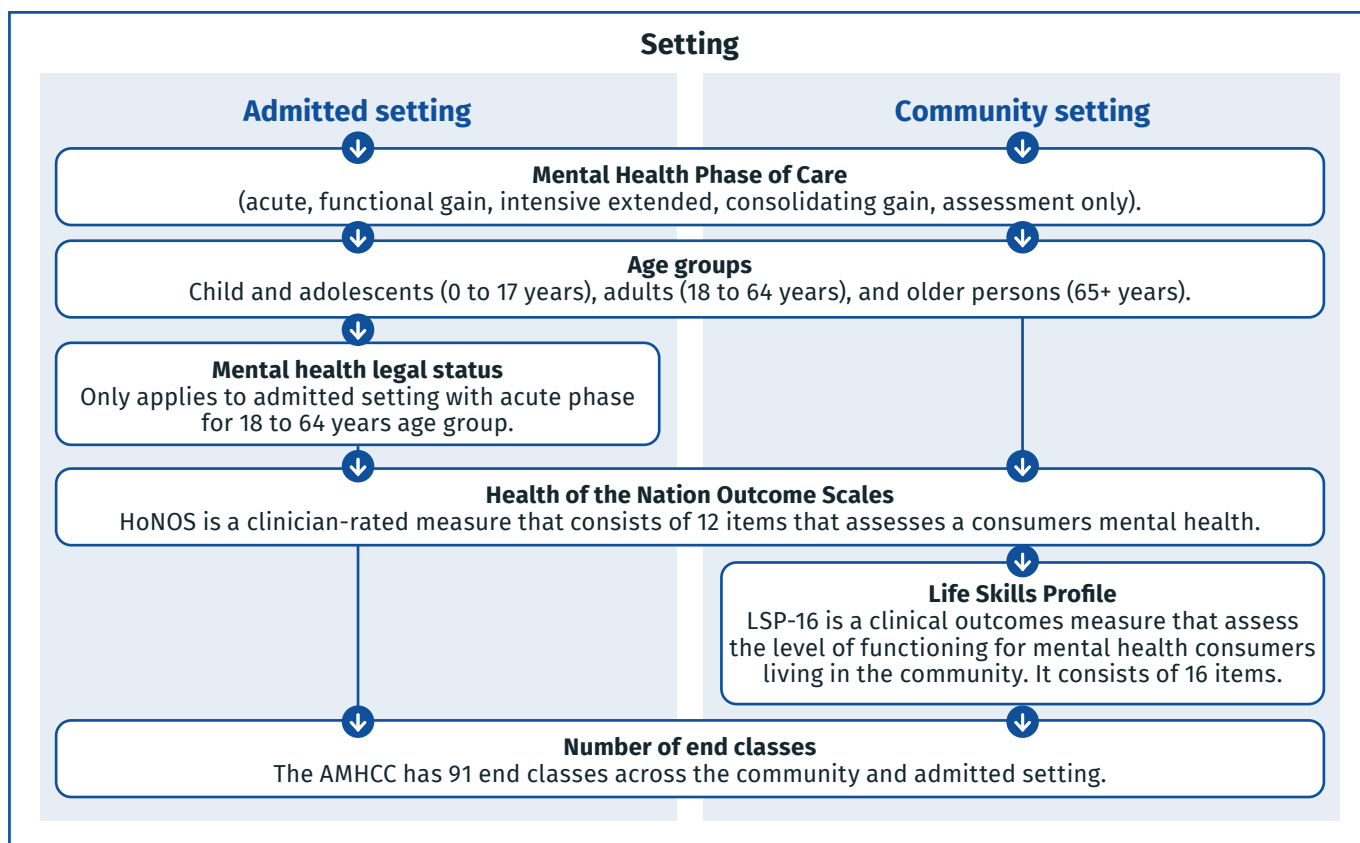
The classification has six major splitting variables. The first three variables are categorical variables, and the remaining variables are complexity variables.

The AMHCC incorporates the following variables:

- setting
- mental health phase of care
- age group
- complexity – Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS), mental health legal status (MHLS) and Life Skills Profile (LSP-16).

## What is the mental health phase of care?

The mental health phase of care is a key concept in the AMHCC and describes the primary goal of care for a consumer at a specific point in time. It is reported prospectively and describes the type and intensity of care expected for a consumer. Mental health phase of care can therefore be considered as a subset of an episode of care, with multiple mental health phases of care potentially making up an episode of care.

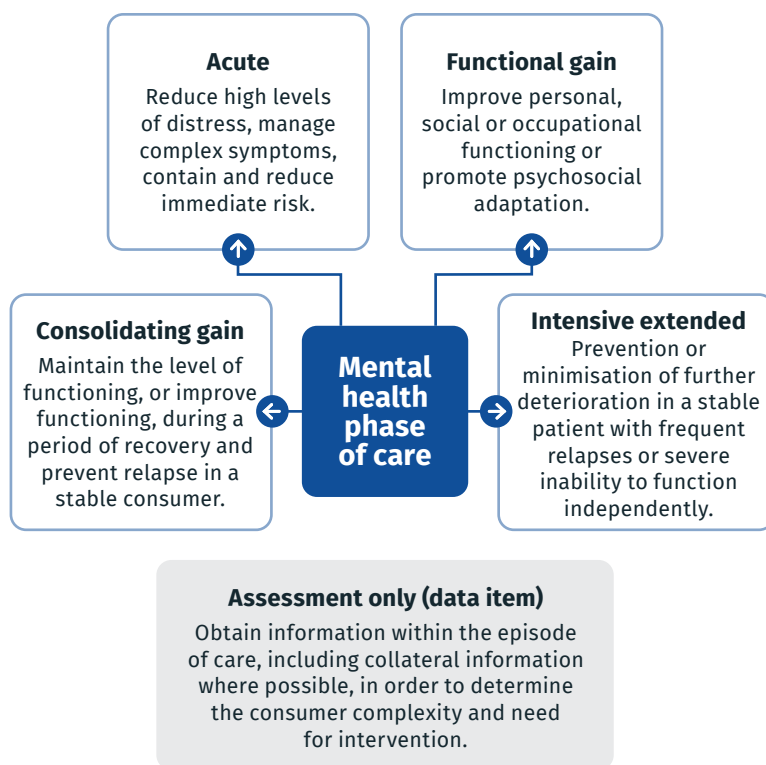


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## How is a mental health phase of care assigned?

- The consumer is assessed on admission or registration, on a transfer of care between settings, or where there has been substantial and sustained change.
- The assessment should be undertaken by the clinician/s along with someone who has the best understanding of the consumer's presentation and need for intervention, typically the case manager or primary treatment clinician or mental health team.
- A consumer will only have one mental health phase of care at any time. When care is co-managed or provided by multiple mental health services in the same setting, the mental health phase of care should be agreed by the treating providers.

The mental health phase of care is not collected at every contact made with the consumer and cannot be changed whilst a consumer is on leave from a healthcare service.



## How does the classification capture complexity?

The classification determines complexity by considering a number of variables including HoNOS, MHLS (for adults in an acute phase of care in the admitted setting) and LSP-16 for moderate HoNOS in the community setting.

### Health of the Nation Outcome Scales

The HoNOS is a clinical outcomes measure that captures the symptoms and functioning of the consumer at key points within an episode of mental health care. It is a clinician-rated measure that consists of 12 items that assess the various aspects of consumers' mental health.

### Life Skills Profile

LSP-16 is a clinical outcomes measure that assesses the level of functioning for mental health consumers living in the community. It consists of 16 items that address issues faced when adapting to life in the community.

### Mental health legal status

MHLS is categorised as voluntary or involuntary. MHLS is an indicator of whether mental health care is being provided under the state or territory mental health legislation. An involuntary consumer may be detained in hospital under mental health legislation for the purpose of assessment or provision of appropriate treatment or care.

- [AMHCC User Manual](#) – designed to provide detailed information for users of the AMHCC.
- [Mental Health Phase of Care Guide](#) – provides practical guidance on how to assess the mental health phase of care for a consumer.

## Further information

To learn more about the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority, get in touch with us via the details below.

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