

# THE 'STEPPED CARE' APPROACH

Mental Health & Addictions Community Services



Eastern  
Health

“**Stepped care**” is an evidence-based approach to care that involves matching individuals to the most appropriate level of care, based on their specific needs. This approach will be implemented in all community services throughout the eastern region. The steps in the service delivery model include:

## **Step 1: Self-Managed Care**

We invite clients to explore recommended websites, apps, pamphlets, YouTube, reading lists, etc., on their own. Some clients might be new to their diagnosis or treatment, and they would benefit from learning more and working through activities before seeking additional treatment. They might also like learning on their own; and if so, self-managed care resources are ideal. If their schedule makes attending therapy sessions challenging, these resources will provide them a means for beginning/continuing their recovery journey.

## **Step 2: Single Session Information-Based Groups**

We invite clients to a one-time information session to learn more about their needs and strengths, along with skills to help them recover. These are classes with a trained mental health professional, and they might be scheduled or offered on a drop-in basis.

## **Step 3: Therapist-Assisted Self-Managed Care**

Clients will be provided with an online program or materials sent through the mail; and they will be paired with a trained Mental Health professional to help coach them through the program. Programs in this step provide timely care by teaching skills through a distance coaching approach over the phone and/or internet in the comfort and privacy of one's home. Programs consist of 8-10 sessions, and clients can expect to meet weekly on the phone with their coach for up to 45 minutes.

## **Step 4: Skills-Based Groups**

We invite clients to attend a group specific to their needs. We have a variety of options in this step, including groups for anxiety, depression, and addictions. Some individuals feel energized by meeting other people who are having similar experiences, and they are ready to make a commitment to attend multiple session groups. These groups are classroom-style format.

Clients can expect to learn many skills and strategies for addressing their mental health issue. While they will not be expected to share their history or aspects of their personal life, participants in these groups will be expected to practice the skills taught and to share their practice experiences with the group. There are expectations that clients will complete daily readings and practice outside of group sessions, and clients will get as much out of the group as they put in.



### **Step 5: *Intensive Group Therapy***

Step five is very similar to step four; however, in this step, groups will be more “intensive.” This might mean the group is longer than 10 sessions; it might mean increased practice and sharing; and it could also include additional expectations (such as seeing an individual therapist at the same time as the group).

One current example of this step is Dialectical Behaviour Therapy skills group.

### **Step 6: *Individual Therapy***

Some clients will feel that they are needing and are ready for a more intensive one-on-one experience. Individual therapy is really intense work; and as part of individual therapy, clients will be asked to set clear goals and to work towards these with the therapist’s guidance.

As with Steps 4 and 5, there is an expectation that clients engage in therapy work (skills practice, reflective journaling, readings, etc.) outside of session and experiment with new behaviors between sessions for review with their therapist. The more practice, the more chance there is for recovery.

This is a personalized service, so there is a large expectation for participation and sharing. Treatment might be a single-session, brief or longer-term. Need for ongoing treatment and client goals will be reviewed regularly.

### **Step 7: *Specialized Services***

These include:

- Psychiatric consultation,
- Traumatic Stress Services,
- Day Treatment Program,
- Concurrent Disorders and Specialized Addictions Treatment Program (CAST),
- Opioid Treatment Centre,
- HOPE Program (Eating Disorders),
- ACTT (Assertive Community Treatment Team), and
- Inpatient Treatment Centers (Tuckamore, Grace and Recovery Centres)

***Please note:*** Clients will enter this service at the level that best meets their current needs and abilities, but may move up and down the steps throughout the course of their treatment. [www.easternhealth.ca](http://www.easternhealth.ca)