

*“every
door is
the right
door”*



Enhancing concurrent capability

A toolkit for
managers and staff



Alberta Health
Services

Addiction and Mental Health



Addiction and Mental Health Services (AMH) has adopted a concurrent-capable approach to enhance care and ensure integration of services.

What is the purpose of the Enhancing Concurrent Capability toolkit?

The toolkit is being developed to facilitate concurrent-capable practice across Alberta Health Services (AHS), AMH. The toolkit will be comprehensive, covering a number of areas related to concurrent capability. Content will be broken down into chapters and released in phases. The following chapters will be developed over time to address the essential components of concurrent capability:

- a welcoming and engaging strategy
- a working knowledge of AMH issues
- a standard approach to screening
- comprehensive assessment
- integrated treatment planning
- comprehensive interventions
- case management and service co-ordination
- continuous care recognizing the chronic nature of AMH disorders

This toolkit has been designed as both a practical guide and a reference source. It provides an introduction to key issues and good practice within the field of addiction and mental health, and aims to promote concurrent-capable practice. It is intended to provide relevant information to promote discussion.

We have tried to maintain a balance between providing guidelines and encouraging innovation. Examples of good practice, tips, guides and templates are offered to facilitate the introduction of new or improved strategies. These tips, guides and templates are offered as suggestions only. Throughout the chapters there are suggested activities and summaries of the main points. Useful hyperlinks are embedded within the toolkit and a reference list will help you to explore areas in more detail.

The toolkit is arranged to allow busy practitioners to identify the information they need and focus on one or two pieces at a time without having to read the entire chapter. There is a lot of information, so take your time and read it at your own pace. We advise that you reread sections that apply to you and discuss the content with your colleagues so you have more than one opportunity to absorb and reflect on the content.

Intended audience

This toolkit is a resource for staff who work with clients/patients with concurrent addiction and mental health issues, in a variety of settings, across the continuum of care.

This toolkit will help professionals to build on their existing knowledge and skills.

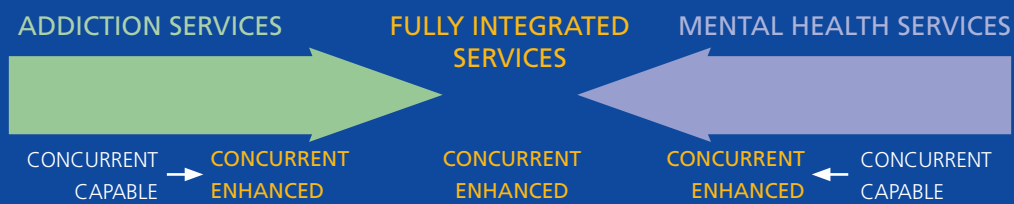
Although the toolkit is designed for AMH, we believe that it has potential for broader application. We need to remember that people with addiction, mental illness and concurrent disorders present to a variety of places for assistance.

What is concurrent capability?

Concurrent capability refers to the ability to identify, manage and treat people who present to either addiction or mental health services with concurrent disorders. The term “concurrent disorders” was used in the Health Canada document *Best Practices for Concurrent Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders* (2002) and is now widely used across Canada. AHS, AMH has adopted this term. Definitions of concurrent disorders have included a wide-reaching and diverse range of disorders including physical health and behavioural addictions. Taking into account all current thinking and for the purpose of planning, AMH will begin with a focused and conservative approach to defining “concurrent disorders.”

$$\text{CONCURRENT DISORDERS} = \text{MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER} + \text{SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND/OR PROBLEM GAMBLING}$$

Concurrent capacity develops and exists along a continuum from concurrent capable to concurrent enhanced. Components and criteria have been developed to describe both “concurrent-capable” and “concurrent-enhanced” care. A tool for staff to facilitate an assessment of concurrent capability from a patient, program and staff perspective is under development.



Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2005). *Substance Abuse Treatment for Persons With Co-Occurring Disorders*. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 42. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Many services within AMH are already working in concurrent-capable and concurrent-enhanced ways.

Why is enhancing concurrent capability important?

The high prevalence of concurrent disorders in mental health and addiction settings means that we should consider people coming into service with both these disorders as the expectation and not the exception. When an individual experiences both a mental health disorder and a substance use disorder at the same time, these problems influence each other in their development, their severity, their response to treatment and their relapse circumstances. If a health-care provider attempts to treat either disorder without recognizing and responding to the concurrent disorder, the treatment is likely to be less effective.

The capacity of a system to organize concurrent-capable services as a minimum standard is critical to strengthening the efficiency and efficacy of service delivery to the addiction and mental health population.

What are the goals of concurrent-capable care?

- Improved service for addiction, mental health and concurrent disorder clients and their families, throughout all stages of their journey within our systems of care
- Effective and efficient interaction and intervention for addiction, mental health and concurrent disorder clients and their families
- Standardization of care regardless of the point of entry into the system, embodying the concept that “every door is the right door”
- Further integration and improved collaboration within and between AMH teams, programs and services