

Implementing a Stepped Care Model (SCM) to Match Patients to Outpatient Mental Health Services



Archna Patel RN, MN, BScN, BSc, CPMHN(C); Laera Gattoni MPH, BSc; Laura Leong Ph.D., C.Psych. Psychologist; Darlene Ginsberg RN, BScN, CPMHN(C)



Lessons Learned

The implementation of the SCM allows for patients to receive the most appropriate lowest barrier care as quickly as possible thereby aligning with the Stepped Care Model and the quality standards.

Description

In alignment with best practices, the adult outpatient mental health program at Humber River Hospital (HRH) implemented a Stepped Care Model. Instead of patients only being referred to psychiatry, services of various intensities are offered to patients. Sorted into “steps”, services are arranged from low to high intensity. Patients can complete one step at a time and once completed, can continue to another step as required or can be discharged. This model benefits patients by minimizing large wait-lists for services as lower intensity “steps” are often group-based and therefore can promote efficiencies in the referral process.

Actions Taken

The clinician screening included clinician engagement with patients to collect health information, history, primary concerns, and goals. In collaboration with patients, clinicians were then able to determine the most suitable starting step of the SCM.

Summary of Results

During the implementation of the SCM from May 7, 2021 to March 31, 2022, 496 referred patients were screened. By placing patients in the appropriate “step”, the clinician screening process allowed patients to access the most appropriate service first. 32% of patients screened during this time-period were referred to services other than psychiatry, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Group, Mood/Anxiety Group, and Community/Self-help Resources.

Step/Service in Clinic	#	% of Total
Psychiatry (4)	337	68%
Inactivate	45	9%
Mood and Anxiety Group (2)	33	7%
Coping with and Accepting Strong Emotions (CASE) Group (2)	20	4%
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Group (2)	19	4%
Community/Self-help Resources (1)	18	4%
Taking Charge Group (4)	15	3%
Nurse Practitioner Clinic (3)	5	1%
Physician Case Conference (4)	4	1%
Total	496	100%

Table 1. Step Identified from Clinician Screening: May 7, 2021 – March 31, 2022. Note: Intensity tier (ie. 1 = lowest intensity, 4 = highest intensity) identified in brackets beside Step Name.

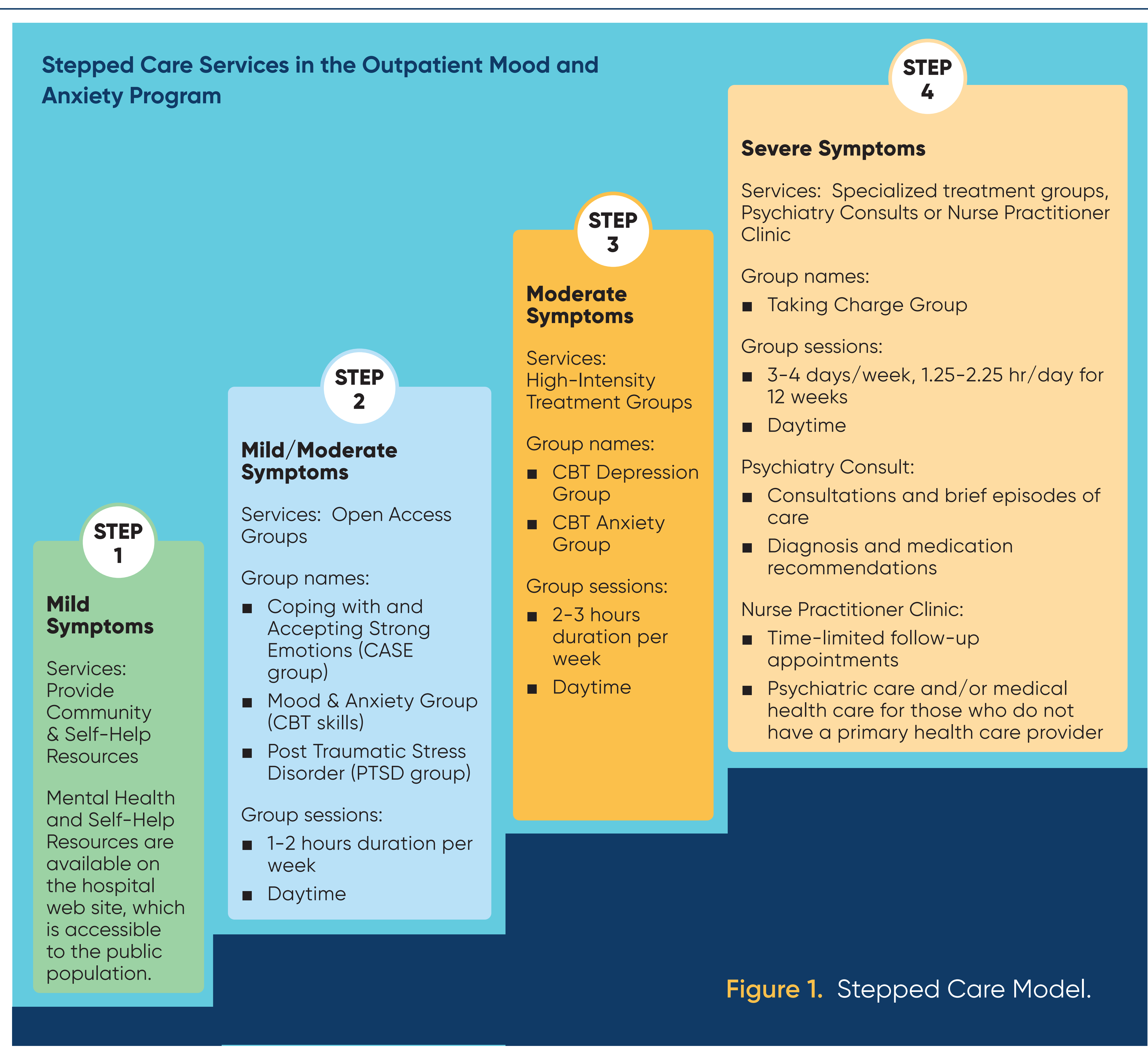


Figure 1. Stepped Care Model.