

Case Management - Homelessness

This document talks about reducing the risk of homelessness.

Case management refers to a collaborative and planned approach to ensuring that a person who experiences homelessness gets the services and supports they need to move forward with their lives. Originating from the mental health and addictions sector, case management can be used more broadly to support anyone experiencing homelessness. It is a comprehensive and strategic form of service provision whereby a case worker assesses the needs of the client (and potentially their family) and, where appropriate, arranges, coordinates and advocates for delivery and access to a range of programs and services designed to meet the individual's needs.

A client-centered case management approach ensures that the person who has experienced homelessness has a major say in identifying goals and service needs, and that there is shared accountability. The goal of case management is to empower people, draw on their strengths and capabilities, and promote an improved quality of life by facilitating timely access to the necessary supports, thus reducing the risk of homelessness and/or enhancing housing stability.

In reviewing case management as a key component to ending homelessness, [Milaney](#) identified it as a strengths-based team approach with six key dimensions:

1. Collaboration and cooperation – a true team approach, involving several people with different backgrounds, skills and areas of expertise;
2. Right matching of services – person-centered and based on the complexity of need;
3. Contextual case management – Interventions must appropriately take account of age, ability, culture, gender and sexual orientation. In addition, an understanding of broader structural factors and personal history (of violence, sexual abuse or assault, for instance) must underline strategies and mode of engagement;
4. The right kind of engagement – Building a strong relationship based on respectful encounters, openness, listening skills, non-judgmental attitudes and advocacy;
5. Coordinated and well-managed system – Integrating the intervention into the broader system of care; and
6. Evaluation for success – The ongoing and consistent assessment of case managed supports.

There are a number of useful resources to help service providers deliver case management in the homelessness sector. The Calgary Homeless Foundation has developed a report called “Dimensions of Promising Practice for Case Managed Supports in Ending Homelessness”. In Australia, the government has a dedicated [website](#) with a large number of resources for doing case management with people who have experienced homelessness. Finally, the National Alliance to End Homelessness also has a number of resources dedicated to this topic.