


## Health needs

The **medical and other health needs** of people living with mental illness or psychological distress are to be **identified and responded to**, including any medical or health needs that are related to the use of alcohol or other drugs. In doing so, the ways in which a person's **physical and mental health needs may intersect** should be considered.

**Identify physical health concerns** by asking the person about their views, preferences and priorities for their physical health. Respect where the person is at - if they are not ready to address an aspect of their health, revisit this later. Ask what is important to them, what they would like to maintain, change or improve, and if there is anything that worries them.

**Be aware of and offer tailored support in response to physical health disparities** for some communities. For example, develop specific strategies to support the physical health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. Be mindful of the impact of systemic discrimination on access to services, and that some people may prefer to access specialist services: Aboriginal-led services and LGBTIQ+ services.

 **Give relevant information, education and support to identify and explain choices:** For example, explain mental health treatment options, and their possible physical health impacts or side effects as well as their expected benefits. Prioritise the person's treatment preferences, including any concerns about previous experiences, side effects, or trauma. In addition, explain options for addressing their physical health priorities.

**Work with the person to develop a holistic plan** that reflects their individual needs and preferences. Recognise the importance of cultural and spiritual activities as part of a person's overall wellbeing and include these as priorities where this is in line with the consumer's preferences.

**Address alcohol and drug needs** as part of holistic care planning, in line with the person's priorities.

**Make referrals** to other parts of your service or external services to help the person access the services they need.

**Support the person to address barriers** to improving their physical health - for example, managing medication side effects, exploring financial support, or finding accessible or inclusive activities that meet their preferences.

**Be non-judgmental** about any alcohol or drug use - explore the person's reasons for substance use and how it impacts and intersects with their mental health, wellbeing and recovery.

**Explore interest in reducing or quitting smoking** if the person is a smoker, and offer evidence-based support.

**Monitor physical health regularly:** Prioritise the person's experiences and views about what is or isn't working well for them and where they would like more support.

