

# Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

## Information for Referrers

*The Women's and Children's Health Network acknowledges Aboriginal People as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Country throughout South Australia. We acknowledge and respect their ongoing and deep spiritual connection and relationship to land, air, sea, water, community and country. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.*

### About Us

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is a community-based tertiary mental health service as part of the Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN) across South Australia. We provide care to mothers in the perinatal period, infants, children and young people up to the age of 16 (up to 18 in some regions) and their families, with severe and complex emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. We employ a multidisciplinary workforce including Social Workers, Mental Health Nurses, Midwives, Nurse Practitioners, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Workers and Clinicians, Occupational Therapists and Speech Pathologists. Our teams work across a wide range of services including Community-based services, specialised inpatient mental health units based at the WCHN and Glenside Campuses and specialised state-wide Consultation and Liaison Services. Our therapeutic focus is on addressing disorder, fostering healing, enhancing adaptation and improving resilience.

CAMHS recognises that mental health difficulties sit within a context of an individual's life, their childhood and histories, beliefs and aspirations and correlates with adversities such as socio-economic hardship, cultural prejudice and trauma. We aim to assist children, young people, new parents, and families to develop strengths for the future, in the understanding that families themselves will keep learning and building on changes they have been supported to make. CAMHS recognises that families, carers, schools, and the whole community are integral in the development and maintenance of the mental health of infants, children, and young people. CAMHS engages in partnerships and provide consultation and education within the wider community, as well as developing partnerships with multiple government and non-government agencies and health care services.

We also recognise the specific challenges related to providing services across South Australia with its vast geographical area and diverse populations. To this end, CAMHS is committed to making use of all technological aids and the creative and flexible deployment of clinicians to ensure that all children and their families have equity of access to services, should they meet our inclusion criteria.

### Who do we see?

As a state-wide specialised tertiary mental health service, CAMHS consider referrals with the following complex challenges:

- Severe and complex emotional, behavioural, or mental health challenges related to significant, persistent emotional difficulties (e.g. depression, anxiety, chronic distress)
- difficulty regulating emotions and/or undertaking high risk behaviours (e.g. self-harm, suicidal ideation, disordered eating, persistent aggressive behaviour,



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substance misuse, aggressive and/or coercive sexual behaviour, transience/homelessness)

- severe and complex emotional, behavioural, or mental health challenges and/or responses related to traumatic events
- psychiatric illness (e.g. delusional thinking and/or psychosis) that cannot be safely or adequately managed through primary care mental health services
- disability (with associated mental health difficulties)
- experiences related to gender dysphoria.

In addition, CAMHS recognises the greater likelihood of mental health challenges and complexities in relation to engagement with services, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and their families and, children and young people under the Guardianship of the Minister. Therefore, CAMHS will prioritise access for these groups.

### Making a referral via CAMHS Connect

**Please note: CAMHS Connect is not a crisis service and should you have any concerns, if the young person is in crisis, or if they are at an acute risk of harming themselves or others, please contact emergency services on 000. In a mental health emergency, please contact Mental Health Triage on 13 14 65 or the Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.**

Referral enquiries are managed by our CAMHS CONNECT Triage Service. Calls and faxes are received and assessed by our experienced clinicians who accept referrals according to our Model of Care. **Consent from the Legal Guardian (if under 16 years) or the young person must be obtained in order to proceed with an assessment.**

We have recently changed our access pathway for referral enquiries. As a tertiary service, referrals are considered from General Practitioners, relevant health professionals, private health and education providers, school counsellors and from mental health community organisations rather than referrals made by a parent or carer. CAMHS recognises that access to primary providers in some areas of South Australia is limited; therefore, referral pathways will remain flexible. If parents or carers contacts CAMHS, their concerns will be heard and assessed for immediate risk as per the current management and escalation processes within our teams. However, any non-urgent enquiries will be respectfully redirected to their GP or primary health care provider.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to continue to contact an Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Worker directly via their local CAMHS Community team. We will also continue to work with local Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Aboriginal Community Groups to strengthen the existing culturally sensitive ways to detect consumers with serious mental health concerns.

For further information please refer to our Website. <https://www.wchn.sa.gov.au/our-network/camhs>

CAMHS Connect can be contacted on 1300 222 647 or via fax (08) 84296184.

CAMHS Executive Office  
Level 1 55 King William Rd  
North Adelaide SA 5006  
Telephone (08) 8161 7198  
CAMHSResources@sa.gov.au



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Women's and Children's  
Health Network