

The USA Compass-EZ™ integrated care organisational capability audit tool: Adaptation for Australian Alcohol and Drug (AOD) and Mental Health (MH) organisations.

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Background:

Enabling the provision of quality AOD and MH integrated care has been a challenging issue in Victoria for decades. To address the issue, First Step piloted the US Compass-EZ integrated care organisational capability audit tool in 2021, identifying that adaptation to the Victorian context was necessary. This aligned with the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recommendation to establish a statewide specialist addiction and mental health centre, and the subsequent launch of the Hamilton Centre in 2023.

Description of Model of Care/intervention:

In 2025, the Hamilton Centre funded the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) to adapt the Compass-EZ™ tool for Victorian treatment contexts. A diverse working group, including sector representatives, people with lived experiences, and Indigenous Australians, was established to ensure broad applicability, with a sub-working group focused on tool rewording.

Effectiveness/Acceptability/implementation:

Regular meetings, consultation with the tool's original authors and avenues for feedback allowed for an iterative process in making meaningful change to wording, whilst retaining the tool's validity. The revised tool and user guide are currently being tested with Victorian mental health and wellbeing (MHWB) service teams and people with lived and living experience. Early results highlight the need for minor text changes; however, key criteria, including ease of understanding, relevance, safety, and inclusivity, were met.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

Following final drafting of the tool, approval and licensing by its original authors in the USA will be sought and the process for implementation across MH and AOD organisations in Victoria will be developed.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

Organisational capability in integrated care is vital to support sustainable best practice. It is anticipated that the revised tool will have broad Australian applicability, with ongoing roll out in Victoria directly supported by the Victorian Department of Health.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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