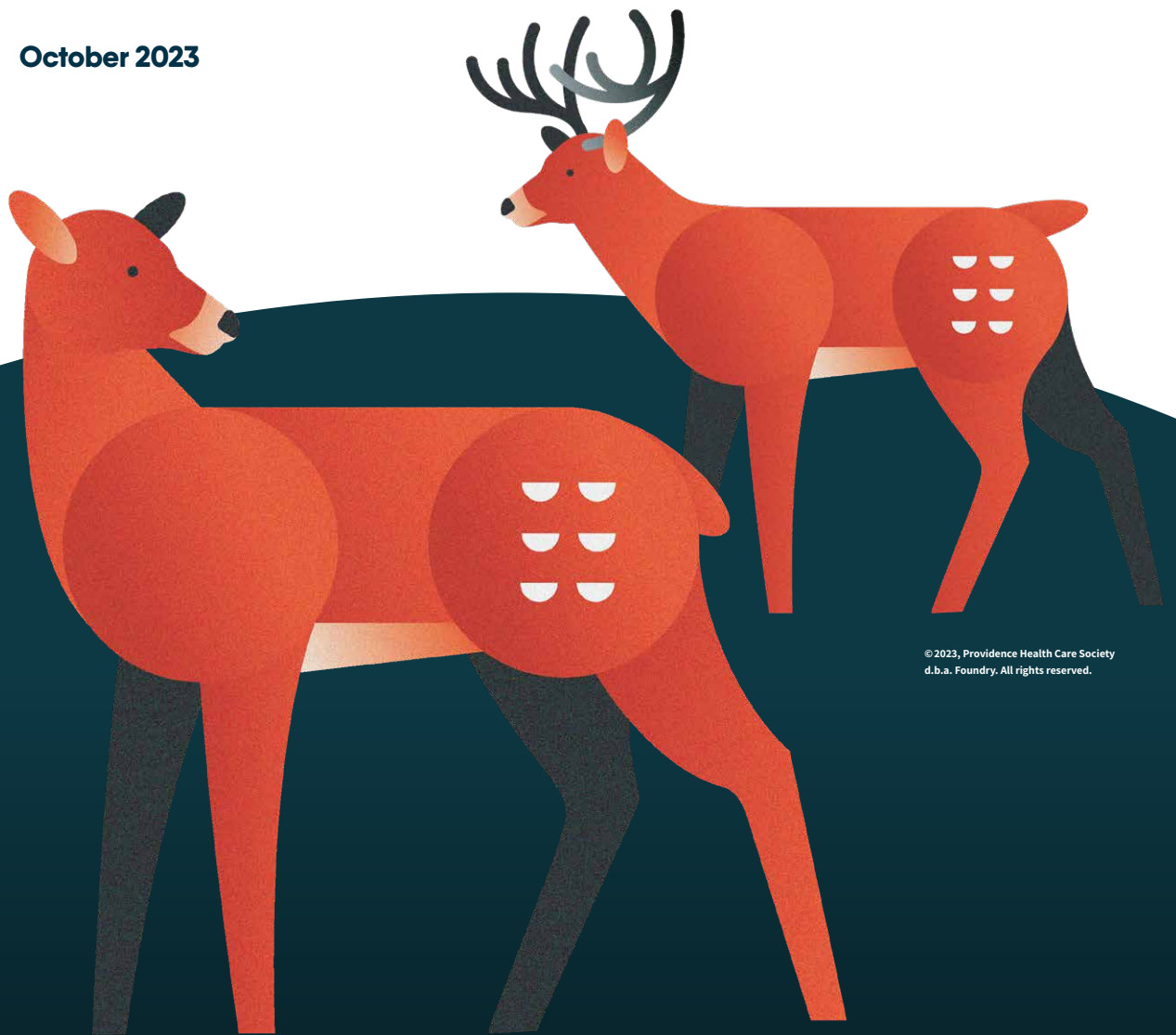


· F O U N D R Y ·

Integrated Stepped Care Model Overview

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Introduction

Every young person's journey to wellness is unique, especially when it comes to mental health. We want to ensure that our evidence-informed care model is flexible to best meet the individual needs of every young person who comes to Foundry.

To be able to provide this personalized care, we have developed an Integrated Stepped Care Model (ISCM) for Foundry. This model gives order to how we provide services across Foundry centres and between different service providers. By following the ISCM, we can help young people, their families/caregivers and service providers to choose the most effective interventions to support young people experiencing concerns related to mental health and/or substance use. The ISCM places emphasis on early intervention to offer effective support to young people before issues overwhelm or illnesses progress to the point of requiring limited, specialized services.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the model, as well as information about how we developed it. Many thanks to Foundry's Provincial Clinical Collaborative and Knowledge Exchange (leaders, clinicians and physicians across the network) who have been diligently working to develop the ISCM and support its implementation.

Background

Integrated Youth Services

Integrated youth services (IYS) refer to a variety of services that are brought together to treat a young person holistically. These services are not merely co-located – they are integrated and work together collaboratively, connecting services and sharing relevant clinical information.

Foundry brings together five core service streams for young people ages 12–24: mental health, substance use support, physical and sexual health, social services and youth and family peer support. In Foundry centres, service providers work together as a single team to support a young person and also help to provide access to more specialized services when required.

IYS offers an enormous benefit to youth, their families/caregivers and service providers. With integrated care, young people are able to move through services without having to tell their stories multiple times and without needing to navigate complex referral systems. Young people and their families/caregivers can be confident that their service providers are communicating about their goals, needs and options, and that they will not be left on their own to connect to service providers.

Service providers working in an integrated system are coordinated around the youth's goals for care. Service providers are able to share and receive vital information with others in the youth's circle of care. They know what interventions the young person has received and what recommendations other service providers have made. Integrated care allows service providers to collaborate with other providers around the young person — regardless of which agency employs them.

At the centre of Foundry's IYS model is a holistic service framework that structures the care offered in centres. The service framework sets out the five service streams and our Integrated Stepped Care Model, providing evidence-informed, culturally agile services and supports across the social determinants of health.

Stepped Care

Stepped care provides a framework for designing a more wholistic and integrated system of service delivery. Organizing multiple services along a continuum of support optimizes resources and increases access. In stepped care, the type and intensity of a service is matched to the needs and preferences of a young person seeking service. Lower intensity services are less intensive, more autonomous and require less investment (i.e., commitment and time, such as online psycho-educational resources) compared to high intensity services, such as multiple sessions of psychotherapy.

In stepped care, the services are what is stepped, and the young person is oriented to the range of services that they can access. Each young person receives the most effective yet least intensive option first targeted to their individual needs, goals and readiness. This ensures a more efficient use of services by only offering high intensity, complex and more challenging interventions when less intensive ones have not worked. This approach also helps minimize the life disruptions that can be associated with more intensive treatments.

The visual representation of this model is about offering services along a trajectory, and young people can access services along a continuum of care in a manner aligned with their changing needs and in response to services and supports.

Addressing gaps in the system of care

Stepped care models are evidence-informed and cost-effective treatment options with a strong history in adult mental health services, but there is a need for more robust evidence in populations of youth and young adults with challenges related to mental health and substance use.¹ In Foundry, the ISCM takes a wholistic approach by addressing a young person's needs and strengths across different aspects of their lives — as reflected in the five core service streams Foundry provides — and across partners and service providers.

Foundry's work includes ensuring we create culturally safe and respectful environments for equity-denied groups including IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) communities.

We recognize our role and responsibility as a white settler organization in calling out and dismantling colonialism and racism in the work we do.

Our journey includes committing to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action, the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and the recommendations of the report "In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care."

In the traditional, conventional Canadian health care system, resources tend to be allocated reactively; they are geared towards high-intensity services with strict inclusion criteria to best support clients in acute crisis or requiring specialist services. Unfortunately, this system of resource allocation can lead to young people with emerging sub-clinical disorders or mild-to-moderate symptoms either being ineligible for services until symptoms increase or having to wait a long time to receive services.

Due to this gap in the system of care, Foundry's ISCM is designed to ensure that appropriate, lower-intensity services are readily available to young people with mild-to-moderate or emerging mental health and/or substance use concerns. However, young people with a range of low to high needs have been presenting at Foundry centres, and evidence shows that services of all intensities can be beneficial if they meet the need at the time. Although our ISCM prioritizes intervening early, before severe conditions develop, and reserves high-intensity services for the clients who most need them, we recognize that young people may need to be ready to engage in higher intensity services and all can benefit from lower intensity services. We support young people in accessing the services and supports that best meet their needs, readiness and preference.

Furthermore, our ISCM also allows lower-step interventions to continue support if there is a waiting period for high-intensity services. This increases access and offers flexibility for youth. Young people can also access more than one service that are of different intensities. To address a young person's needs holistically, other services and supports outside of mental health and substance use are available and can be incorporated as appropriate.



The ISCM provides a common framework around which all service providers, regardless of discipline or organization, coordinate service delivery at Foundry. This framework facilitates the intentional integration of services and collaborative planning around youth and their families/caregivers.

Developing the ISCM

With representatives from Foundry centres, regional health authorities and the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Child and Youth Mental Health teams, Foundry's Clinical Working Group was made up of clinical leaders, clinicians and physicians. In December 2016, a small team within the Clinical Working Group was selected to lay down the framework of the model. To create the framework, this group:

- Reviewed the stepped care literature and identified evidence-informed best practices;
- Consulted with content experts in key areas: mood, anxiety and distress; substance use; and early psychosis;
- Collaborated with Foundry centres to ensure that the framework and its service options reflect clinicians' existing skillset and the programs already offered in each centre;
- Reviewed the draft stepped services with youth and families/caregivers with lived experience; and
- Validated draft stepped services through external clinical experts.

In 2019, a developmental evaluation on the early implementation of the ISCM at three centres (Campbell River, Kelowna and North Shore) led to the undertaking to refine the ISCM.² In early 2022, when centres achieved some stability after the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, we established an ISCM Refinement Project Team with FCO staff and leads from the Clinical Collaborative & Knowledge Exchange (the updated name of the Clinical Working Group) and conducted a review of ISCM training and implementation at six centres (Abbotsford, Campbell River, Kelowna, North Shore, Prince George and Victoria).

In addition to the learnings from the developmental evaluation and the work of the ISCM Project Refinement Team, the ISCM documents and training have also been informed by the work of Stepped Care Solutions, a non-profit consultancy group that supports transformation of mental health and substance use services.³

Bringing Foundry's Values to Life

Foundry's values are the cornerstones that guide us in the workplace and in our communities. As we learn and develop as a team and as individuals, we are all working towards living these values:

Learn and evolve

Appreciate individuality

Celebrate community

Share the load

Committed to youth

Embrace nuance

When implementing the ISCM at a centre, we can bring these values to life by remembering:

- It's as important to learn from youth as it is to help provide them with what they need. We learn from one another and validate our understanding by having conversations to ensure we're all moving in the right direction.
- No two experiences and needs are ever alike. Each young person has a unique need, story and journey that we want to understand.
- We rely on each other's knowledge. No individual or partner is greater than another because we all work together to respond to the needs of young people.
- We are a network of support for youth and for each other. We are a whole greater than the sum of our parts when we collaborate.
- While there are multiple experts and stakeholders, and decisions to make, at the end of the day, we always put young people first.
- We understand that needs and people can change at any time. We listen and understand each journey, knowing each solution and decision can be tailor-made.

For more details on each of the Foundry values, please see the Introduction to the Service Model Guide on [The Foundry Learning Centre](#).

Overview of Foundry's Integrated Stepped Care Model

In Foundry's ISCM, different interventions or services are provided in an integrated fashion, and service providers work together as a team around the young person. Foundry's ISCM is a systematic way of organizing services for young people with mental health and substance use concerns based on the level of support and service need, as well as readiness and preference.

The Four Steps

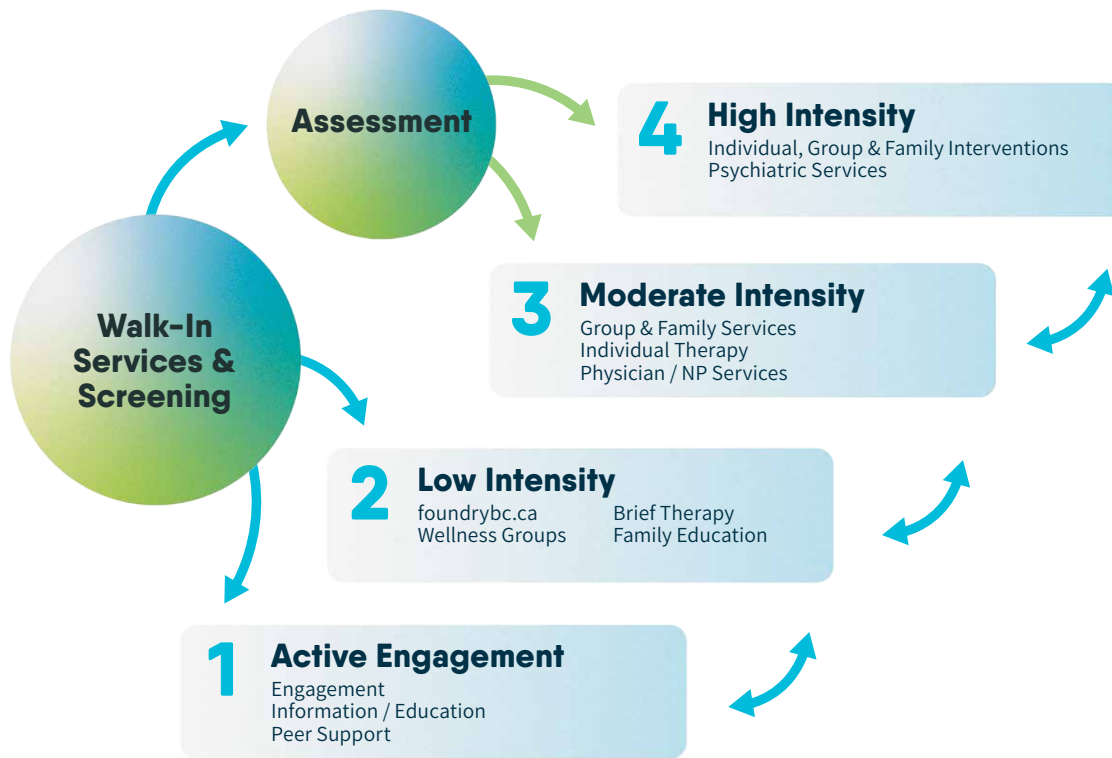
Our ISCM has four steps (see “Figure 1: Foundry's Integrated Stepped Care Model” on page 10), ranging from low- to high-intensity services that are offered at Foundry:

- **Step 1: Active Engagement** (referred to as “watchful waiting” in the literature) — Information/self-directed education, open access wellness groups, education groups, monitoring, peer support
- **Step 2: Low Intensity** — Single session walk-in counselling, brief therapy, psycho-educational groups, closed wellness groups, family education
- **Step 3: Moderate Intensity** — Individual psychotherapy, group therapy, medication as managed by family physician/nurse practitioner, family services
- **Step 4: High Intensity** — Specialist individual, group and family interventions, psychiatric services (These specialist services may be on site or accessed in community through a partnership referral process.)

Some services are offered outside of Foundry centres, with the same level of integration and collaboration, including:

- **Health promotion:** Mental health literacy, health promotion and prevention content through foundrybc.ca and Foundry social media; and
- **Transition to other local, regional and provincial services:** Mobile crisis response, inpatient care, bed-based services.

FIGURE 1: FOUNDRY'S INTEGRATED STEPPED CARE MODEL



A Focus on Integration

To fully and ideally implement the ISCM, high levels of coordination and integration are necessary, so that young people have seamless service experiences. At Foundry, service providers may work across multiple service streams, and they make sure to share information, use common documentation processes and communicate with each other regularly, while also clearly communicating with the young people.

The service streams are guided by the Foundry ISCM. The model identifies evidence-based interventions at each step of care for mood, anxiety and distress; substance use; early psychosis; and disordered eating; with trauma care services currently in development. By having an ISCM, team members from different organizations or various professional backgrounds have a shared framework to support discussions and shared decision making with young people.

Foundry is based on a partnership model, and services may be provided by different organizations. While all centres offer Foundry’s five service streams and core therapeutic modalities (i.e., Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Emotion-Focused Family Therapy), the complete range of services offered at any one Foundry centre will reflect the unique partnerships that each community has brought together in their centre. At Foundry, we believe it is crucial that all partners involved in each community are actively engaged in shaping the specifics of their local services to ensure full integration and effective interventions.

Implementing the ISCM

As a Foundry community begins to develop their ISCM, there are processes and practice standards to guide the work. Seven core components have been created to help centre leaders navigate the implementation process. These core components offer meaningful and actionable guidance on how to do the work in a good way, in line with Foundry’s values. For more information, see “Tools and Resources” on page 12.

Orientation and Training

Foundry Central Office (FCO) supports Foundry centres in several ways throughout their development.

The leadership of all service partners at each Foundry centre receive an initial orientation to our ISCM. Centre staff are provided training on the screening and assessment tools in Toolbox, as well as the practice of the core therapeutic modalities identified in the stepped services. Training may be provided by FCO staff, centre staff, online or through provincial workshops.

To ensure that knowledge is shared between Foundry centres and FCO, and among the different Foundry centres, we hold province-wide knowledge exchange meetings. Regular meetings with centre operations and clinical leadership allows FCO to responsively support all Foundry centres as needs and challenges arise in the implementation of the ISCM.

FCO Support

If you have questions or are looking for further information on Foundry's Integrated Stepped Care Model, please contact your FCO Manager, Service Implementation and Integration.

Tools and Resources

Visit [The Foundry Learning Centre](#) to access these tools and resources.

- Implementing Integrated Stepped Care Model Services

References

- 1 Berger M, Fernando S, Churchill A, Cornish P, Henderson J, Shah J, Tee K, Salmon A. Scoping review of stepped care interventions for mental health and substance use service delivery to youth and young adults. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*. 2021;16:327-341. Available at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/eip.13180
- 2 Salmon A, Berger M. Foundry's Integrated Stepped Care Model: A Principles-Focused Developmental Evaluation. Report 1 of Cycle 1 Findings. 2020 July.
- 3 Carey S, Jaouich A, Churchill A, Cornish P, Impey D, Kim M. Stepped Care 2.0 Revised Implementation Guide. Mental Health Commission of Canada.2021. Ottawa, ON.



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