



You in Mind – An Integrated Stepped Care Approach

Wrapping primary mental health care around individuals' needs

In 2017, following a local needs assessment and a comprehensive co-design process SWSPHN commissioned the You in Mind program to initially deliver moderate intensity psychological therapies to underserved groups (aged 12 years +). You in Mind was the first mental health program to be commissioned by SWSPHN and replaced the former ATAPS initiative as an accessible alternative to Medicare's Better Access scheme.

You in Mind gained recognition quickly among GPs and other local service providers, and five years on its moderate psychological therapies stream remains the most utilised SWSPHN commissioned program.

SWSPHN has commissioned two main Service Provider Organisations to deliver the You in Mind Program across the region since 2017, with a third provider that delivers the program specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

The challenge

As SWSPHN gained experience in commissioning primary mental health services, reviewed client journey's through commissioned programs through data, and further developed an understanding of the mental health needs of the region – it became apparent that SWSPHN's stepped care approach could be implemented more effectively. Clients were being referred into programs matched to their need at the time of referral, however, were not being stepped up or down as their needs changed, a number of reasons are thought to have contributed to this, however a key reason was that this was potentially disruptive to a client's continuity of care.

The approach

Due to its success, SWSPHN identified potential to expand the You in Mind program to become South Western Sydney's multi-tiered, integrated stepped care approach - enabling clients to be seamlessly referred between levels of care as their needs change, with the potential to continue to receive treatment with the same mental health professional and/or Service Provider Organisation.

The expansion commenced with the introduction of Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (LiCBT) based on Beyond Blue's NewAccess model of care in 2019, and then high intensity psychological therapies in 2020. Two existing Service Provider Organisations were directly engaged to ensure coverage across the region.

In 2021 the program was further expanded to include peer support through an open tender approach, with a requirement that the supplier would collaborate and develop formal partnerships with existing You in Mind Service Provider Organisation. The tender was awarded to one of the existing You in Mind Service Provider Organisations.

The impact

Today, the program offers low, moderate and high intensity psychological therapies and peer support for people with emerging to severe and persistent mental illness under one integrated, person-centred and flexible stepped care approach.

Building the capacity of the You in Mind program has enabled formal relationships to be developed between You in Mind and other Commissioned Services such as headspace centers where formal co-locations and referrals pathways have been established.

Whilst an evaluation is planned in 2022, initial review of PMHC-MDS data and anecdotal feedback indicates that the approach has been successful in streamlining referral and access to psychological therapies

The learnings

As SWSPHN began commissioning mental health services across the stepped care continuum, it was clear that achieving a true Stepped Care approach was not as easy in practice. By re-modelling to an integrated stepped care approach, within the same program, under the same Service Provider, PHNs can successfully provide continuity of care for clients and streamlined referral and access to different levels of care, as the clients' needs change. An enabler to this approach is the establishment of robust intake practices to ensure that clients have been referred to the program that best meets their needs, including but not limited to the implementation of the Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST).

Another potential enabler is the commissioning of the Peer Support Program which works alongside all three streams of the You in Mind program, thereby having the ability to support clients should they need support to transition between levels of care. The Peer Support Program also has an important role in working with the client and their You in Mind clinician to develop a collaborative care plan to assist in ensuring the service meets the client's needs.

The integrated stepped care approach also had some unexpected learnings, as demand for services increased over the years. With one Service Provider delivering all streams of the stepped care approach, clients could seamlessly be re-allocated to lower intensity services as an interim option for waitlist management. In addition, clinicians from one stream with the appropriate skills and experience could easily be re-deployed to another stream where there may be workforce capacity issues. As such, the You in Mind program became a demand management approach within itself.

Client outcome measures (K10+ and K5+) reveal the level of psychological distress they experienced reduced (by -6.09), indicating improvement in their mental health outcomes.



90% rated You in Mind as very good – excellent

"It provided me with support during a crucial period of my life. So much so, it helped me feel more hopeful and also helped me become more active in my own recovery."

"The quick support, care and truly helpful strategies and advice. I felt so lonely and sad and felt better from the first session. I am really enjoying seeing my clinician and am so grateful"

"Consistent psychologist for each session (no change of person I had to deal with)."

"It is accessible, free of charge, has no waiting list and such good communication with community, doctors and people trying to get help."

"You can't imagine how grateful I am that my son has someone to support him, I am so relieved that he is opening up and speaking to someone and I actually can't believe he has left the house to attend his appointments"

Clients' cultural background:

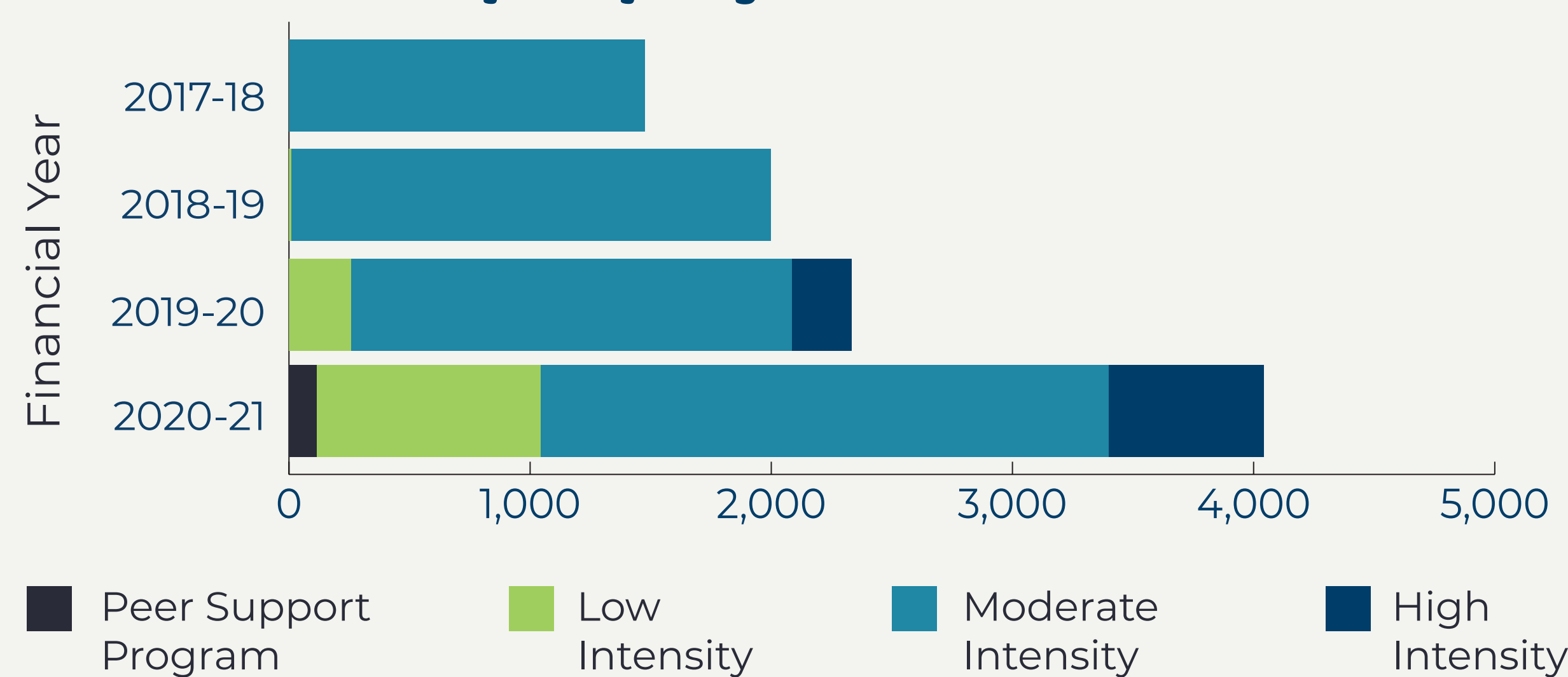


Average session hours per client 2020-21:

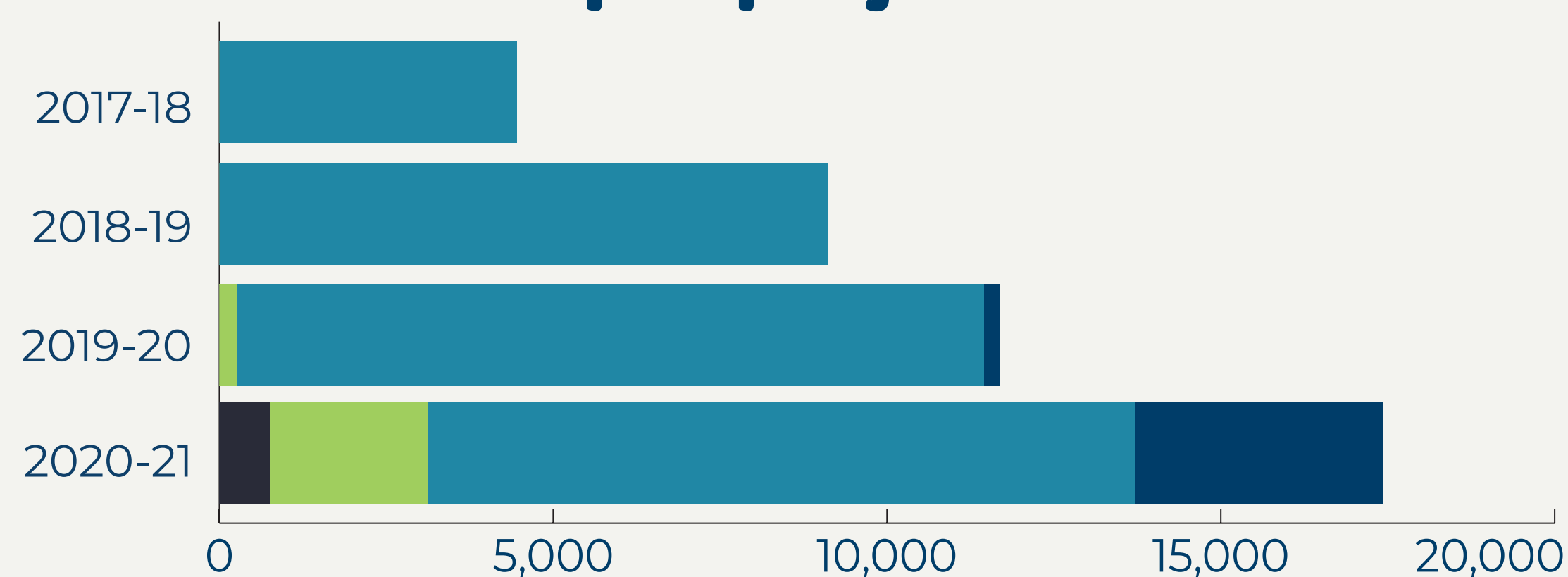


Average session per client data indicates clients accessing higher intensity services utilise more session hours than clients accessing lower intensity services. Therefore, the session hours provided to each client aligns to their level of need.

No. referrals per project stream:



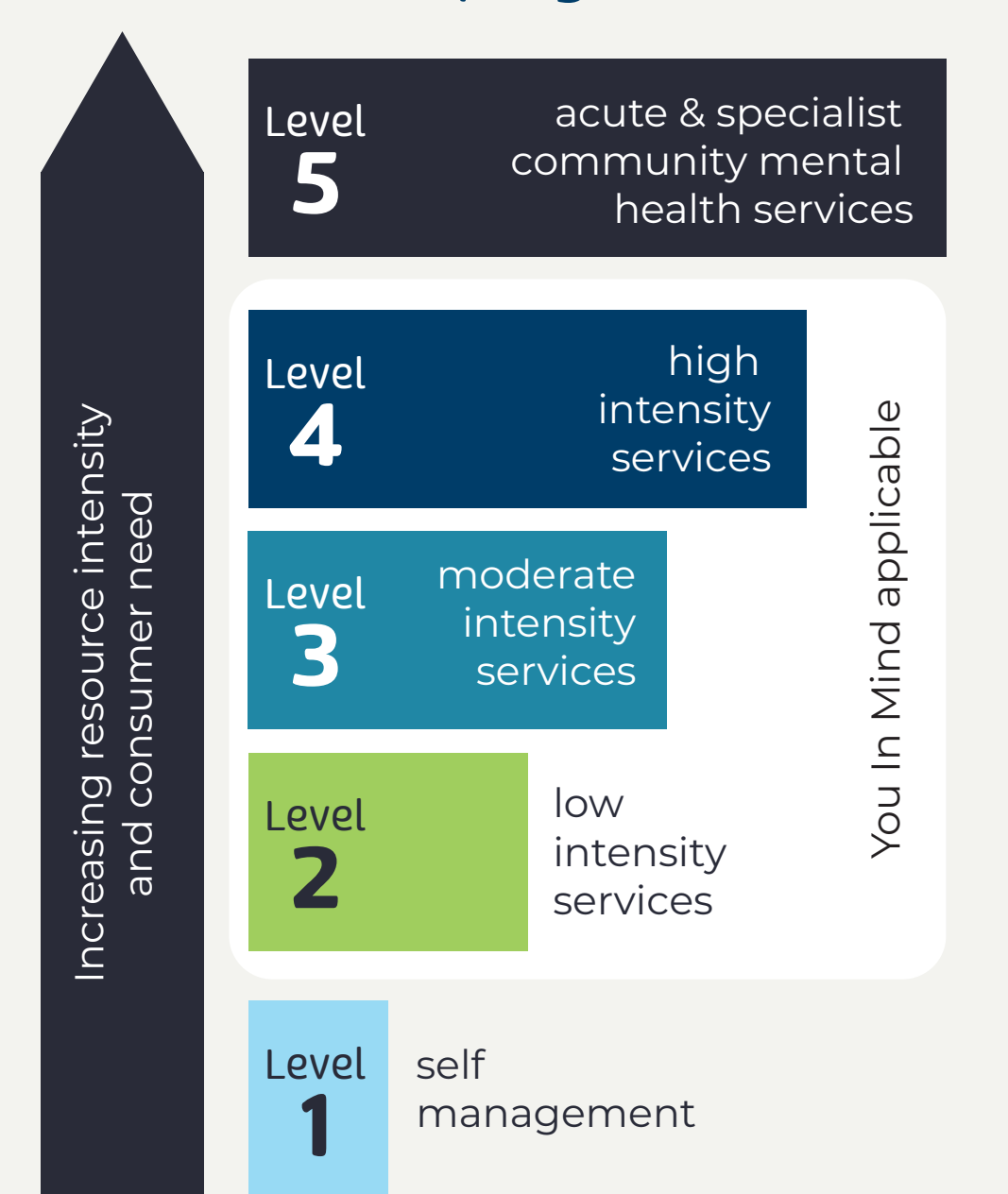
Session hours per project stream*:



*Session hours data error for 2018-19 Low Intensity project stream. Data shows that although referral numbers have increased across all programs, session hours delivered under moderate intensity services reduced from 2019-20 to 2020-21 as High Intensity and Low Intensity services were further established. This may imply reallocation of referrals from Moderate Intensity to High Intensity or Low Intensity services at intake/triaging.

Stepped care

Levels 2, 3 and 4 are applicable to this program



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