

# Understanding quality standards

What are quality standards?	Why are quality standards important?
Quality standards are resources that have clear, practical, and ambitious statements that describe best practices, processes, and supports required to provide the highest quality care, based on the best available evidence.	Quality standards enhance mental health and substance use health services by guiding care and supporting the measurement of outcomes. They amplify evidence-informed practices that benefit system leaders, agencies, young people, and families.
How do quality standards support our systems of care?	Quality standards support positive outcomes for young people and their families.
<b>At the system level</b> Standards help enhance consistency of care, promote accountability, close service gaps, and support ongoing improvement efforts.	<div><b>Standards improve consistency and efficiency of care</b></div>
<b>At the agency level</b> Standards help improve resources and training, increase care effectiveness, enhance service quality, and promote positive outcomes.	<div><b>Standards drive equity across the sector</b></div>
<b>At the individual level</b> Standards contribute to stigma reduction. They help young people and families know what high-quality care looks like so they can feel more confident to self-advocate.	<div><b>Standards support better measurement</b></div>
	<div><b>Standards enhance accountability and transparency</b></div>

## Quality standards quick reference

### What is unique about our standard development process?

- ✓ We consider implementation early and often to ensure standards are practical and useful in real-world settings.
- ✓ Young people and families are central to the process, with a focus on empowerment and meaningful involvement.
- ✓ We prioritize equity through culturally responsive, inclusive, and evidence-informed approaches that help reduce disparities in care.
- ✓ Our standards support personalized, accessible, and high-quality care that help normalize access and reduce stigma.

### Why do we focus on principles-based standards?

- ➔ They are flexible and values-driven, to remain meaningful and useful across different communities and services.
- ➔ This approach creates effective services that meet the needs of young people and families.

### Why are principles-based quality standards important?



**Flexible:** Can be applied in different ways to fit various communities and services.



**Holistic:** Focus on comprehensive well-being, ongoing improvement, and lasting impact.



**Empowering:** Young people and families are active decision-makers and have a voice in their care.



**Consistent:** Promote a unified approach across mental health and substance use health services.

[Learn more about quality standards on our website!](#)