

# Service mapping

## Implementing the Levels of care quality standard

### Introduction

#### What is a service map?

- A service map shows available services within an organization or community. It includes information about a service's population, location, and contact information.

#### Why service mapping?

- Identifying services will help you understand the continuum of care in your organization or community, who provides those services, and how organizations work together.
- A service map can be used to start conversations about whether gaps or duplications exist in services, referral pathways, or communication channels. This can inform decision making and planning about how services are accessed, promoted, and resourced so young people can receive high-quality care, as described by the [Levels of care quality standard: Matching the right care to needs and goals](#).

#### Who should do this?

- This service mapping activity can help your organization implement the Levels of care quality standard. It can also be used by anyone hoping to better understand the continuum of care in their organization or community. Service mapping can be completed by an implementation team in collaboration with relevant partners.

#### When should this be done?

- This activity can be used as you plan for change and assess your current state. You should revisit this map at regular intervals and make any necessary updates.

**Continuum of care** models include a spectrum of types and settings of care and treatment that reflect the concerns and severity of symptoms of clients. Principles of continuum of care models have inspired similar models, including levels of care. While both models include a spectrum of care and treatment that reflects the needs of the clients being served, levels of care include additional components of matching and movement (Knowledge Institute, 2025).



## In this tool

This tool provides guidance on how to plan for, develop, and use a service map.

Refer to these other resources to support service mapping:

- [Information collection template](#): Gather information about services.
- [Service map template](#): Organize your service information in one location.
- [Sample agenda for a service mapping meeting](#): Build shared understanding of the services in your map and generate ideas to improve service delivery and co-ordination.

## Service mapping guidance

### Plan



**1. Define your objectives:** Work out what you want the map to do.

- Clearly define the level of detail and geographical area you plan to capture in this map. Ask:
  - Who is the map intended for? Is it for your implementation team, organization staff, or young people and caregivers in the community? All of these? Others?
  - Are you mapping services internal to your organization or within the broader community?



**2. Identify your partners:** Think about who is involved in service planning.

- External community service planning tables and internal core service providing tables may be groups that already meet regularly. Ask:
  - Do you have an established table or existing services group?
- Depending on your identified objectives, develop a list of all organizations or groups in the selected area that provide mental health and substance use health support or care, as well as other services for young people. This could include internal programs or external community organizations like schools, non-profits, child welfare, mobile crisis teams, recreation programming, adult mental health services, and hospitals.
- Consider identifying partners from existing engagement maps, Ontario Health Teams, Youth Wellness Hubs, Community Health Centres, your local public health website, or online directories like [Connex Ontario](#). You can also ask other staff (particularly leadership).



**3. Gather information:** Contact your partners for information about their organization or services.

- Consider the level of detail that will be captured by the map so it doesn't become too complicated. Think about where you may need to include definitions.
  - Refer to the [Information collection template](#) for more guidance.
- You can share the information collection template (by email or in a meeting) with your partners to gather information.
  - If your organization already has a service map, include information from existing examples or lists.

## Develop



**4. Draft your service map:** Consolidate all services in a logical and organized way that best meets your objectives.

- Organize all your service information.
  - Use the [Service map template](#), or other software like Microsoft Visio, Excel, [Miro](#), or [Mural](#).
- Ensure services are easily identifiable by using standard naming conventions.



**5. Host a service mapping meeting:** Connect your partners.

- Plan how much time and what meeting spaces you may need to convene your partners.
  - The [Sample agenda](#) can help you think through these logistics.
- Contact each service/organization/group on your list to identify an appropriate person and invite them to a service mapping meeting.
- Share a copy of your drafted service map in advance and ask your partners to review it for accuracy.
- Invite your partners to bring additional information like service data or indicators, should you wish to discuss specific elements like partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding (MOUs), service usage rates, service user groups, data collection gaps and opportunities. This could also extend to sharing communication mechanisms, collaborative spaces, transportation resources, and other systems that could improve co-ordination and service delivery.



## Use



**6. Use your map:** Use your service map to inform implementation planning for the Levels of care quality standard.

Once you have drafted your service map and reviewed it with partners, consider your next steps. Here are some ideas.

- Create a new committee including organization representatives from your service map. Establish regular meetings to discuss enhancements to levels of care, service co-ordination efforts, and shared objectives. You can also invite relevant partners to join your implementation team.
- Match indicators to services so you can monitor impact.
  - See the [Quality standards measurement guide](#) for more information.
- Assess your service map for themes and trends to determine where strengths and service gaps exist related to the Levels of care quality standard. Ask:
  - How do the services on your map align with the quality statements or demonstrate promising practices?
  - Where will you focus your implementation efforts?
- Develop MOUs or protocols between organizations so you can more easily connect clients across services.
- Complete a process mapping activity to visualize pathways between the services you have mapped. Use this to identify measures like number of referrals, wait list lengths, client demographics, and presenting issues. Tracking these and other measures will help show where quality improvements can be made. Decide:
  - Can any services be better promoted or communicated by collaborating with other partners at the table?
- Evaluate where resources can be distributed or pooled – for example, broadening a youth engagement group or sharing space, staff training, and data.
- Consider strengthening service navigation by co-creating a list of all mental health and substance use health providers and services with young people and caregivers.
- Engage young people and caregivers to solicit their feedback and ideas.



**7. Maintain your map:** Regularly review and revise your service map.

- A service map captures a point in time. Decide who will be responsible for maintaining it, making changes, evaluating its use, and determining how often it will be revisited.
- Remember to update your implementation workplan!

## References

The Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions. (2025). [Levels of care quality standard: Matching the right care to needs and goals.](#)