



**ATCA**

**AUSTRALASIAN THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION**

**AUSTRALASIAN THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION  
STANDARD  
FOR THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES  
AND  
RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

**Third Edition June 2019**



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ISBN

**The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) Standard for Therapeutic Communities and Residential Rehabilitation Reference Group:**

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The ATCA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country and its waters. We wish to pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend this to all Aboriginal people seeing this message.

## **The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association's Standard for Therapeutic Communities and Residential Rehabilitation Services.**

There are two proposed levels of certification under this Standard.

1. Residential Rehabilitation service.
2. Therapeutic Community.

The first level of the Standard allows an organisation to gain certification against a set of criteria that are directly applicable to a Residential Rehabilitation Service for alcohol and other drug use. For services considering a transition to the Therapeutic Community model, working with this Standard will assist in providing guidelines to assist a service that is seeking certification as a Therapeutic Community.

To achieve certification as a residential rehabilitation service it is proposed that agencies will need to meet 80% of the Performance Objectives in each Performance Expectation numbered 1–6 identified as 'essential'. This represents the minimum level of activity required to demonstrate competency in agency practice in the residential rehabilitation setting.

The second level of the Standard allows an organisation to seek certification as a Therapeutic Community. To achieve certification as a Therapeutic Community, 80% of all Performance Objectives identified as 'essential' must be achieved (i.e. Performance Objectives that inform Performance Expectations 1–13). The Performance Objective 7.1 "Community as Method" must be within the 80% of achieved criteria.

This 3rd edition of the ATCA Standard includes Expectation 14. Expectation 14 addresses Governance and Financial Management. Audits against Expectation 14 are optional. Services wishing to maintain their industry standard will continue to seek certification against the ATCA Standard, in addition to the industry standard, by completing Expectations 1-6 (Residential Rehabilitation Services) or Expectations 1-13 (Therapeutic Communities).

However, services undertaking an audit against the ATCA Standard now have an option to gain full industry accreditation against the ATCA Standard, through the inclusion of Expectation 14.

For Residential Rehabilitation Services, this will require an audit against Expectations 1-6 plus Expectation 14; and for services wishing to be accredited as a Therapeutic Community, the completion of all 14 Expectations will be required.

The essential criteria relate to those policies and procedures which should be in place, and they describe how agencies conform to the Therapeutic Community model. The Standard also documents the service delivery needs of the target community and what management, staff and consumers of the agencies should know about the Therapeutic Community model and its implementation within the service under review.

For agencies that have participated in other quality certification programs, a further set of criteria, called 'good practice criteria' has been developed. These criteria demonstrate a level of compliance with the Performance Objective, which exceeds that required by the essential criteria. Your agency will be awarded 'good practice' certification if, in addition to meeting 80% or more of the essential criteria, 80% of the 'good practice' criteria are met.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 1: The Residential Community.**

### **Performance Objective: 1.1: Rules and values in the organisation.**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. The organisation has a current strategic plan which clearly articulates the Mission and future direction of the agency.
- b. The organisation has processes in place that demonstrate how the community resident members are informed of the organisation's underlying values and principal rules at assessment and/or prior to admission.
- c. The organisation can demonstrate how the community member is supported throughout the program to understand the underlying values of the organisation.
- d. The organisation can provide evidence of processes in place that outline the activities associated with a breach of rules and the rationale behind the application of consequences for any breaches.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 2: Resident Member Participation.**

**Performance Objective: 2.1: The resident member's participation is the central focus to all aspects of the organisation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Clear principles of resident member participation which includes roles, expectations including respect for all in the community, and the need to maintain confidentiality of other community members, are clearly articulated prior to admission and reinforced throughout engagement in the organisation.
- b. Staff demonstrate an understanding of resident member's participation processes and principles.
- c. Multifaceted processes are utilised to evaluate the gains made by individual resident members through their participation in the different levels of the program.

**Performance Objective 2.2: Resident member rights within the residential setting.**

**Good Practice Criteria:**

- a. There is a Bill of Rights for resident members of the organisation, and it is understood by all residents.

### **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 3: Strategic Human Resource Management.**

**Performance Objective 3.1: The organisation's recruitment is based on gaining the best outcomes for the organisation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. The organisation has in place clearly defined roles for staff and volunteers which maximise the best effect and outcome for the organisation.
- b. Leaders and managers invest in human resource management practices which ensure staff and volunteer recruitment for the organisation is based on the alignment of skills, experience and potential with clearly defined organisational need.
- c. The composition of the Board/Management Committee reflects the appropriate mix of skills required to govern the agency.
- d. The organisation demonstrates flexibility in its program to meet the needs of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Māori, Pacific Islander and all other culturally and linguistically diverse individuals to access the service.

**Performance Objective 3.2: Staff are provided with appropriate support to undertake their role within the organisation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. The organisation has policies and procedures in place to support staff and their competence is regularly assessed and monitored to ensure the quality and appropriateness to users of the services being delivered.
- b. The organisation has a clear process for staff and volunteer onboarding and training, reviews, workplace appraisals, formal and informal feedback to monitor staff and volunteer practice and conduct.
- c. Key management staff and staff and volunteers have their performance reviewed on an annual basis.
- d. The organisation has a code of conduct, which is applied to all staff and volunteer practices; and there are clear policies and procedures outlining staff and management responsibilities and expectations regarding: Conduct, Training and Development, Leave, Privacy and Security and any other Conditions which may apply from time to time.
- e. The organisation has a system of review in place to ensure that planning and continuous quality improvement take place routinely.
- f. The organisation supports the professional development of its leaders and staff.

**Performance Objective 3.3: Human resource processes allow for ongoing development of staff.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Staff skills and knowledge are regularly assessed to identify level and gaps that need to be addressed.
- b. The needs of the community are prioritised when assessing level of skill and any knowledge gaps in the staffing structure.
- c. The organization has policies and procedures in place to inform the Board of Management Members of their role and responsibilities.
- d. There is a documented orientation process for new Board Members which includes an introduction to the Therapeutic Community model.
- e. The Board of Management reviews its performance on an annual basis.
- f. Staff members are trained in, and have an understanding, of relevant policies, procedures and review processes to ensure maximum compliance.

**Good Practice Criteria:**

- a. A strategic workforce development plan is in place and utilised in all levels of human resource management.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 4: Information management and appropriate use/evaluation of data.**

**Performance Objective 4.1: The organisation maintains an appropriate database that allows for service evaluation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. The organisation has systems that collate treatment outcome measures across different periods in the treatment of the individual resident member.
- b. Data is maintained on end of treatment outcomes, such as leaving the treatment service into secure accommodation, self-determined goals, improved relationships, reduced criminal activity/improved post-prison integration, improved health and well-being, education and vocational development, improved living skills, reduced drug use harm.
- c. General reporting can be generated from the data collection in accordance with the organisation's policy and jurisdictional legislation.
- d. The organisation has policies that dictate the appropriate use of data.

**Performance Objective 4.2: The organisation maintains all client records according to organisational policy and the relevant jurisdictional legislation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. The organisation maintains all resident member records according to organisational policy and the relevant jurisdictional legislation.
- b. The organisation has a policy related to the maintenance of client records, which ensures that the appropriate controls of privacy and confidentiality for all stakeholders are maintained.



## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 5: Workplace Health and Safety.**

**Performance Objective 5.1: The organisation has the relevant policies and processes in place relating to Workplace Health and Safety legislation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Training is provided to staff and volunteers in line with the relevant Workplace Health and Safety legislation of the jurisdiction.
- b. The Board or other administrative body maintains oversight of Workplace Health and Safety in line with its governance role.
- c. Where the resident members contribute to the functioning of their organisation, their capacity and suitability to undertake tasks in line with workplace health and safety considerations, are assessed by staff.
- d. Resident members are provided with training, support and information related to the work functions they carry out in the organisation.
- e. The organisation has strategies in place to regularly identify, assess and respond to risks to the safety and wellbeing of staff, volunteers and resident members.

**Performance Objective 5.2: Staff are supported to maintain current first aid training.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. An adequate number according to local legislation of staff on each shift holds a first aid certificate.

**Good Practice Criteria:**

- a. Resident members are supported to gain first aid training appropriate to their locality.

**Performance Objective 5.3: Staff oversee tasks and activities by resident members.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. The potential benefit of tasks and activities are assessed by staff.
- b. Resident members have an understanding of the benefits of the set tasks and activities in the program.
- c. Skills development is related to set tasks and activities.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 6: Harm reduction and Risk Management**

### **Performance Objective 6.1: Harm reduction information is included in the program**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. Harm reduction information is included in the program.

#### **Good Practice Criteria:**

- a. Harm reduction education is shared through peer interaction and education.

### **Performance Objective 6.2: Each resident has an individualised treatment plan.**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. Every resident member has a treatment plan and it is reviewed regularly in consultation with the treatment team and the resident.
- b. The treatment plan includes exit planning.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 7: Community as Method**

### **Performance Objective 7.1: The TC programme applies the Community as Method approach.**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. The Therapeutic Community programme applies the Community as Method approach.
- b. The Therapeutic Community has distinct stages which cover assessment, orientation, treatment, transition and re-entry.
- c. The Therapeutic Community approach is multidimensional. It involves therapy, education, teaching values, and skills development.

#### **Good Practice Criteria:**

- a. The agency has established culturally appropriate and community suitable encounter measures.
- b. The agency demonstrates a community that is self-reliant and self-aware and deals with community issues utilising all of community measures.
- c. The resident group is charged with assessing readiness for stage change and providing feedback on progress through the stages.

### **Performance Objective 7.2: The Australasian Therapeutic Community Essential Elements are implemented within the Therapeutic Community.**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. Staff induction and in-house training incorporates the Australasian Therapeutic Community Essential Elements.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 8: Therapeutic Community Leadership and Management Principles.**

**Performance Objective 8.1: Therapeutic Community leaders are role models within the organisation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Therapeutic Community leaders and managers inform themselves of the Therapeutic Community approach through relevant evidenced-based practice material in order to support their roles.
- b. Managers and leaders are committed to and promote their services as being based on the Therapeutic Community model, promoting the efficacy of the Therapeutic Community approach and the consequent outcomes.
- c. Career development and succession planning, with a view to retaining and building on the Therapeutic Community knowledge base of the organisation, is undertaken, supported and promoted by Therapeutic Community leaders and managers.
- d. Managers and leaders undertake regular review of their practices, ensuring processes are in line with Therapeutic Community principles.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 9: Therapeutic Community Resident Member Participation.**

**Performance Objective 9.1: The Therapeutic Community resident member's participation is the central focus to all aspects of the organisation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Staff members have clear guidelines to maintain objective facilitation in all community processes and are only final decision makers where the Therapeutic Community resident group is unable to be the principal decision maker through guidance and support.

**Performance Objective 9.2: Resident member rights within the Therapeutic Community.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. There is a Bill of Rights for resident members of the Therapeutic Community, and it is understood by all community members.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 10: Therapeutic Community Strategic Human Resource Management.**

**Performance Objective 10.1: The organisation's recruitment is based on gaining the best outcomes for the organisation.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Staff tasks are regularly reviewed to ensure they support the boundaries set within the Therapeutic Community.
- b. The Therapeutic Community actively recruits staff with Therapeutic Community knowledge.
- c. The organisation has in place a philosophy or policy that supports the recruitment of staff with recovery experience.

**Performance Objective 10.2: Human resource processes allow for ongoing development of Therapeutic Community staff.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. Leaders and managers invest in the ongoing development of Therapeutic Community staff members in Therapeutic Community-specific training.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 11: Use of Data from the Therapeutic Community.**

**Performance Objective 11.1: The organisation maintains an appropriate database that allows for service evaluation.**

**Good Practice Criteria:**

- a. Post-residential treatment data is collected in a formalised manner.
- b. Data is utilised to promote the efficacy and value of the Therapeutic Community model.
- c. Leaders and managers actively participate in and/or support research contributing to the evidence base rising from datasets.
- d. Leaders and managers actively participate in collective Therapeutic Community sector information sharing.

**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 12: Rules in the Therapeutic Community.**

**Performance Objective 12.1: Rules in the Therapeutic Community.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. There is a documented process for dealing with violations of principal rules.
- b. The Therapeutic Community implements consequences for any breaches of the principal rules.
- c. The principal rules are clearly articulated to all members of the Therapeutic Community.



**PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 13: Continuous Improvement.**

**Performance Objective 13.1: Improving the outcomes of resident members is the priority consideration in decisions to change the service and approach.**

**Essential Criteria:**

- a. The principles of the Australasian Therapeutic Community Essential Elements are incorporated into improvement initiatives.
- b. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that management and staff are responsible for the maintenance and delivery of a service that is safe, effective, integrated, high quality and continuously improving.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 14. Governance and Management.**

### **Performance Objective 14.1: Governance**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with relevant legislation including industrial and contractual requirements.
- b. The organisation can demonstrate its understanding of the risks associated with statutory compliance, financial risks, governance, environmental, reputational and strategic risk and that it has systems in place to address these risks.

### **Performance Objective 14.2 Financial Management.**

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- a. Financial management activities comply with the disclosure requirements of transparency to inform all stakeholders, including funding bodies and the broader community of the financial status of the organisation and that funds received are accounted for appropriately.
- b. Financial management activities comply with legislative and accounting requirements including the requirement for an annual independent financial audit.
- c. There is a financial delegation policy in place which clearly outlines the financial expenditure limits of different departments and staff within the organisation.

