



LOCUS Quick Guide

Level of Care Utilization System: Assesses level-of-care needs for adults with behavioral health conditions and supports selection of the appropriate service intensity.

Purpose

- Provides a structured assessment of current needs, functioning, risks, strengths, and supports.
- Generates a recommended level of care based on six dimensions.
- Supports treatment planning and transitions between service intensities.

Administration

- For adult clients age 18 and older.
- Completed by a qualified mental health professional who has successfully completed LOCUS training.
- Requires a structured interview and completion of all six dimensions.

Frequency of LOCUS Administration

- Initial administration:** Complete during the initial assessment for new clients. For existing clients, complete at the next scheduled review, but no later than six months after implementation.
- Reassessment:** Repeat at least every six months, whenever there is a significant change in clinical presentation, functioning, risk, supports or other relevant circumstances, and at discharge.

Availability

- LOCUS is available in English.
- Training is required before administering the tool.

Advantages of the LOCUS



- Informs treatment planning, service delivery, and transitions in care
- Supports clinical decision-making, caseload management, and utilization review
- Establishes a shared framework and common language
- Promotes person-centered, recovery-oriented care

LOCUS Levels of Care

Level 0	Basic Services: Prevention & Health Maintenance
Level 1	Recovery Maintenance & Health Management
Level 2	Low-Intensity Community-Based Services
Level 3	High-Intensity Community-Based Services
Level 4	Medically Monitored Community-Based Services
Level 5*	Medically Monitored Residential Services
Level 6*	Medically Managed Residential Services

* BHS is not using LOCUS to determine placement for residential or inpatient settings (Levels 5–6).

Service Examples Based on Level of Care Assigned

- Level 0:** Prevention, outreach, screening, community education, hotlines, early identification, and crisis support.
- Level 1:** Managed care/primary care or transition from specialty mental health services.
- Level 2:** Recovery-oriented peer support with minimal clinical intervention (e.g., MCP or wellness services).
- Level 3:** Focused therapy, rehabilitation, and case management (e.g., SMHS outpatient services or BPSR; ICM).
- Level 4:** High-intensity community care, including ACT.
- Levels 5–6:** Residential, inpatient, or sub-acute services.*

LOCUS is a clinical decision-support tool, not a referral algorithm. It defines the recommended intensity of services, which may be met through multiple appropriate programs or service configurations. As a result, it is expected that more than one program or service type may align with the same LOCUS recommendation.

Scoring Information

- ✓ **5-point scale:** Score each dimension based on current needs, functioning, risks, and supports.
- ✓ **Higher score:** If two options reasonably apply, select the higher score.
- ✓ **Closest fit:** If no descriptor fits exactly, select the criterion that best reflects the current presentation.
- ✓ **Clinical judgment:** Scores inform recommendations; they do not replace clinical judgment.
- ✓ **Independent Criteria:** Dimensions 1–3 are weighted more heavily, although all six dimensions are considered.
- ✓ **Results interface:** Includes Recommended Level of Care and Actual Level of Care fields.

REASON FOR VARIANCE

Required whenever the actual level of care differs from the recommendation. Document the specific rationale.

The Six Assessment Dimensions

1 Risk of Harm Safety risk and ability to maintain safety.	2 Functional Status Effects on daily living, roles, and self-care.	3 Co-Morbidity Medical, addictive, and psychiatric complications.
4 Recovery Environment Environmental stressors and available supports.	5 Treatment & Recovery History Prior response and ability to sustain recovery.	6 Engagement & Recovery Status Participation, motivation, and readiness for change.

1 ASSESS Complete the interview and all six dimensions.	2 SCORE Select the best-fitting current score.	3 REVIEW Apply clinical and person-centered factors.	4 DOCUMENT Record actual LOC and explain variance.
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COMPLETE All six dimensions are scored.	RECORD Document the actual level of care.	EXPLAIN Complete Reason for Variance when needed.	REASSESS Repeat every six months or when needs change.
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QUESTIONS?

Contact your COR or the BHS Population Health Unit.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Complete required LOCUS training before administering the tool.

WHEN TO COMPLETE

Initial assessment, every six months, at discharge, and whenever material circumstances change.