

How to provide cancer care equitably to adolescents and young adults across Aotearoa-New Zealand

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BACKGROUND

Throughout Aotearoa-New Zealand, health outcomes for Māori and Pacific Island Peoples fall behind that of non-Māori/Pasifika. This has been linked to the colonisation of New Zealand and barriers that Māori and Pasifika face accessing healthcare. This trend is also evident among young Māori and Pasifika AYA diagnosed with cancer.

Following the introduction of six regional AYA Cancer Services in 2007 and The AYA Cancer Network Aotearoa in 2014, resources and initiatives have been developed that specifically highlight and address the needs of AYA with a focus on addressing inequities. Although this has resulted in a narrowing of the survival gap, five-year survival rates are still 6-9% poorer for Māori and Pasifika AYA compared to all others.¹ Poorer survival has also been identified for those living outside of the main treatment centres and in high levels of deprivation.¹

In 2020, the first AYA Cancer Action Plan was launched with the following goal:

By 2025 all young New Zealanders diagnosed with cancer will have equitable access to high quality medical and supportive care regardless of where they live, their age or ethnicity.²

One of the priorities outlined in this plan was to develop a national AYA cancer tiered framework for the guidance and delivery of psychosocial care. There are situations and psychosocial risk factors that based on evidence result in young people struggling to engage and access existing structures and services.³ The stepped care model approach aims to target the most intensive support towards our most vulnerable young people who are often not identified and prioritised in our existing system.

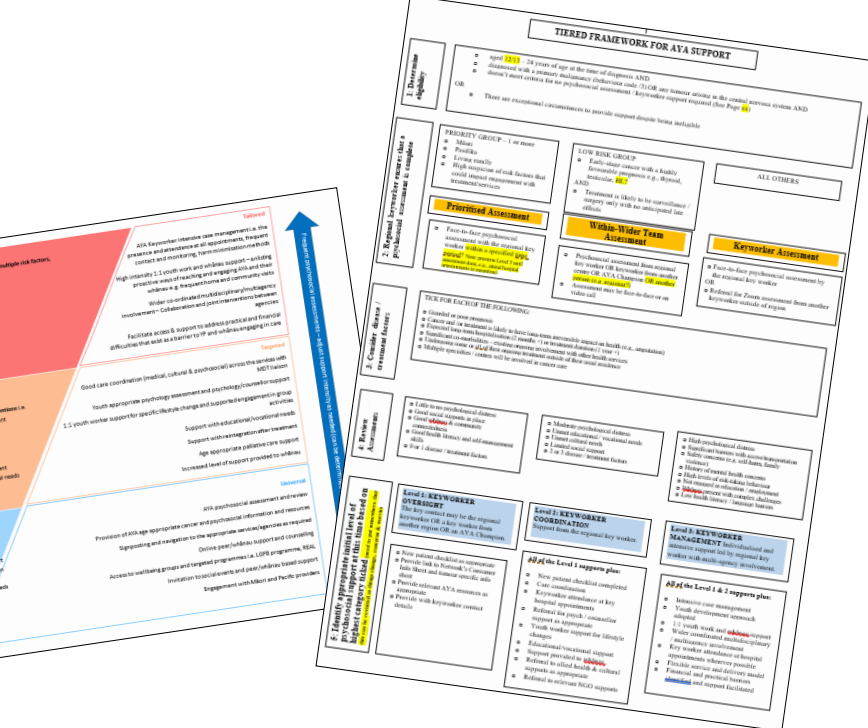
AIM

To provide equitable cancer care to AYA across New Zealand, by the development of a tiered framework to assist Key Workers and fellow health professionals' assessment and provision of psychosocial support care.

METHODS

Brainstorming sessions with the AYA Cancer Network Aotearoa Keyworker Working Group members formalised the eligibility criteria for support from AYA Cancer Services and developed a tiered framework for AYA psychosocial support to assist with equitable delivery of care with the finite resources available.

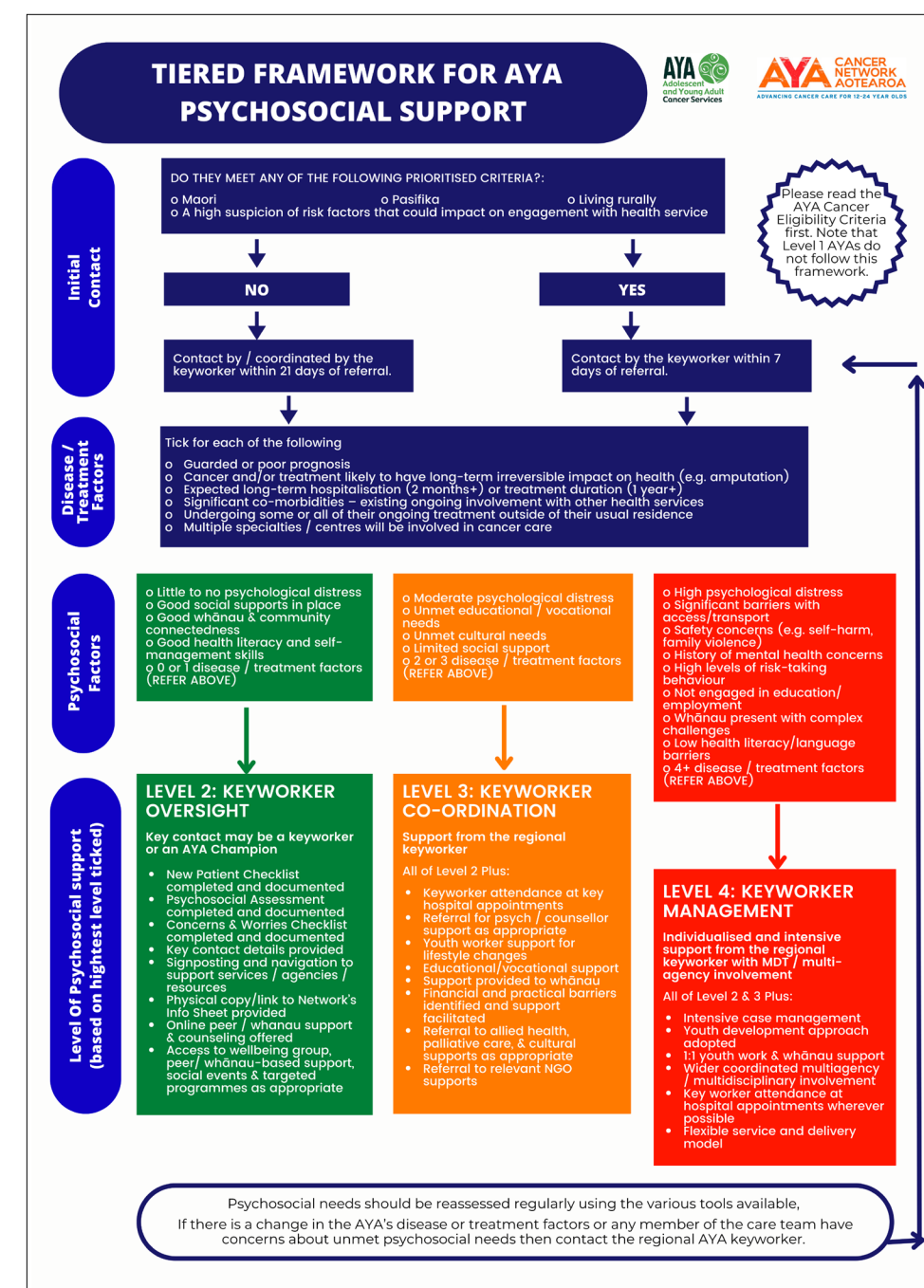
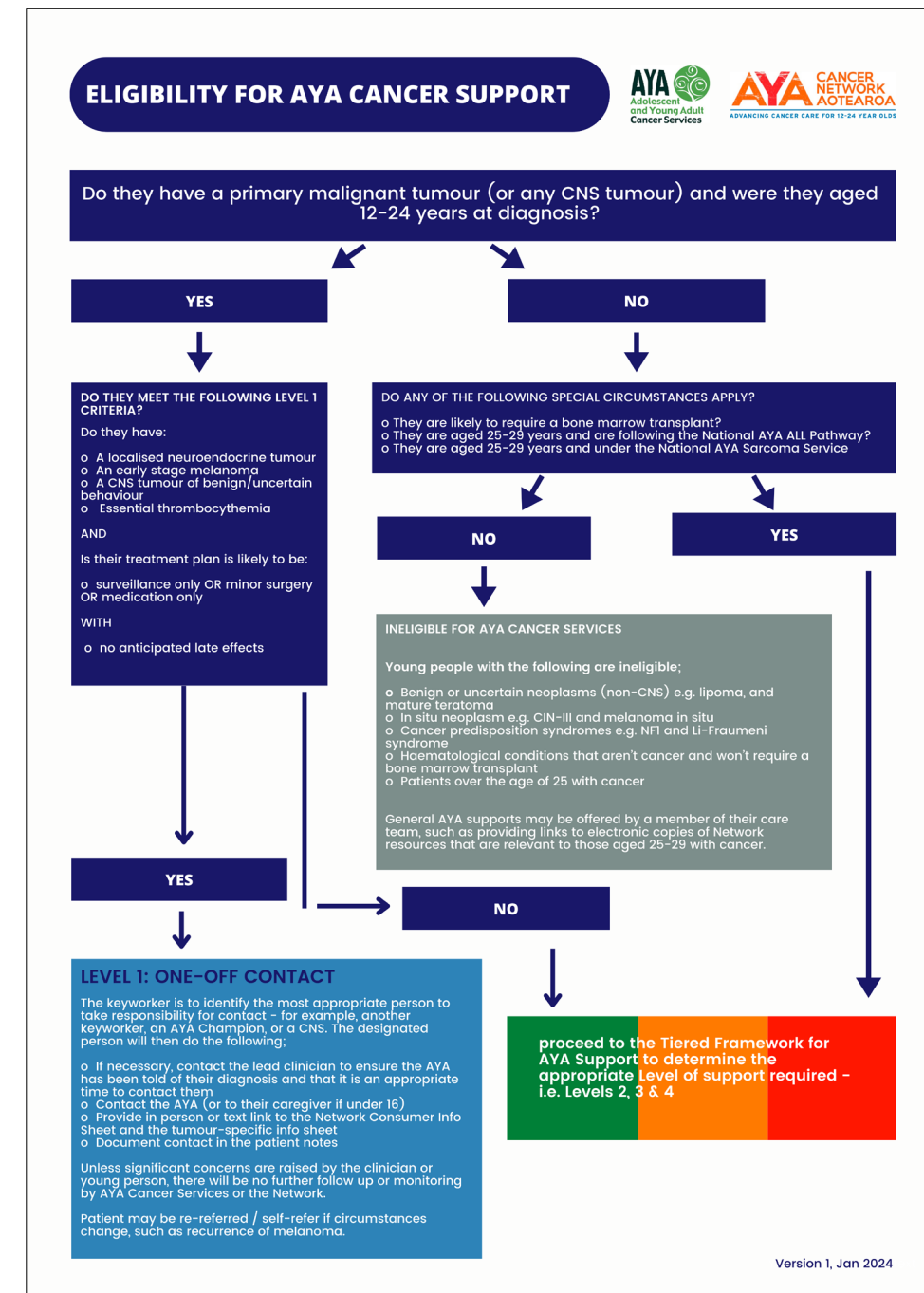
Numerous versions of the eligibility flowchart and tiered framework were developed and refined. For the eligibility framework, special cases requiring exemptions were identified, such as those young people with non-cancer diagnosis who are likely to require a bone marrow transplant. Later versions of the tiered framework included both disease/treatment factors, for example guarded or poor prognosis, in addition to psychosocial factors. Case-studies were utilised to ensure that the there was Keyworker agreement with the prioritisation levels that the tools were generating.



RESULTS

The final versions of the eligibility flowchart and tiered framework identified four groups of AYAs, ranging from Level 1 (those who are unlikely to require ongoing contact) through to Level 4 (those who require the most intensive level of support). Māori, Pasifika, and those with other known risk factors are prioritised for contact and psychosocial assessment within 7 days of becoming known to a Keyworker. Supporting documents, such as patient information sheets for those with low-risk melanomas, have been developed.

RESULTS CONTINUED



CONCLUSION

We hope that by utilising the eligibility flowchart and the tiered framework, the AYA Cancer Keyworkers will be able to ensure that support is provided equitably across the motu (country).

REFERENCES

- Ballantine, K, Moss, R, & Watson, HJ. (2020). Adolescent and young adult cancer incidence and survival in Aotearoa 2008-2017. Auckland, New Zealand: AYA Cancer Network Aotearoa
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FOR EXAMPLES OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND TIERED FRAMEWORK IN ACTION, PLEASE SCAN THE FOLLOWING QR CODE.

