

Staff Directory

Clinicians in the service often work in teams so that you have access to a range of different staff who can help you and your whānau. Some staff you may encounter are:

General Practitioner (GP)

Your GP may be the first person you talk to if you are worried about your mental health. They have a medical degree, and some GPs have extra training in mental health. Your GP may be able to diagnose some mental health problems, or they may refer you to a more specific service. A GP can also prescribe medications for you, and may help you to keep track of side effects. As your GP is a general practitioner, they are a great place to start with concerns about your mental health, and they may be able to support you after contact with more specialist services too.

Counsellor/Therapist

A counsellor is someone who will listen and help you to clarify problems in your life, and they are often trained in specific areas. They may be able to help by providing coping techniques (e.g. breathing exercises for anxiety), or it may just help for you to have someone to talk to about the challenges that you're facing.

Psychologist

Clinical psychologists are professionals who have studied psychology at university and gone on to specialise in learning how the feelings, actions, beliefs and culture of people affect the way they live. They have learned how to listen to and understand people's emotional and psychological problems, and help people make changes in their lives. Like psychiatrists, clinical psychologists can diagnose and treat mental health problems but, unlike psychiatrists, cannot prescribe medication. When you first see a clinical psychologist, they will ask you about the problem(s) that are troubling you and about your past and present life. Once you and the psychologist agree what the difficulties are and what's maintaining them, you may be offered therapy to address the problems.

Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist, like a GP, has a medical degree. However, they have gone on to specialise in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues. A psychiatrist may help by diagnosing what condition you might have, foster an understanding of the problems you're experiencing, or may prescribe medications that could help with the difficulties you're facing.

Case Manager/Key Worker

The person in this role will be a health professional of some kind, and they are there to provide ongoing support for you throughout your journey. Some things they may help you with are developing care plans going forward in your journey, helping you stick to a course

of medication or therapy, helping you and/or your whānau learn about your illness, or linking you with specific community activities and supports.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

An OT is trained to help people get back to their activities of daily living. They might help you return to or gain further work or education, or with some life skills such as cooking, cleaning, transport and socialising. They may do this by designing activities to help you be independent, as well as come up with coping strategies and help improve certain skills.

Mental Health Nurse

A mental health nurse will have a nursing degree with experience in mental health. They may be able to help you with managing both your physical and mental health, taking your medication, developing behaviour programs, and supporting you and/or your whānau in your journey.

Cultural Worker or Māori Mental Health Worker

Māori Mental Health Workers have special knowledge and skills specific to Te Ao Māori and mental health issues. They are likely to be working in kaupapa Māori mental health services, Māori PHOs (primary health organisations) and in the community.

Peer Worker

A peer worker is often someone who has lived experience of mental illness, which means that they have experienced mental health issues themselves. A peer worker may act like a mentor to you, and help you to understand and make sense of your experiences and journey.

Videos that explain what each type of health professional does can also be found at

<https://werryworkforce.org/drive-series>