

The Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand

Te Poari o nga Kaihaumanu Hinengaro o Aotearoa



Welcome to Te Poari o ngā Kaihaumanu Hinengaro o Aotearoa Poutū-te-rangi Newsletter 2020

This issue brings you up to date with Board related mahi since the Hakihea 2019 newsletter

*He aha te nui?
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.*

*What is the most important thing?
It is people, it is people, it is people.*

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Important information about COVID- 19

The Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand (Board) acknowledges that this is a challenging time for Aotearoa New Zealand and for psychotherapists, health practitioners, whānau and communities. It is important that together we unite against COVID-19

As part of New Zealand's COVID-19 response, the Board's office is now closed, and employees will be working from home until further notice.

Please find following information related to COVID-19: With the World Health Organisation declaring the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern the Board is referring all inquiries to the Ministry of Health's [**COVID-19 resource site.**](#)

Many psychotherapists are already using this site, which includes regular updates and guidance for health professionals around symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and infection control measures.

Psychotherapy associations are also sharing information with their members including the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP) who are supporting members by providing the following [**information.**](#)

As a reminder, COVID-19 is a notifiable disease. This means that should a health practitioner suspect a case of COVID-19, they should notify a medical officer.

Client confidentiality, privacy and contact tracing

There may be questions about how to manage client confidentiality and privacy in the event that the a psychotherapist is diagnosed with COVID-19 and contact tracing needs to be undertaken by Public Health officials, and what their responsibilities are to their clients.

The Psychologist's Board has obtained legal advice on this question¹, which the Board is sharing with psychotherapists.

That advice is that a health practitioner who has tested positive for Covid-19 can disclose client or patient information to the appropriate public health body for the purpose of contact tracing or other public health measures.

If you are affected, in the first instance, the appropriate public health authority that you should contact will be Healthline (Ministry of Health) or your local DHB's public health unit.

The health authority will tell you what patient information you will need to disclose, but you must not disclose any information beyond what is requested.

This information is likely to be limited to the patient's name and contact details, and when (e.g. date/time) and for how long you were in contact with the patient. It is important that you:

¹ Available on their Website

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(1) do not disclose patient information to any person or body other than the appropriate public health body; and

(2) do not disclose more information than is necessary to enable the health authority to take appropriate steps.

After you have contacted the public health authority, you also have an obligation, where possible, to contact the patients that you have provided information about to the authority.

The potential exposure to Covid-19 is something that is relevant to your obligations of open disclosure and the therapeutic relationship with the patient. By contacting the patient, you will help to reduce any alarm or distress that the patient may feel if they are 'cold-called' by the public health authorities without any forewarning.

COVID-19 Alert System

The following information comes from the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website.

Following Prime Minister Arden's announcement the alert level moved to [Level 3](#) – Restrict - Heightened risk that disease is not contained. This includes probable community transmission occurring and possible multiple clusters break out.

Measures needed locally and nationally include:

- Alternative ways of working required and some non-essential business closures
- Non face-to-face primary care consultations
- Non acute (elective) services procedure in hospitals deferred
- healthcare staff reprioritised.

Some psychotherapists have questioned whether they can continue to provide non-face-to-face [primary health care](#)² consultations as per level 3³.

Yes, non-face-to-face work primary health care can continue.

The Prime Minister has also announced that from 12:00am on Thursday 26 March 2020 New Zealand's COVID-19 alert will increase to [Level 4](#) – Eliminate - Likely that disease is not contained.

² Primary health care covers a broad range of health services, including diagnosis and treatment, health education, counselling, disease prevention and screening.

³ Level 3 we will see alternative ways of working required and some non-essential businesses closed.

Measures needed locally and nationally include:

- People instructed to stay home
- Educational facilities closed
- Businesses closed except for essential services (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics) and lifeline utilities
- Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities
- Travel severely limited
- Major reprioritisation of healthcare services.

This means businesses must close with staff either working from home or taking leave. Businesses can continue operating at alert Level 4.

This means that New Zealanders who are outside of [essential services](#) must stay at home and stop all interactions with others outside of those in your households.

We know that this is a big ask. Eradicating the disease is vital to protect people's health and ensure our health system can cope and look after New Zealanders who become sick.

You may go for a walk or exercise and enjoy nature but keep a 2 metre distance from people at all times. You can take your children outside.

Food will always be available – production will continue, distribution will continue, supermarkets will continue. You will always have access to food.

Medicines will always be available.

Healthcare for those that need it will be available.

Your usual financial support, like benefits, will continue as normal.

Remember whatever you do must be solitary. We are asking that you only spend time with those who you are in self-isolation with and keep your distance from all others at all times.

We need your support to protect New Zealand and eradicate COVID-19. Enforcement measures may be used to ensure everyone acts together, now.

Essential Businesses

'Essential businesses, and those that support them, will continue to provide the necessities of life for everyone in New Zealand.'

This means food, medicine, healthcare, energy, fuel, waste-removal, internet and financial support will continue to be available.'

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What are the essential businesses?

Please view a list of [essential business](#) on the Governments COVID-19 site. This list will evolve over time.

Some psychotherapists have asked whether they are considered an 'essential' service.

Psychotherapists are not named on the essential service list (unless they work for a named essential business i.e. DHB). The Board and the Psychologists Board are attempting to seek clarification on the role of psychotherapists and psychologists.

What is clear is that in the interests of public safety the overarching requirement is to limit contact between people.

This suggests that non-essential⁴ face-to-face psychotherapy **should not** be undertaken and psychotherapists will need to take urgent steps to ensure that they are able to provide psychotherapy through other means.

The Board is aware that many psychotherapists are or have already put in place mechanisms to continue seeing clients through other non-face to-face means.

The Board appreciates that psychotherapists are changing the way in which they practice to support non face-to-face consultations and the COVID-19 measures put in place by the Aotearoa New Zealand Government.

Following are links which psychotherapists may find useful:

1. [Psychotherapists and Electronic Media](#)
2. [Psychotherapist Clinical Supervision](#)

The [Australian Psychological Society](#) has advertised 'principles for choosing videoconferencing technology that psychotherapists may find useful.

ACC Information on Telehealth approved for additional service types

[Accident Compensation Corporation \(ACC\) COVID-19 page](#)

⁴Psychotherapists engaged in essential face-to-face meetings will need to be particularly vigilant in terms of their health and safety obligations i.e. hygiene, contact tracing etc.

The following information was released by ACC:

We are pleased to announce that ACC will enable Telehealth for use in additional service types for the duration of the COVID-19 response. We know providers are facing unprecedented challenges, so it is our hope Telehealth solutions may provide some relief at this time.

Telehealth may also be used, where appropriate and with a client's consent, in the treatment of ACC's clients accessing Integrated Services for Sensitive Claims, Psychological Services, and Clinical Psychiatric Services. Individual waivers to use Telehealth for these services will not be required for the duration of the COVID-19 response.

The ability to use Telehealth services for follow-up appointments is also being extended for the duration of the COVID-19 response, under Cost of Treatment Regulations (CoTR), for Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, as well as Hand Therapists (under the Hand Therapy contract).

Clinicians will need to adhere to the standards set out by their professional associations or regulatory body when determining whether Telehealth is an appropriate alternative to an in-person consultation.

It's important to note that the expansion of Telehealth services is only applicable as clinically appropriate and only for the duration of the COVID-19 response.

ACC will continue working to find solutions that can relieve pressure on clients and providers—for as long as the response to COVID-19 is required; this includes extending the "Did Not Attend" limits in ACC health service contracts by 1 additional DNA during the COVID-19 response.

Applications for Registration:

Please be aware that the Board will not be processing any applications from **overseas-trained** applicants received after 20 March 2020, until further notice.

All applications already received will continue to be processed as usual; however, there may be delays.

Responsible Authority Vacancies

The Ministry is 'currently seeking health practitioner applications/nominations' for the Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand (Board).

The Board encourages psychotherapists who identify as tangata whenua to consider submitting their interest in being a Board member.

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By way of background, responsible authorities are established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA). The purpose of the HPCAA is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing mechanisms to ensure that psychotherapists are fit and competent to practise.

The Minister of Health appoints a variety of people to responsible authorities.

Please click the link below to find out more and apply for membership of the Board:

Health practitioner vacancies on New Zealand Responsible Authorities | Wellington

Any questions regarding this information or process can be sent to appointments@health.govt.nz

Nominations close on **Friday 27th March 2020.**

Finalised Naming Policy

Thank you for engaging with the Board on the development of a naming policy under section 157B of the HPCAA.

The Board has outlined in a [consultation response](#) document the decisions reached following the close of the consultation period.

The finalised Naming Policy can now be found on the Board's Website (in the [Board Policies](#) section).

Tangata Whenua Psychotherapist Hui

The Board is working with its tikanga advisors to plan a hui for psychotherapists who identify as tangata whenua.

The intention of the hui is to develop, value and strengthen relationships with tangata whenua psychotherapists, and to be a forum for psychotherapists to interact with each other and discuss issues of common interest.

Given the evolving COVID-19 situation, the plans for this hui have temporally been put on hold. The Board will continue with this work as soon as practicable.

Tikanga Advisor Introduction – AWE Consultants Limited

To assist and affirm its commitment to mahi in ways that acknowledge the status of Tangata Whenua⁵ and

⁵ Generic term for tangata whenua comprising those with mana whenua responsibilities (tangata whenua who are tied culturally to an

Tangata Tiriti⁶ as partners to te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Board has been working with tikanga advisors - AWE Consultants Limited.

The Board is pleased to introduce to psychotherapists, Matua Wereta (Rackie) and Whaea Iris Pahau.

Some psychotherapists have already met Iris and Rackie during recent consultation meetings and hui.



Iris Pahau

Ka titiro ake au ki ngā
onepū o Te Aupouri
Me ōna awa, me ōna
maunga kōrero
Ka huri ake au ki
Taranaki maunga, ka
mīharo ake
Ka tangi ake, ki a rātou
Ka tōmuri ake te titiro ki
te Wanui-a-rua ki
Taumarunui me ōna
kōrero hoki

Wereta (Rackie) Pahau

Ka anga ake ngā kanohi ki
te uranga o te rā
Ki te taumata o Hikurangi,
ki ngā whārua o te
Waiapu,
te riu o Horouta waka.
Ka ū ki Pōtiki-rua, ki te
Toka-a-Taiau, ko ngā
karangatanga o
Ngātiporou whānui

The Board began working with Iris and Rackie in 2017 and has benefited from their wisdom and expertise. This includes advice and workshops on developing and working within a bicultural context, attendance at, and support during hui, and guidance while reviewing the 'Board mahi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi policy'⁷.

The mahi of regulating psychotherapists to protect members of the Aotearoa New Zealand public is important and carries considerable responsibility. This mahi is supported by professional advisors, Board committees (which include lay members and members sought from the profession via expressions

area by whakapapa and whose ancestors who lived and died there), together with Taurahere (tangata whenua, resident in an area, but who belong to waka and tribes from other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand).

⁶ Generic term to describe people whose rights to live in Aotearoa New Zealand derive from Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the arrangements that the Crown has established under a common rule of law, and the equity provisions of Article 3 of Te Tiriti.

⁷ recently reviewed and updated. To be available for all stakeholders on the Board's website shortly.

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of interest), clinical supervisors, psychotherapists, training providers, psychotherapy associations, competence committee members, professional conduct committee members, other regulators, employees and tikanga advisors.

Board mahi involves collaboration, consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. The Board values and encourages this engagement and appreciates the support and feedback it receives so that it can fulfil its purpose and regulatory functions under the HPCAA, while developing a bicultural framework that includes respect for diversity and natural justice.

Developing and strengthening relationships is an ongoing commitment. With the assistance and support of its tikanga advisors this is a journey the Board is embracing.

*Kia tutuki ai nga wawata i tūmanakotia
May our dreams and aspirations be realised*

Accreditation Standards Update

The Board and the Accreditation Committee continue to refine draft Accreditation Standards following recent training provider consultation. The Board will be sending (as soon as practicable) training providers a consultation response which outlines recent Board decisions and rationale.

The Board will continue to engage with training providers and expects wider consultation to be held later this year.

Wider consultation will involve training providers, practitioners, the public, regulatory authorities, and other agencies related to psychotherapy training.

Recertification Audit Update

Thank you to all the psychotherapists who were selected for, and are engaging in, the 2018-2019 Board Audit. This audit is ongoing and is due to be completed June 2020.

[As a reminder audit tips are available on the Recertification and Audit page of the Board's Website.](#)

Reminders and Links

Understanding bias in health care

Learning and education videos were developed for Wiki Haumarū Tūrōro (Patient Safety Week 2019). Modules include:

1. Understanding and addressing
2. Te Tiriti o Waitangi, colonization and racism
3. Experiences of bias

These are available on the Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand [Website](#).

Health regulator animation

The Board, along with its collocated Responsible Authorities, have developed a short animation to outline how regulation works to protect members of the Aotearoa New Zealand public.

Click [here](#) to view the animation.

Annual Report

The Board's annual report for the year ending September 2019 is now available on the Board's [website](#).

Meet the Board

The Board notes that the next meeting of the Board may be delayed or the way in which the Board meets may change i.e. electronic. This is an evolving situation and is being monitored.

The next Board meeting is in Wellington on Sunday 24th May 2020. Practitioners will be invited to 'meet with the Board' (open forum) **via Zoom**. A link to access the Zoom meeting will be sent closer to the time.

This is an opportunity to ask questions about current Board work and engage in conversation. If you intend to attend, please RSVP to registrar@pbanz.org.nz.

Date: Sunday 24th May 2020
Time: 4.00pm – 5.00pm
Location: Level 7, 22 Willeston Street, Wellington

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2020 Upcoming Board meeting dates

Sunday 24th and Monday 25th May 2020

Saturday 20th June 2020 – Planning day

Friday 14th and Saturday 15th August 2020

Sunday 29th and Monday 30th November 2020

*He waka eke noa
We're all in this together*