



Rangatahi and young people Mental health and wellbeing

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Context

- The wellbeing of rangatahi and young people is a priority.
- Rangatahi and young people experience higher rates of mental distress than any other age group in the population.
- Mental distress is more common among females, rangatahi, Pacific young people, disabled young people, and young people from rainbow communities.
- There is a strong case for investment into addressing the societal contributors to wellbeing and mental health services and supports for young people.
- There are no quick fixes – this is an issue we cannot ignore.



Our focus areas so far

- Young People speak out about Wellbeing: An insights report into the Wellbeing of Rangatahi and other Young people in Aotearoa
 - Uncertain futures
 - Racism and discrimination
 - Social media and safety online
 - Whānau wellbeing and intergenerational connections
- Improving access to mental health and addiction services
 - Youth focus in progress update to implement Access and Choice services
 - Admission of young people to adult inpatient mental health services
 - Te Huringa mental health and addiction monitoring report



Wellbeing

Understanding wellbeing for rangatahi and young people



Uncertain futures

- Climate change and the environment
- Economic insecurity
- Stress and pressure
- Civic engagement
- Covid 19 had a significant impact

“There is a lot of anxiety and fear happening around the state of the planet. Current systems and messaging do not support young people to not feel anxious and fearful about those things”

“It’s hard to focus on myself. I wanna move out of home but there’s bills and my family. When you’re in a house full of people nothing’s ever really yours”

“People with power aren’t listening to the people of the land. We just can’t keep going the way we are, consumption, diet, tools, the way we live – it’s embedded”



Racism and discrimination

- Racism as a determinant of wellbeing
- Youth perspectives on discrimination
- Experiences of rangatahi Māori
- Experience of specific populations
- Representation, identity and wellbeing

“We have all these practices and all these protocols and, we are doing so much better than it was and we are making change but underlying a lot of that is just tokenism. And so, it becomes a lot more damaging when it's there for the wrong intentions”

“So there's that additional, I guess, challenge for our people who experience stigma and discrimination due to their mental health. So it's kind of layer, upon layer, upon layer. It's age, it's gender, it's race, and it's mental health, and disabilities as well “

“I think it goes back to power structure and hierarchy. Respectful curiosity is missing because there's a feeling of 'I don't need this', but also because of shame or embarrassment [discussing racism] might bring up for people”



Social media and safety online

- Social media and digital spaces
- Seeking community and connection online
- Online pornography
- Self-image
- Bullying and unwanted communication

“Social media is treated by older generations as a separate entity from reality, when in fact it has become a part of our social fabric. This makes it hard to have these conversations with older generations”

“You get bullying at school, but with social media you’re adding another level of bullying. Social media platforms need to have policies about being safe online”

“The way you react to the news “oh that’s terrible...scroll”. That feeling isn’t talked about. Emotions so heavy, fear, sadness, guilt, and no capacity to digest.”



Intergenerational connection and support

- Connected-ness and rangatahi
- Whānau wellbeing
- Community support

“People of colour, young people of colour, LGBTQIA+ persons definitely have spoken about intergenerational connections, and they definitely need it and the support given that their social and cultural kinship networks are tightly knit and still plays a big, big, big role in their lives.”

“There is a need to connect with whakapapa – whatever this means for youth. Many young people don’t have this opportunity, because their parents are immigrants, lost ancestral knowledge”

“If people don't have parents who know how to look after themselves, it's very hard to teach rangatahi, how to look after themselves from a mental health point of view. And then also from a cultural point of view, cuz they are, they're the ones who look after us and they pass on the knowledge, but if the knowledge is not there, then how can they pass it on?”



Questions (using mentimeter)

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Code: 2835 9152

- What is working well to support the wellbeing of Rangatahi and young people? What can we celebrate and learn from?
- What do you want to see happen next?



Improving services

Providing better supports and services for rangatahi and young people



General findings

- Investment into mental health and addiction services has increased.
- Fewer people accessing specialist services, including inpatient services.
- Increase through the access and choice programme and young people using ED services for mental health reasons.
- Young people continue to wait longer than other age groups to access specialist mental health services.
- Dispensings for antidepressants, antipsychotic and anxiolytic medications have increased substantially for young people over last 5 years.



Access and choice

- Overall expectation of 325,000 people, including 55,000 people age 12-24 per annum accessing services.
- By end June 2022, 23 youth services across 18 districts.
- Significant increase in young people accessing Access and Choice services across all four streams. At end June 2022 24,232 people.
- More youth friendly options.
- There is a need to significantly scale up services.

"They're not coming in at an early stage in their distress. They're coming in at a point where, to use clinical language, they would meet criteria for a moderate to severe level of distress and impairment, rather than mild to moderate."

"Being able to have the opportunity to say what I want, what I need from someone, and to have them meet that need was really powerful"



Admission to adult inpatient services

- Decreasing admissions of young people to adult mental health inpatient services. More than 150 young people each year.
- Young people told us the negative impacts of admission to adult mental health services outweigh any potential positive aspects.
- Young people want youth-specific acute response services ie community residential alternatives and kaupapa Māori services.
- We call for more youth-specific acute response services in communities to enable a reduction in the number of young people admitted to adult inpatient units to zero.

“In those (adult) wards, we started seeing a lot of violent outbursts, fights, and arguments and we were exposed to people trying to escape, people harming themselves. A whole range of different traumas that we’d never seen before.”

“Within the adult service, they don't really care about your education, they don't have any support for it. You're just left to your own devices”



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