

May Whānau/ Aiga Focus Newsletter

Kāhui o te Ihi Adult Community Mental Health Services
Te Toka Tumai Auckland

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Collated by Leigh Murray, Whānau Advisor

Ki te kotahi te kākaho, ka whati; ki te kāpuia, e kore e whati

When a reed stands alone it is vulnerable, but a group of reeds together is unbreakable

Target Measures to focus on through the month of May

- Family/Whānau Contact – Each keyworker will be provided with a list of Tangata Whai i te Ora who have had no recorded whānau contact for the last 3 months. We are asking you to review this list and during May arrange a time to speak to the whānau or friend via phone, F2F or email.
- Parental Status question to be updated in regional assessment &/or regional history form.



Are you a parent / caregiver for children aged (0-19)?
Yes ☒ No ☐ Not asked ☐

NOTE: Child Name, DOB, and Gender are Mandatory Fields. Age is auto calculated (do not populate)
Click the clear link to remove a line if entered in error.

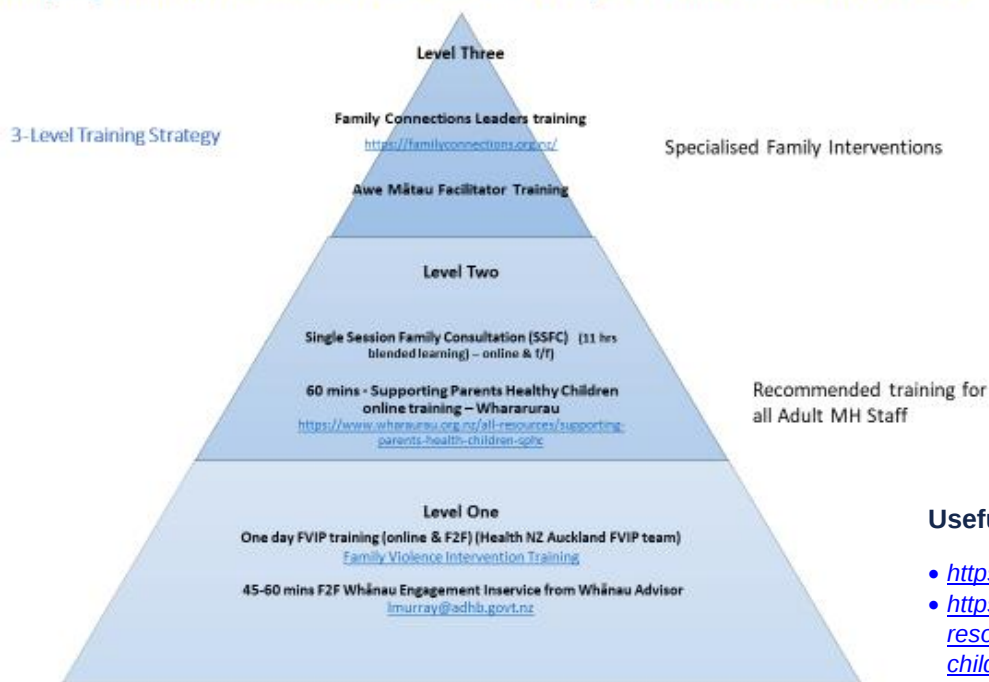
Child name	DOB DD/MM/YYYY	Age	Gender	
Donald duck	00/00/2010	11	Male	clear
Daisy duck	00/00/2008	13	Male	clear
			Gender	clear

If you don't know child's D.O.B, you can just enter birth year eg. 00/00/2010 so approximate age is recorded. If we know how many tamariki our adult clients have, we are in a better position to provide support & plan for the whole whānau.

Key Dates in May

1 st May	Baseline data on family/whānau contact & Parental Status emailed to teams
5 th May	Awe Mātau group starts in Kāinga Tiaki. (Spaces available)
12 th May	'Supporting Tamariki Together: Recognising Concerns & Navigating Next Steps' – Online Presentation from Ola Sliwakowska (Child Protection Co-ordinator) & Anna-Marie De Vries (Oranga Tamariki SW)
12 th May	Family Connections course starts in Manaaki House (Spaces available)
19 th May	In-Service on Whānau Engagement (via Teams)
June	Winning teams announced

Developing adult MH workforce confident & Competent To work with Whānau



Useful Links:

- <https://familyconnections.org.nz/>
- <https://www.wharaurau.org.nz/all-resources/supporting-parents-health-children-sphc>
- [Family Violence Intervention Training](https://www.familyviolenceinterventiontraining.org.nz/)

Nga Mihi Nui 🙏 Team Family Champions for sharing some tips with us

Accessing good quality training as a mental health professional is a great way to take on board new skills and knowledge. However nothing can really take the place of the benefits that come from collaborating and consulting with colleagues in your teams on a daily/weekly/yearly basis. We all bring different strengths and abilities to our work. Aligning with the tuakana- teina approach, those in your teams who consistently attain high levels of whānau contact data alongside a full caseload (ie 64% - 83%) were approached to share some tips.

Q 1 When you are working with a whai ora who is reluctant for you to contact their whānau, what are your tips to work with them on this?

- Explore barrier/s to contact whānau/who they identify as whānau.
- Explain confidentiality and consent to contact/share/disclose specific information about their care and treatment with whānau, or who they identify as whānau.
- Explain benefits of whānau participation in their care and treatment.
- Provide information on available & appropriate whānau services to the whai ora and their whānau.
- Different approach with different clients depending on the risk, age, ethnicity, trauma...etc.
- Normally it's a very natural flow when whai ora have a good relationship with their whānau. Other times, while building therapeutic relationship with whai ora, I very respectfully mention this and give them all the power to decide.
- As early as possible raise whānau involvement with the whai ora.
- Be clear about your reasons for speaking to the whānau before you have conversation with whai ora.

Q2 How has engaging with the whānau of your whai ora helped you in your work?

- Whānau participation in service user's care and treatment or transition process to GP care.
- Has allowed clinician to identify whānau support needs for referral to appropriate whānau services to strengthen service users and whānau relationship to support whai ora's care and treatment.
- Utilising whānau services in the community will free up clinicians to focus on clinical work.
- Family is often huge help in whai ora's recovery.
- Whānau are a support system that mitigates risk and gives more in-depth story of whai ora or at least another version.
- Provides a different perspective and adds to your formulation and understanding of the person. It gives you a better sense of who you are working with.
- By upskilling the whānau with helpful communication tips this increases support for the whai ora.

(See script in appendices to give you some more ideas when you pick up the phone to talk with whānau, see page 7)

Nga Mihi Nui 🙏 to the Whānau who shared their wisdom with us

Some whānau members who help co-facilitate our specialist Whānau Education programs were also approached to give their thoughts on these 2 questions.

Q 1 One whānau member had not experienced reluctance from their family member to be involved. *"It is so important to have mutual respect. As whānau we need to be extremely careful and respectful of our family members when they are unwell. Treat them as if they are well and just like us. Keep your cool and your emotions in check. If you are talking to the professional be mindful that what you say will be discussed with your family member"*.

Q2 Family involvement can facilitate good communication between all parties. We can sometimes provide transport to key appointments & encourage attendance. *"I have always tried to work in with the health professionals and community staff as they support my family member. Trust has been established. I can talk to them in confidence."*

Education and Resources for Whānau and Friends

Stepped care approach to whānau resources



Mutual support — “you are here for me, and I am here for you”— is a strength that cannot be replicated by a paid professional.

Quote from whai ora...

It starts with the whānau ... until my whānau can accept their part it doesn't work. Need to resource and support whānau to know what to do & to support [me]”.

Te Kete Pounamu hui participant, HDC MH Commissioner's report, June 2020



Level 1 – Written Information - Providing written resources to friends & whānau in hard copy or via email is generally a great place to start in terms of whānau engagement. Work is underway to set up whānau resource walls in each of the centres so relevant leaflets/booklets are visible & accessible for kaimahi to pass onto whānau. This initiative originated from seeing it implemented in Te Whetu Tawera. The Lotofale admin team has done an excellent job of weaving together a cultural & visually stunning display.

Whānau & friends of whai ora do not always come into the centres for a variety of reasons so provision has been made to email resources out. One-page whānau resource documents covering 9 different presentations (psychosis, bi-polar, severe emotional dysregulation, anxiety/depression, suicidal distress, addiction, eating disorder distress, parental MH distress & dementia) have been developed by the Whānau Advisor for kaimahi to email out to whānau. They are stored in the whānau folder under [Community Mental Health Resources - OneDrive](#)

Level 2 – Referrals & Whānau Hui - Whānau often want to access support and connect with other whānau members. Whānau specific services & groups are listed in written resources, however many whānau tend to minimise their need for support. A proactive referral or recommendation from a Mental Health professional can facilitate whānau access to helpful skilled support. A well facilitated whānau hui utilising the SSFC approach can also support better communication in the home.

Yellow Brick Road family support service <https://yellowbrickroad.org.nz/> (previously known as Supporting Families in Mental Illness) has a contracted 3 FTE team operating in the Auckland area offering flexible 1-1 support, access to a counsellor and a monthly support group.

- When addiction issues are present, CADS work with whānau as clients in their own right, noting down their NHI with access to counselling and group programs in their Kingsland office.

Level 3 – Specialist whānau programs Group psychoeducation programs that provide safe, facilitated spaces for whānau to learn skills & share experiences have proven their ability to increase whānau understanding & knowledge. When these groups are co-facilitated by trained whānau members they are also able to role-model hope. Te Toka Tumai Auckland specialist Mental Health and Addiction services co-ordinates two evidence-based whānau psychoeducation programs co-facilitated by staff and trained whānau members.

(1) Family Connections®, a 12-week manualised course providing education, skills training & support for whānau supporting someone with emotional dysregulation or borderline personality disorder (BPD). ***“Am much more patient and hopeful – have had good feedback from her” Whānau 2024***

(2) Awe Mātau, a 6 week/6 session program co-designed and developed here in Kāhui o te Ihi that empowers whānau when their loved one experiences psychosis. Based on Te Whare Tapa Wha it supports whānau to have a positive relationship and understand recovery. ***“Listening to you and the other parents in the group has strengthened my own Te Whare Tapa Wha & I feel deeply grateful for the wisdom & aroha that has been shared” Whānau Maori 2025***

How to Refer

(1) The generic Family Connections (FC) program flyer and FC leaflet can be passed onto the whānau. If possible it is preferable to do this in consultation with the Tangata whai ora. After confirming registration, the whānau can then go onto the waitlist for the next group. Groups are scheduled depending on staff availability. **(Next FC course starts at Manaaki House 12 May - spaces available)**

(2) The Awe Mātau leaflet can be passed onto the whānau with a registration form. After registering, the whānau go onto the waitlist for the next group which is also scheduled according to staff availability. An Awe Mātau group flyer with date/location details can also be emailed out. **(Next Awe Mātau group starts at Kāinga Tiaki 5th May – spaces available)**

A two-day Awe Mātau Facilitator training is offered 1-2 times per year co-facilitated by the Whānau Advisor and a Senior Social Worker. It is attended by interested Kaimahi and whānau members who have attended an Awe Mātau group and want to give back to other whānau. **(Next Awe Mātau Facilitator Training is 30/4 -1/5/2026 – contact lmurray@adhb.govt.nz for more details)**

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari kē he toa takitini

My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, it was not individual success but the success of a collective

The collaboration between kaimahi and whānau members to co-facilitate specialist whānau education programs has been a successful innovation here in Te Toka Tumai Auckland. A forum hosted by Kāhui o te Ihi in December 2024 highlighted the positive benefits for both facilitators and group participants. This was covered by Te Pou on the KPI website. <https://www.mhakpi.health.nz/resources/family-connections-and-awe-matau-presentations-working-alongside-whanau-for-great-outcomes/>

In December 2025, Kāhui o te Ihi put on a thankyou morning tea to celebrate our wonderful whānau member facilitators and our fantastic staff who deliver these highly valued transformational programs to whānau across the Mental Health and Addictions directorate. It was great to have our wonderful co-directors there - Hineroa Hakiaha and Tracey Silva-Garay there, reminding us how important it is to have leadership support for programs like this. Ngā Mihi Nui Rosie for remembering to take a photo.



Appendices

Prompts for first whānau and/or friend contact over the phone

1. Introduce yourself	“Kia ora, my name is xxx and I am a Keyworker from xxx (your team) in Health NZ Auckland Mental Health Services. I have recently started working with xxx, who I understand is your xxx (friend/mother etc). They have given me consent to make contact with you.”
2. Introduce your Role	“As a Keyworker my role is to work alongside xxx to assist him/her to manage his/her mental distress and improve their wellbeing. I will be seeing xxx (details of contact/hours/frequency etc).”
3. Get their buy in	“As part of what we do, we believe that involving family and friends is important to the on-going recovery of xxx and would really appreciate your views and involvement. What are your thoughts around this?” <i>(This is an opportunity for you to get to know what is important to the whānau or friend and a little about their experiences).</i>
4. Offer them support	“We value the support you are providing and want to let you know about relevant information and resources”. Would you like a list of current available resources emailed out to you?” <i>(Obtain the preferred email address)</i>
5. Finishing call	“We aim to make contact at least once every 3 months with the family of the people we are working with, so I plan to make contact again in a couple of months. Also if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to get in touch. Thank-you for your time today”

Safety and security comes from informal human ties and relationships not from formal structures. People engaged in relationship act because they care about the other person. People's lives must be shaped and supported by their personal relationships (friends and family) not by services and programs.

– Beth French