



Ministry of Health Meeting, 18th May 2020

NZAC:

- Gay Puketapu-Andrews - Te Ahi Kaa
- Christine Macfarlane - President

Ministry of Health (MoH):

- Jo Chiplin - Group Manager Primary and Community Wellbeing
- Carla na Nagara - Director of Suicide Prevention Office
- Arran Culver - Chief Clinical Advisor

This meeting was initiated to discuss concerns raised by NZAC members about the perceived exclusion of counsellors from the health workforce and to build a relationship with the MoH, Mental Health and Addiction representatives.

The meeting started with introductions to each other and our current roles. We then provided a brief overview of NZAC and counselling in Aotearoa. As background information, we had sent the new 'Counselling Changes Lives' document before the meeting.

MoH provided an overview of what is happening now with MoH, He Ara Oranga – the Mental Health Inquiry report, and the changes following COVID-19.

A discussion on the Health Improvement Practitioner (HiP) role, District Health Board (DHB) contracts and the split between MoH and DHB then ensued. We raised the recent example of the Marlborough Primary Health Organisation (PHO) contract that excluded counsellors. This happened before the HiP contract was rolled out in this region. Their response to this was that individual DHB's interpret the MoH and clinical full-time equivalent (FTE) as they choose, and MoH does not direct this. MoH did expect the DHBs/PHOs to retain the current services, so this was an unexpected update.

Arran Culver stated MoH are undecided in the opinion of NZAC pursuing HPCA registration or remaining with self-regulation.

It seems that the benefit of registration for the MoH is that it is an easy option, uncomplicated for them, have standardisation, and is in keeping with other Allied Health Professions. Also, there are various counselling associations in Aotearoa, one of which is NZAC. This is what the MoH finds challenging, how to navigate the differences between these professional bodies.

MoH uses definitions such as clinical and non-clinical, regulated and non-regulated when discussing professions and service delivery in the mental health arena. They situate counselling in the non-clinical and un-regulated area. We emphasised that using non-clinical and un-regulated creates a delineation that is unhelpful and incorrect when we are referring to the counselling profession.

The un-regulated workforce, mainly support workers, who do not have any association, minimum training requirements, and a code of ethics or practise guidelines. This workforce is the largest in Mental Health and Addiction Services and is a focus for the MoH in developing an integrated workforce. The MoH would like to include NZAC, other

professions and associations, Health Workforce NZ and other Ministries in this development. MoH plans to develop a working party formed to join across silos to focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing with a long term view.

The meeting ended with a commitment to connecting again before mid - July 2020.

In response to the NZAC HPCA vs Self-regulation review, National Executive has created a small working group. The focus is to develop up-to-date information on the HPCA Act and the existing self-regulation position, understanding the current environment and looking towards the future of counselling in Aotearoa. The members of the group are Rangī Davis, Alastair Crocket, Robyn McGill, Sheryl Smith, and Jenny Manuera. Te Ahi Kaa and the President will also be supporting and involved in this work. We are appreciative for the energy, knowledge and experience of the group working on behalf of the association.

Ngā mihi nui,
Gay Puketapu-Andrews and Christine Macfarlane