



6th April 2020

Kia ora koutou,

We begin with the acknowledgement that we are in challenging times as we enter our second week of lockdown in Aotearoa due to COVID-19. These types of circumstances can bring out the best and worst of how we respond/react as humans.

It is with sadness we hear of whanau who are unable to be present with their loved ones when passing away, to say goodbye and grieve at tangihanga. The inability for people to participate in these special rituals, connecting to others and being comforted while grieving will have continued ramifications. The pain of unresolved grief will be far-reaching in these times of high levels of stress and anxiety. As counsellors, we may be called upon to hold grief for others as well as ourselves and our whanau. Our ability to be present and compassionate will provide reassurance and a sense of calm in a turbulent time for many.

This email covers a lot of important information, so please read carefully.

National Office:

We are pleased that we were prepared before the instigation of Level 4 lockdown for National Office staff to be working remotely, and this is working well so far. Your phone calls will go to voicemail and messages will be retrieved regularly. The best way to contact National Office is by email.

We have yet to employ a new Executive Officer and will now have to re-advertise this role. In the meantime: We (Gay and Chris) continue to manage most tasks between us, this is a temporary alternative until this position is filled.

Request for Annual Practising Certificate (RAPC):

Usually, the RAPC email comes out on 1st April. This year with our change to an online process, we are a little late in sending this out to you. Please look for an email in the next week asking you to complete this process. We will also add a video screencast to the website to take you through the online process.

CPD:

Please update your online 2019-2020 CPD Plan and complete the reflections as soon as possible. The 2020-2021 CPD Plan is also available for you to start with your supervisor. The date for the 2019-020 CPD Plan and Reflections to be completed and approved by your supervisor is 6th August 2020.

[Click here](#) for more information on CPD.

Website:

On the home page of the site, you will see two new buttons: '*How to use this website*' and '*COVID-19 information*'. Please click on the underlined words which are hyperlinks below to take you to that information.

[COVID-19 information:](#)

All vital information - guidelines, announcements, emails, etc. relevant to counselling and working during the COVID-19 shut down period will be uploaded here. This is the go-to place for members. We have uploaded the [Permission Statement](#) for student and provisional members counselling hours, and also updated [COVID-19 Guidelines](#) dated 2nd April 2020.

Indemnity Insurance information while working remotely [click here](#).

This week we will be uploading *Managing Risk in Schools – COVID-19*, this document will also be sent to the Ministry of Education and will be distributed to all schools.

[How to use this website:](#)

This is where video screencasts, guidelines and information of the how to do things online will be uploaded. Look here to find more about Request for Annual Practising Certificate, online CPD, member profiles, etc. You may have noticed we also now have a new drop-down box in '[Search for a counsellor](#)' – this is to indicate you are available online. This will help the public to find counsellors who work via online or telephone.

We have been very appreciative of all the positive comments on the NZAC Facebook page. Chris has been working hard at responding to issues members have raised about the website and will continue to manage this as part of her tasks.

Unable to work due to COVID-19:

Please look at financial support from the Government [click here](#).

Jobs are also advertised on NZAC [click here](#) under classified in the Members Only section of the website.

Media campaign:

We are starting a media campaign in the next week, which will be promoting NZAC as being available to provide online counselling. We anticipate as the lockdown continues that the public will be looking for support and that there will be a need for counsellors to be accessible. Please update your profile on the website to ensure you are displayed to the public if you can provide online or telephone counselling. The campaign message will be how to seek online help if people are struggling because of the lockdown. Finding support outside of the immediate people sharing the isolation bubble, by choosing Counselling Aotearoa, NZAC Registered Counsellors. It is a two-tiered approach; the campaign would involve one week of digital adverts on Stuff and the Herald sites. Then supported by three weeks of a Google search initiative actively targeting people who search for help and promoting NZAC website.

NZAC AGM and Professional Development Day:

National Executive has decided to cancel the 2020 Professional Development Day scheduled for 7th August. The rationale being the uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation regarding travel, finances and projected attendance. We are continuing to plan for the AGM to be held on 8th August, with a key-note speaker, to be held in Wellington if possible, and via the online platform as well. In the case of members not being able to travel, we will provide an entirely online AGM.

Branch AGMs:

We encourage you to continue to plan for your AGM and try an online platform such as zoom or postpone the AGM until a later date but before our National AGM. The Chairperson reports are due into National Office before 1st June.

In conclusion, we are hopeful that we will all manage well through this time and continue to provide the care and support needed by whanau and those seeking our services. We encourage everyone to be mindful of how they are caring for themselves as a particular priority at this time. At the end of the day we are all human beings affected by the stress and anxiety the Covid-19 situation brings. Fortunately, we are all also very aware as professionals that we cannot work well with others if we are not attending to ourselves. So, please take care of yourselves, call upon the compassion and empathy within that we all share as humans be kind to yourselves and others, and appreciate the delights and joys that are everywhere around us even at the most difficult of times.

There are many who are using this time to call on people's humanity and we believe that we are in a unique position to be active participants in how this looks.

Ma te ngakau koe e arahi – let a loving heart guide your decisions.

Kia kaha, kia mau, kia manawanui, whanau.

Arohanui, Chris raua ko Gay