

Statement of Practice for Counselling in Health Settings

Te Rōpū Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa - New Zealand Association of Counsellors
Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand

Poipoia te kākano kia puawai

Nurture the inner being so that it may grow and flourish

**Puritia te mana o te Aorangi, puritia te mana o te whenua, puritia te mana a te tangata,
Kia tū, kia ātea, kia mārama! Hui e! Taiki e!**

Embrace the energy of the Universe, embrace the prestige of the land, embrace the potential of people, to stand enlightened and without impediment. Let us be one. We are united we are ready!

The following statement of practice brings together the shared vision of Te Whatu ora – Health New Zealand and the New Zealand Association of Counsellors Te Rōpū Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa (NZAC) in setting out the contributions of counselling practice to health, and particularly mental health, in Aotearoa New Zealand. The statement has arisen out of consultation between the Ministry of Health Manatū Hauora, Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand, NZAC, and the community.

Counselling involves the formation of professional relationships based on ethical values and principles, a key element being the therapeutic use of the relationship between counsellor and client/s. Counsellors employ contemporary, coherent, non-colonising counselling practice approaches to assist clients to increase their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others, to develop more resourceful ways of living, to manage and overcome problems with wellbeing and mental health, and to bring about change in their lives, all interwoven with the client's/clients' social, cultural, and spiritual contexts, and the history and contemporary life of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Counsellors collaborate with clients in assessing the appropriateness of counselling, in identifying and naming problems/difficulties/distress, in developing understandings of the effects of these difficulties in the client's life, in determining the preferences clients hold in resolving, responding to, or managing problems/difficulties/distress, in the development of practical strategies that have a personal, social and cultural fit for the client, and in evaluating the effectiveness of the counselling. Such practice involves the complex interaction of relational and technical skills, founded in theory.

NZAC Te Rōpū Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a foundation to building healthy futures for all people in Aotearoa. It aligns with the expression of Te Tiriti

on the terms of Pae Ora: Mana Whakahaere, Mana Motuhake, Mana Tangata and Mana Māori; in the application of the principles of tino rangatiratanga, equity, active protection, partnership and options; and in healthy futures through wai ora, whānau ora and mauri ora (see (<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/whakamaua-tiriti-o-waitangi-framework-a3-aug20.pdf>) .

NZAC-registered counsellors express Te Rōpū Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa NZAC's core values of counselling in all aspects of their work: Respect for human dignity; Partnership; Autonomy; Responsible caring; Personal integrity. Counsellors registered with NZAC Te Rōpū Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa enact these core values through a series of principles that direct them to: Act with care and respect for individual and cultural differences and the diversity of human experience; Avoid doing harm in all professional work; Actively support the principles embodied in te Tiriti o Waitangi; Respect the confidences with which they are entrusted; Promote the safety and well-being of individuals, families, communities, whānau, hapū and iwi; Seek to increase the range of choices and opportunities for clients; Be honest and trustworthy in all their professional relationships; Practice within the scope of their competence; Treat colleagues and other professionals with respect (see <https://www.nzac.org.nz/ethics/code-of-ethics/>) .

These core values and principles guide counsellors to engage with both psychological theory and those wider disciplines that offer understanding of the socio-political-historical production of problems in the context of structural disadvantage in Aotearoa New Zealand. In particular, counsellors maintain caution towards models of individual deficit that have been shown to have harmful effects, especially for tangata whenua.

Counsellors providing services under contract to the Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand complement and collaborate with other health and mental health practitioners, as part of the wider allied health workforce. Counsellors work as part of an integrated approach that incorporates therapeutic options from multi-disciplinary perspectives to meet the needs of clients. In this context, counselling is a complementary speciality alongside other approaches to care for or treatment of those experiencing distress. Counselling provides options highly responsive to a person's particular mental health needs at the time, taking into account complex personal, interpersonal, cultural, spiritual, generational and community contexts.

Counsellors undertake initial professional education in approved programmes, as detailed in Appendix One, and engage actively in ongoing regular professional supervision and professional development throughout their careers. Both supervision and professional development are mandated and evaluated. In Aotearoa New Zealand in all these facets of professional education - counsellor education, supervision and professional development – counsellors are required to take responsibility for developing their relationships with and expanding their understandings of mana whenua.

Appendix One

Prescribed qualifications and requirements for Counselling in Health Settings

To meet the scope of practice for Te Whatu Ora- Health New Zealand, health and mental health provider contracts, counsellors must satisfy all of the following:

- Hold either a Bachelor of Counselling or a Masters of Counselling from an NZAC-accredited programme in a New Zealand tertiary education institution, or a recognised overseas equivalent.
- Post-qualification a counsellor must complete 300 counselling practice hours, 30 hours of supervision with an NZAC registered supervisor over a minimum period of 18 months to become a full Member of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC).
- Meet all NZAC initial and ongoing membership requirements, including continuing professional development (CPD) and professional supervision, and hold a current Annual Practising Certificate. Puawānanga Kaitiakitanga as a competency must be completed at least once every 3 years.
- Pass police vetting on application for Counselling in Health Settings certification, and again every three years.

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