

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

# Strategic Approach

2016 - 2020



## Mental Health Foundation Vision:

# A society where all people flourish

Increasing proportions of the population are being diagnosed with mental disorders, even where social circumstances are improving. There are many more stressors and strains on mental health, generally relating to the increased pace and complexity of life.

However, flourishing, a measure of mental health that was developed within the last decade, can be used to determine the level of positive mental health in populations.

When someone is flourishing they experience positive emotions, positive interest and engagement with the world around them, and meaning and purpose in their lives most of the time.

Evidence suggests that people who are flourishing are less at risk of physical

and mental health problems and have better social relationships. Flourishing is much more than just an absence of a diagnosis of a mental disorder. Flourishing requires certain positive qualities in one's life to be cultivated over time, and within conducive social and political environments. Studies indicate that in countries comparable to New Zealand only a minority of the population is flourishing.

Flourishing through developing positive mental health is a challenge and benefit for all. It is equally relevant for those who have experienced mental distress/ been diagnosed with a mental health problem, and can be equated with the concept of recovery.

The Mental Health Foundation intends to creatively initiate activities and dialogue at a national level on the benefits of flourishing to our overall mental health, and how flourishing can be increased equitably across our population. We want to see flourishing included as a measure of progress, and from this be able to set targets to increase our collective mental wellbeing.

Many communities and individuals already flourishing will be our teachers along the way, complementing a growing number of international and local studies on positive mental health.



The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) Board has endorsed the vision and strategic goals of the organisation for the next five years in the following six areas:

Refine and **establish a national measurement** for change in wellbeing, using baselines from existing surveys and research information, and create a **national enthusiasm** for increasing wellbeing at a population level and reducing the incidence of preventable common mental health problems.

**Advocate for a greater focus on wellbeing** for all and **actively engage** with the New Zealand population – informing, educating and advocating for general and targeted populations.

**Create active partnerships** with influential populations to achieve the goal e.g. **Māori led organisations**, tertiary institutions, corporate sector, local authorities, leisure and recreational agencies.

Maintain a prominent **public voice and authoritative commentary** on mental health, advocating for change, supporting those with valid concerns and limited voice, and encouraging communities to be confident in building their own improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes and aspirations.





**Influence government** to be more proactive in supporting mental wellbeing, and preventing mental health problems, and initiate a national policy agenda through contracts and influential contacts.

**Generate income** from as wide as possible range of sources, to invest in innovative programmes aligning with the MHF's visions and goals. Sources could include fundraising, direct mail, events, crowd funding, government partnerships with corporate and philanthropic organisations and social enterprise.



# Te Pae Mahutonga guides our work

There is a strong synergy between flourishing and Te Pae Mahutonga.

Te Pae Mahutonga – The Southern Cross – is a symbolic chart for mapping the dimensions of health promotion, including mental health promotion. It was developed by Professor Sir Mason Durie in 2004 and covers both the internal and external determinants of positive mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation acknowledges the tremendous contribution made by Professor Sir Mason Durie in developing this framework. Te Pae Mahutonga will inform and guide the Foundation's strategic approach throughout the next five years.

Using an indigenous model helps give effect to our Te Tiriti o Waitangi policy in guiding our work with Maori. The tenets of Te Pae Mahutonga also clearly respect and accommodate working responsively with all cultures to secure autonomy and participation.





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The Mental Health Foundation, a charitable trust established in 1977, promotes the mental health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.