

10 May 2022

Tena koutou katoa and assalamu alaikum

Canterbury DHB, in partnership with other agencies and individuals, developed a mental health and wellbeing response to the 2019 mosque shootings based on:

- upskilling the local workforce (primary, community and specialist services) – cultural and clinical training to better equip our system to respond to people of Muslim faith
- increasing capacity across primary, community and specialist services – removing barriers, increasing the diversity of the workforce and streamlining access
- providing community education and engagement opportunities – psychosocial education supported by Spiritual Advisor and psychologists of Muslim faith
- developing workforce opportunities for Muslim people who can facilitate access to clinical services – building local Muslim teams
- working with other government and local agencies to provide coordinated responses.

This has resulted in a variety of education, support and therapy tailored to meet the needs of people impacted.

Plans for the coming year are being finalised, in the context of the pandemic and the major health reforms taking effect mid-year.

In response to community feedback, at this stage, we anticipate focussing on the aspects of frontline service delivery that have demonstrated positive outcomes for people and adding virtual therapy from a network of Aotearoa/New Zealand based clinicians of Muslim faith with strong links maintained to local health services.

We hope this will result in:

- maintaining dedicated community support/whanau ora teams
- maintaining Specialist Mental Health Service clinical positions dedicated to this work (Child and Adolescent Psychologists and clinical capacity at Anxiety Disorders)
- developing a service whereby people of Muslim faith deliver therapy virtually alongside a local healthcare service.

We hope that by accessing New Zealand based therapists, strong connection with local services can be maintained so there is an informed response to crises and/or ongoing care needs.

We are also looking for ways to support people of Muslim faith into clinical roles as we recognise the value of an ethnically and culturally diverse workforce.

As we evolve into a national health system over the coming months, it's possible that directions will change due to prioritisation by new entities and new leaders. However, we will continue to do as much as possible to ensure members of our communities can access support and treatment as required.

Nga mihi and assalamu alaikum

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Planning and Funding

Canterbury and West Coast DHBs