

Interpreting the He Ara Oranga wellbeing outcomes framework

What is it?

The He Ara Oranga wellbeing outcomes framework¹ comprises an aspirational vision, twelve wellbeing outcomes and associated data.

For each wellbeing outcome, the framework describes ‘what good looks like’ in the future. The framework is strengths-based and positively framed. It depicts an intentional future state. Therefore, it should be read with a future-state frame of mind.

The outcomes statements have drawn from public engagement, expert advice and other exemplar frameworks and information. Overarching principles were developed to inform the outcomes framework design and use.

What is different about it?

The framework has three notable features:

- it is a holistic wellbeing framework with specific relevance to mental health and addiction;
- the wellbeing outcomes apply to everyone in Aotearoa (population-level) through to tāngata whaiora using mental health and addiction services (service-level);
- the wellbeing outcomes are shown through both te ao Māori and shared wellbeing perspectives (the dual-layering).

The dual perspectives connect and overlap. The te ao Māori lens acknowledges the unique position of Māori as partners with the Crown via Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The dual layering reflects the role that tangata whenua and tangata tiriti have to play; working together to support improving the collective wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

The ‘shared perspective of wellbeing’ and ‘te ao Māori perspective of wellbeing’ should not be read as direct translations. They represent related concepts of wellbeing from different world views. The layers are additive – the ‘shared perspective of wellbeing’ may also apply to Māori (and potentially vice versa, subject to whakapapa²).

¹ This name reflects the pathway to wellness and embeds the legacy of He Ara Oranga (the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction, 2018).

² Some te ao Māori outcomes may only apply to people with Māori whakapapa. For example, ahi kaa is a concept where Māori can trace their relationship to whenua (land) through their whakapapa linkages. Belonging, connectedness and pride with respect to whenua, whānau and whakapapa are important outcomes from a te ao Māori perspective.

The outcomes framework takes a whole-of-population view, but it also seeks to address the overarching question about whether we are improving equity of wellbeing outcomes for people and whānau of Aotearoa, with focus on equity for Māori as tangata whenua.

Whose wellbeing is it for?

The outcomes framework applies to everyone in Aotearoa – from infancy to end of life. This framework is complementary to, and builds on, the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy framework by taking this whole-of-life approach with specific relevance to mental health and addiction.

There are 14 priority groups outlined in He Ara Oranga and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission Act 2020.³ Over time, the framework may be customised to apply to priority groups. The approach acknowledges intersectionality – that is, that some people may live across multiple cultures and identify with multiple communities of belonging (e.g. a gay Māori woman, a Pacific male with a disability). We do not assume that people will identify with only one layer. Rather, that there is difference and diversity between and within groups, and it is for each individual to self-determine what perspectives of wellbeing resonate for them.

The wellbeing outcomes apply across the full spectrum of mental health, addiction, and wellbeing needs – including people and whānau experiencing distress, crisis, harm from substances or from gambling, addiction, psychiatric diagnosis, or a combination of these experiences. Wellbeing applies to everybody - what matters for people with significant distress, is also what matters for everyone. This includes things such as meaningful connection, having enough money to live on and having purpose.

Who might use it?

This is a shared framework that multiple partners can use to guide their collective effort to improve wellbeing, such as influencing investment decisions, service design and policy.

Potential partners include government agencies, service providers, localities, people who have experience of using mental health and addiction services, community groups, iwi, hapū and whānau (among others).

It is also a key framework that we will use to deliver our role to assess and report on wellbeing outcomes for people in Aotearoa.

³ These include: people with lived experience of mental distress, mental illness and/or addiction; family and whānau supporting people with mental distress, mental illness and/or addiction; Māori; Pacific peoples; refugees and migrants; rainbow communities; rural communities; disabled people; veterans; prisoners; young people; older people; people who have experienced adverse childhood events; and children in state care.

What is its purpose?

As noted, the He Ara Oranga wellbeing outcomes framework provides a picture of what holistic wellbeing looks like. It provides a way to understand and measure whether wellbeing is improving for all people and whānau of Aotearoa. The outcomes framework also offers multiple partners a shared and common language about what an aspirational future looks like. The outcomes framework, when fully implemented, has five broad purposes:

1. **To create a shared and common wellbeing purpose** across multiple partners.
2. **To measure whether** wellbeing outcomes are improving, with a focus on improving **equity of outcomes** for those priority groups who need most support, in order to experience wellbeing.
3. **To align partnership efforts** to achieve improved wellbeing. This includes driving and/or **influencing a suite of transformative implementation activities** that achieve wellbeing (including amongst other things, innovative service delivery, policies, workforce training and other enablers⁴).
4. **To support transparent accountability** of services, partners, and the government to improve wellbeing outcomes.
5. **To prompt discussion and learning about what works and does not work** that improves the likelihood and sustainability of wellbeing solutions.

At this stage, the outcomes framework is designed to be implemented at both a population-level (everyone in Aotearoa) and a mental health and addiction service level (people and whānau who use mental health and addiction services). The wellbeing outcomes cascade across these levels.

Connected work

Whilst the outcomes framework sets out the vision and wellbeing outcomes, we are all working towards (the ends), it does not include the policies, initiatives and programmes needed to help achieve these outcomes (the means). This outcomes framework will be used as one of the tools to bring together key partners to collectively develop agreed strategies to improve wellbeing outcomes.

The outcomes framework is a partner framework to the He Ara Āwhina system monitoring framework which describes what an ideal mental health and addiction system looks like.

A suite of data sits alongside the wellbeing outcomes to measure whether wellbeing outcomes are improving. The population indicators are available on our website and the tāngata whaiora measures are in development (for service-level use).

⁴ Such as infrastructure and capital investment, provider development, data and digital systems, and others.

An evolving and living outcomes framework

This outcomes framework was developed by the Initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission in 2020, in collaboration with communities, and guidance from experts in wellbeing and mental health. We intend for the framework to be enduring and to evolve over time to stay up-to-date with wellbeing outcomes relevant to Aotearoa, and new data availability. We will continue to engage on and refine the framework.