

**INSPIRING THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH  
AND ADDICTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND:  
The Blueprint Executive Leadership and Management Programmes**

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**Abstract**

Fostering leadership among mental health staff is a key initiative for New Zealand. The Blueprint Executive Leadership and Management programme enables clinical leaders to learn alongside consumer leaders and specialist services managers. This paper describes the content and process of a national mental health leadership training programme that is managed with input from one of New Zealand's leading university management schools (the University of Waikato School of Management). Such a partnership allows the delivery of a highly credible, academic programme grounded in mental health sector insight thus supporting a key goal of fostering a culture of professional development.

Key Words: Mental Health Leadership Training, New Zealand

## **Inspiring the Future of Mental Health and Addictions in New Zealand: The Blueprint Executive Leadership and Management Programmes**

### **Introduction**

The Blueprint Executive Leadership and Management programme enables clinical leaders to learn alongside consumer leaders and specialist services managers. This model of learning creates the opportunities for debate, critical conversations, crucial networking and ‘aha’ moments that reflect the reality of the mental health and addiction sectors in New Zealand. A corporate partnership with one of New Zealand’s leading university management schools (the University of Waikato School of Management) ensures the delivery of a highly credible, academic programme grounded in mental health sector insight thus supporting a key goal of fostering a culture of professional development.

### **The New Zealand Context**

New Zealand has a population of over four million people and a growing number of Maori (the indigenous people of the land), Pacific peoples, and Asian groups. Mental health and addictions services in New Zealand exist to serve the 4.7% of people who have a significant mental health or addiction problems at any one time in a year (Oakley-Brown et al. 2006).

District health boards are responsible for providing or funding the provision of health and disability services in their districts. There are 21 district health boards in New Zealand and they have existed since January 2001. Contracting of mental health and addiction services in New Zealand for both district health board provider services and non-government organizations is through the Planning and Funding arm of district health boards which are commissioned to meet the needs of local communities.

### **Sector leadership**

Dr Janice Wilson, Director General Mental Health of the Ministry of Health wrote in 2003 “... *we have been involved in a process of focussed mental health reform, based on the National Mental Health Strategy. Considerable change has been slowly occurring in mental health services for about three decades before this, but the reform of the past decade has been faster, more comprehensive and strongly driven by the Government policy agenda....Such reform continues to be hard work for those driving it and those participating in it. It needs strong, informed, talented and skilled leadership. In fact ‘leadership’ can be seen as the main vehicle or vector for the implementation of the reform. Such leadership needs to be seen throughout the mental health sector. It must be incorporated into strong and skilled management, into clear clinical knowledge and direction, into the partnership with Maori and into active participation with service users and their families or whanau*” (Wilson, July 2003).

This supported a specific focus on leadership within the mental health and addiction sector.

The Ministry of Health is a policy advisor to the Minister of Health, an agent of the Minister for monitoring and overseeing district health boards, a funder of the district health boards and national services such as national screening services, and a provider of regulatory and other functions (e.g. public health) ([www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)).

In 2002 the Ministry of Health's *Mental Health (Alcohol and Other Drug) Workforce Development Framework* signalled a shift to a whole-system approach to the development of the mental health workforce (Ministry of Health, 2002a). A key part of this shift was the introduction of five strategic imperatives:

- Workforce development infrastructure
- Organisational development
- Recruitment and retention
- Training and development
- Research and evaluation

## **History of the Blueprint Executive Leadership and Management Programmes**

In 2004 Blueprint Centre for Learning was contracted by the Mental Health Workforce Development Programme to develop and deliver a leadership and management programme for the mental health and addictions sector. The Mental Health Workforce Development Programme at that time was a partnership between the mental health directorate and the Health and Research Council of New Zealand. The Mental Health Workforce Development Programme was funded by the Ministry of Health and administered by the Health and Research Council. A joint District Health Board and Ministry of Health steering committee provided governance and assisted with implementation of the mental health workforce development initiatives.

The Executive Leadership Management Programme (ELMP) sits within the Organisational Development key strategic imperative. The contract management of the Executive Programmes now sits with Te Pou. Te Pou is New Zealand's National Centre of Mental Health Research, Information and Workforce Development ([www.tepou.co.nz](http://www.tepou.co.nz)).

Blueprint Centre for New Zealand is the only New Zealand Qualifications Authority and ISO 9001 accredited training provider focussing on mental health in New Zealand. Blueprints focus is on "Living the Learning" and the organisation has a spirit of "Passion for People and Potential" ([www.blueprint.co.nz](http://www.blueprint.co.nz)). Therefore the executive programmes enabled Blueprint to take a led role in contributing to the development of capacity and capability within the mental health workforce

## **PROGRAMME OVERVIEW**

There are two Executive Programmes. The first is a one year Executive Leadership and management Programme. The second is an optional Year 2: the Advanced ELMP. The programme aims to maximise opportunities for participants to translate theoretical learning into practice and establish strong networks with the sector.

### **The programme aims to:**

- Develop participants leadership capability through an understanding of personal and academic leadership and management styles(s)
- Expose participants to key skill areas required for management and leadership roles within the mental health and addictions sector
- Provide a forum to update and inform key mental health and addictions developments
- Stimulate, challenge and educate through exposure to national and international speakers
- Foster a culture of professional development for the sector
- Encourage networking, peer mentoring and support structures.
- Promote sustainable leadership outcomes
- Promote innovation, inspiration and fun as attributes of leadership  
([www.blueprint.co.nz](http://www.blueprint.co.nz))

### **The Programme content**

The ELMP is a complete programme and is delivered over a 12 month period. On successful completion of the ELMP, programme participants can apply to do the Advanced ELMP. This builds on the ELMP networks and provides the opportunity for enhanced sector specific learning and the undertaking of two more university papers.

At the completion of the Advanced ELMP, programme participants will also have a Post Graduate Certificate in Management Studies from the University of Waikato. This is possible because much of the learning in this course emanates from the University courses thus counts towards the University degree. The Programme aims to maximise opportunities for participants to translate theoretical learning into practice and establish networks within the mental health and addictions sector.

### **Year One Content (ELMP)**

- History of the Mental Health and Addictions Sector in New Zealand, Key policy and Legislation, Future Strategy
- Personal Awareness
- Creativity and Innovation “*where do you take a great idea*”
- Work-Lifestyle integration
- Performance Assessment
- Human Resource Management
- Strategic Service Planning
- Using Information Strategically
- Creating an ethical environment
- Media and Communication management
- Community Development and Developing Community Capacity : Working across the System

## **Year Two Content (Advanced ELMP)**

- Self Awareness and Goal Application
- Culture and Leadership
- Political Awareness and its significance in Leadership
- Change Management
- Managing for Results
- Health Budgeting
- Workforce development and competencies
- Growing Entrepreneurial Leaders
- Emphasis on Accountability and Applied Networking

## **Programme Delivery**

The programme is coordinated by a senior mental health manager who provides continuing role modelling, facilitation and mentoring with programme participants. Expert facilitators from the mental health, commercial and academic fields will lead each session, they are asked to create workshops that allow for regular and purposeful interaction, that stretch and challenge participants as leaders and managers and create an environment that values debate and is provocative!

As part of the programme comprises postgraduate management papers delivered by New Zealand's tertiary leader in management research (Waikato School of Management), this means the Executive Leadership and Management Programme will deliver a highly credible (and creditable) academic experience, grounded in progressive mental health sector insight. The university credits students obtain from the programme can be cross-credited or be used as credits towards a postgraduate Certificate, Diploma or MBA.

## **Access Criteria**

Participants accepted onto the Executive Leadership and Management Programme will have well-recognised abilities and be committed to a high level of professional development. This includes people from clinical, consumer, and generic backgrounds in any management or leadership role across the sector. Students may come from all areas of New Zealand.

Access to the programme is by application and may involve an interview as a component of the selection process.

While this is primarily a postgraduate learning opportunity, participants without a tertiary qualification will be considered if enough relevant, practical experience and an ability to meet the requirements of the programme can be demonstrated.

They will also:

- Be in a current management or leadership role or can demonstrate a commitment to a career pathway in leadership or management roles.
- Have staff reporting/supervisory responsibilities
- Have accountability for financial management
- Be employed by a current mental health or addictions contracted provider and work for a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- Be able to demonstrate a commitment to the future of the Sector
- Have a minimum of three years work experience
- Have an undergraduate degree (ideally although not mandatory)

Although the programme is heavily subsidised through the contract with Te Pou there is a fee expectation from the student or supporting organisation. This significantly contributes to the sense of value of the programme. To ensure there are no barriers to access Blueprint has negotiated additional scholarship resource from Te Pou. This enables the provision of full or partial scholarships to be awarded to programme participants.

### **Learning and Evaluation**

The programme places significant emphasis on Learning Sets which enable networking and the development of crucial professional relationships for support and mentoring. Learning sets with an action learning project are a key component of the ELMP. The Learning sets are expected to submit a report and present to a panel of senior mental health and addiction managers and professional presenters at the conclusion of the programme. In addition in the advanced year students through a facilitated process provide individual feedback to each set member on their contribution as a leader and team member to each other. There is a strong expectation of accountability and contribution.

*The Advisory Panel is a group of recognised leaders with extensive experience and skills in mental health and education and have provided guidance to the programme from inception through to delivery and evaluation. The Advisory Panel along with the programme coordinator have created a matrix which throughout the programme participants and facilitators are encouraged to consider and apply:*

<b>Consumer perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful consultation “<i>our customers are not with us by choice but by circumstance</i>”</li> <li>• Active participation with Service Users and Whanau</li> <li>• Responsiveness to service user/consumer needs</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers as a Maori/Pacific peoples manager</li> <li>• Multiple accountabilities</li> <li>• Community relationships</li> <li>• Processes</li> </ul>
<b>Clinical perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice</li> <li>• Evaluation of Services</li> <li>• Inclusion of Multi Disciplinary Team perspectives</li> <li>• Differing clinical philosophies (in absence of clinical evidence)</li> </ul>
<b>Service and Organisational perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniqueness of ‘your’ service, vision, goals, values and priorities</li> <li>• Drivers for decision making</li> <li>• Understanding your own organisation incl key players, and key drivers etc.</li> <li>• Future direction</li> </ul>
<b>Family/Whanau and Community perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful and active participation</li> <li>• Planning participation and consultation with Community and Whanau</li> </ul>

## **Recognition of Excellence**

Both years of the programme have an Award associated with them. This creates a dynamic of academic “*stretch*”, prestige and competition. The nominees are selected jointly between the University of Waikato and executive Programme coordinator based on the following criteria:

- Inclusive teamwork approach
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant area
- Ability to apply knowledge to work related issues
- Seeks to learn continuously
- Able to seek integrative solutions to difficult problems
- Innovative

Participants are asked to prepare a presentation for the executive programmes Advisory Panel and selected guests. The Panel select the awardees and the announcement is made at graduation celebration.

The first year of the programme also has a further award. The successful recipient is funded to attend the International Initiative in Mental Health Leadership brokered study tour linked to the person’s individual needs and coinciding with the International Initiative in Mental Health Leadership exchange and conference ([www.iimhl.com](http://www.iimhl.com)).

The second year also has an award which enables the successful recipient access to resource for professional leadership mentoring and coaching.

Both Awards support the goal of sustainable leadership outcomes.

## **Programme Completion**

The programme expects 85% attendance at the face to face training days, mandatory attendance and pass of the University components of the programmes. The Graduation event provides a real opportunity for celebration and recognition of achievement of the graduates and a wide range of mental health and addictions national and local leaders attend.

## **Executive Programme Outcomes**

Statistics to date include:

- Since the commencement of the programme in 2004 there have been three streams of the first year of the programme with 102 graduates and an average completion rate of 89%.
- The Advanced programme has seen two streams finish with 38 graduates and an average completion rate of 92.3%.
- Through the partnership with Waikato Management School the 38 graduates of the advanced programme also have acquired a PgCertMgtst.
- A number of students through their own volition have continued with their academic study towards the Diploma qualification.
- 14% of graduates have been consumer leaders, 16% Maori, 35% from the non-government organization sector and 14% from the addiction sector.

- The statistics are considered a real success and reflection of the diversity of the sector and a real promotion of increased integration in service delivery through increased understanding of each other and the power of relationships.

In August 2008 the Blueprint Leadership Network was launched with a forum on leadership and change, this will be the Alumni of the Executive programmes and the goal is to maintain the focus on leadership in the sector and nurture and maintain relationships, crucial networks and mentoring. In addition a follow up report was completed to explore with a sample of graduates and sponsoring managers the sustainable learning following the executive programmes (Peters & Pitts-Brown, 2008). The results (while qualitative) show strong positive change in leaders' behaviour on the job (from self-report and managers' reports following completion of the Programme. Examples are both personal (e.g. increased professional confidence, an ability to self-reflect on their own behaviour and an increased knowledge base) and practical (e.g. the ability to lead a project/chair a group, succession and project planning and greater accountability by challenging staff as to why they were doing things in a particular way).

## **Conclusion**

The Blueprint Executive Leadership and Management programme was established to develop mental health leaders across all disciplines and groups. To date it appears that the content and evaluation model is well received by participants. An initial evaluation suggests that skills and attitudes are sustained in the workplace. More research could focus on the longer term sustainability of such learning. Comparisons with other national leadership programmes would also be helpful.

*“He aha te mea nui o te ao,  
He tangata, He tangata, He tangata”*

*What is the greatest thing in this world,  
It is people, it is people, it is people*

Maori prover, source unknown

## **About the Authors**

**Janet Peters** is a Registered Psychologist who has worked and published in the mental health field for 15 years. She currently works as a contractor across several areas including for the International Initiative in Mental Health Leadership and in public mental health awareness campaigns. She has just completed four documents in New Zealand looking at ways to increase the accessibility of talking therapies in statutory mental health services.

**Sally Pitts-Brown** is the Chief Executive of Blueprint Centre for Learning. Sally started off as an Occupational Therapist and has worked for the last eighteen years in both the United Kingdom and New Zealand in a variety of leadership and management roles within the mental health sector. Sally lives in Wellington, New Zealand with her husband and two young children.



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