



Supporting wellbeing, resilience, and effective leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand

Toolkit for team leaders in mental health & addiction services

Introduction

Kia ora. This toolkit has been created for team leaders like yourself who want to support the wellbeing of your team. Working in the mental health and addiction space is both rewarding and challenging. To ensure your team can support the people seeking their help, they first need to be well themselves, and you can support them in this.

In addition, as your environment is continually changing and under constant pressure, it's important you have tools in your kete to help your team manage what is happening around them.

This toolkit is designed to help you:

- Keep your team well and engaged
- Lead confidently through change
- Build resilience for yourself and others
- Give feedback that strengthens relationships and performance
- Manage workload in sustainable and supportive ways

We've kept it practical and short – so you can dip in and out. It's grounded in both te ao Māori perspectives and international best practice. And most importantly, it's designed to be used in your day-to-day work – whether in a team hui, a one-on-one, or when reflecting at the end of a busy day.

1. Kaimahi wellbeing

QUICK TOOL

Six ways to worker wellbeing

1. **Whakawhanaungatanga | Connect** - Foster strong relations through regular team catchups, peer support and open communication.
2. **Take notice** - Promote mindfulness/self-awareness of own wellbeing. Check in regularly and encourage a positive team culture where people feel able to offer feedback.
3. **Thoughtful work practices** - Consider the (clinical) systems that support the service/team to work well. Encourage quality and service improvement using models like Choice & Partnership Approach (CAPA) and Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika.
4. **Support learning** - Encourage growth through training, mentoring, and reflection.
5. **Be active** - Include fun and movement in team routines such as walking meetings and stretch breaks.
6. **Look after ourselves** - Model balance, use supervision, and protect recovery time.



Conversation script: 10-minute wellbeing check-in

- *How are you going outside of the day-to-day tasks?*
- *What's one thing that's energised you this week?*
- *What's one thing draining your energy right now?*
- *What support would help most in the next fortnight?*

Case study

Aroha, a team leader in a community NGO, noticed kaimahi were tired and disengaged. Instead of pushing harder for productivity, she set aside 15 minutes at the start of the week for 'whanaungatanga time' — a space to connect and reflect. Kaimahi reported feeling more valued, and energy lifted noticeably.

Team activity: Whitiwhiti kōrero

At your next hui, run a 15-minute round where everyone shares:

- One challenge they're carrying
- One thing going well

Encourage listening without fixing — just holding space.

Try this now

This week, ask at least one team member the question: "What's one thing that would make your week easier?"

2. Leading through change

QUICK TOOL

CLARC roles*

As a leader in change, you are the:

- **Communicator:** Explain what's happening and why
- **Liaison:** Bridge between your team and wider organisation
- **Advocate:** Share positives and help kaimahi see opportunities
- **Resistance manager:** Acknowledge concerns, respond with empathy
- **Coach:** Help kaimahi learn and adapt

Step-by-step: Using ADKAR* in a team meeting

- **Awareness:** Explain the 'why'
- **Desire:** Ask what would encourage kaimahi to engage?
- **Knowledge:** Provide training or information
- **Ability** – Support practice and application
- **Reinforcement** – Celebrate successes and share impact stories



Case study

When a district health service restructured, Mere, a clinical team leader, used the CLARC model to guide her team. She set up fortnightly updates to provide information and listen to kaimahi concerns and suggestions (**Communicator**), fed kaimahi concerns upward and relayed information back (**Liaison**), openly spoke about future benefits (**Advocate**), created space for worries and discussion (**Resistance manager**), and paired newer kaimahi with mentors and offered opportunities for more support (**Coach**). Kaimahi felt supported even amid uncertainty.

Reflection prompt

- When you think about your current team, where are they on the ADKAR journey (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement)?
- Where do you need to focus your leadership energy right now?

Try this now

In your next hui, name the change openly and ask each person: “What does this change mean for you?”

1. Kempton, L. (2025). *CLARC: The role of people managers in change management*. Prosci. <https://www.prosci.com/blog/clarc-the-role-of-people-managers-in-change-management>

2. Prosci. *The Prosci ADKAR Model*. <https://www.prosci.com/methodology/adkar>

3. Building resilience

QUICK TOOL

Resilience micro-practices

- **Whakatau** – Begin meetings with a karakia or one minute of silence
- **Reframe** – Ask: “What’s within our control right now?”
- **Strengths spotting** – Call out what’s going well, even small wins
- **Energy check** – Use a 1–10 scale: “Where’s your energy today?”



Case study

Tane’s team faced high caseloads and burnout. He introduced a ‘strengths round’ at weekly hui, where each person named something positive they’d seen a colleague do. This small shift lifted morale and helped the team remember their collective impact.

Team activity: Building collective resilience

- Draw a waka on a whiteboard
- Ask: “What keeps our waka strong in the waves?”
- Capture answers (e.g., trust, humour, shared goals)
- Then ask: “What weakens our waka?”
- Close with: “What’s one small action we’ll take this week to strengthen the waka?”

Reflection prompt

- When have you personally felt most resilient as a leader?
- What habits, supports, or values helped you?

Try this now

At your next hui, ask: “What’s one thing that gives you strength at work?”

4. Giving feedback

QUICK TOOL

Feedback in three steps

- **Whanaungatanga first** – start with connection
- **Observation, not judgement** – “I noticed...” instead of “You always...”
- **Support and next step** – “How can I support you to build on this?”



Conversation script: Supportive feedback

- *I appreciate the way you [specific action]. It made a real difference.*
- *I noticed [specific behaviour]. Can we talk about how it's affecting the team?*
- *What do you need from me to make this easier?*



Case study

Sally, a manager, dreaded giving feedback about punctuality. Instead of being critical, she asked her kaimahi member: “I’ve noticed you’ve been late a few times — what’s happening for you?” This opened space for honesty (childcare issues) and together they worked on solutions. The kaimahi member felt supported, not reprimanded.

Team activity: Feedforward exercise

In pairs, each person asks:

- “What’s one thing I could do more of to support you?”
- Partners give constructive suggestions for the future (not critiques of the past).

Try this now

This week, notice one positive action from each team member and acknowledge it directly.

5. Managing workload



QUICK TOOL

Workload balance conversation

Use these prompts in supervision or check-ins:

- What's feeling manageable right now?
- What's tipping you over?
- What can we pause, delegate, or simplify?

Step-by-step: Shared prioritisation

- List all current tasks
- Mark what's urgent vs. important
- Ask: "Which of these actually move us closer to our purpose?"
- Rebalance workload together

Case study

A team was overwhelmed by referrals. Their leader introduced a shared prioritisation process where the team decided together what to focus on first. This created fairness, reduced resentment, and gave kaimahi a stronger sense of control.

Team activity: Stop | Start | Continue

At a hui, ask the team:

- What should we **stop** doing?
- What should we **start** doing?
- What should we **continue** because it works?

Reflection prompt

- When was the last time you said "no" or "not now" to protect your team's capacity?
- What helped you make that call?

Try this now

In your next one-on-one, ask: "If one thing could come off your plate this week, what would make the biggest difference?"

In closing: Your leadership matters

Every small action you take to support kaimahi wellbeing, guide through change, build resilience, give feedback, and manage workload makes a difference.

- Remember:**
- Whanaungatanga keeps people connected
 - Manaakitanga creates trust and care
 - Kotahitanga builds unity and collective strength

You don't have to have all the answers - just being present, empathetic, and intentional is leadership at its best. Ngā mihi nui for the work you do.





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