

Collaborative Mental Health and Addictions Credentialing Programme

Information for GPs and Practice Managers

The metro Auckland Collaborative Mental Health and Addictions Credentialing Programme aims to strengthen the capability of practice nurses (Registered Nurses) to respond to mental health and addiction issues.

Practice nurses on the programme develop skills, knowledge and confidence to:

- normalise conversations about mental health and addictions
- assess for mental health and addictions issues
- ask about and address concerns about risk
- deliver brief interventions to support people with mental health and addictions issues
- provide self-management support
- provide ongoing monitoring
- support referral / introduction to other services
- support the physical health needs of people with serious mental health and addiction issues
- work in shared care arrangements with specialist mental health and addiction treatment nurses/services

Programme details

- Access to six study days delivered over 4-6 month period.
- Practice development support through small group supervision (5 X 1.5 hour) by an experienced mental health nurse.
- Reflective practice is the foundation of supervision sessions. Nurses are also required to prepare four written reflections as part of the credentialing process.
- Application of learning within the clinical setting.

At the end of the programme practice nurses meet the requirements to apply for a *mental health and addictions in primary care credential* from Te Ao Māramatanga New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses

How can practices/employers support practice nurses during and after the programme?

Practice nurses require support from employers to attend study days and group supervision sessions, and importantly, support and opportunities to apply learning in their everyday clinical practice. Practice nurses who achieve credentialing require support from employers to maintain and extend knowledge and skills.

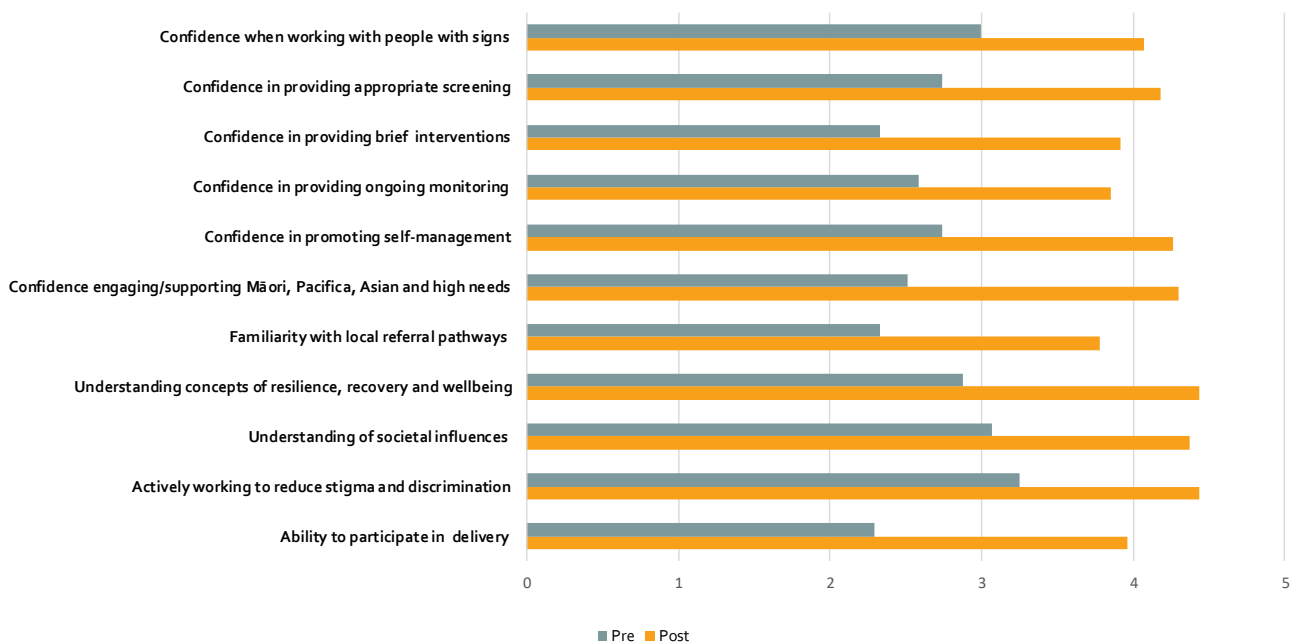
What is the role of the credentialed nurse within the practice team?

The role of the credentialed nurse will vary depending on the individual nurse and their practice environment. Commonly credentialed nurses report:

- Routinely assessing for mental health and addiction issues
- Providing brief interventions and self-management support as part of everyday care
- Delivering care and support of individuals with mental health and addictions issues as part of wider practice team and/or with specialist mental health and addiction treatment nurses/services
- Influencing practice within wider team and being a practice resource

Pre and programme assessments consistently show a growth in confidence, knowledge and understanding amongst nurse participants

July - November 2017 Programme: Changes in confidence, knowledge and understanding



How can the credentialed nurse add value to the practice team and improve health outcomes?

Credentialing does not change the scope of the practice nurse but supports them to work at the top of their scope. Credentialed nurses are a great asset to the practice team and clients when responding to the needs of people with mental health and addiction issues.

- Credentialed nurses have the opportunity to identify mental health and addiction issues early and intervene before people become increasingly unwell.
- Credentialed nurses offer alternative access points for people with mental health and addiction issues and can potentially decrease GP's mental health workload.

What does the programme cost?

The programme is free. There is no back-fill payment for study day release.

The main impact of the programme on my practice is having the skills to confidently screen for mental health issues. The doctors ask me to screen new and existing patients for mental health issues.

Practice Nurse, Otara Family Christian Health Centre

I have gained knowledge about the resources available for clients and staff and helpful screening tools for alcohol, drug, and depression. I have shared this knowledge with my work colleagues and now we are using the AUDIT tool and the PHQ-2 and PHQ-9 depression screening tools.

Practice Nurse, Gabriel Medical Centre

The mental health and credentialing programme has changed the way I practice dramatically. The GPs at my practice now refer patients to me that are experiencing anxiety and/or depression. I see these patients usually under Care Plus funding if they qualify and some are more than happy to pay.

Practice Nurse, Medplus

After completing the credentialing programme I have been able to use knowledge and skills gained to support change in our practice. The practice use Planned Proactive Care (PPC) funding to run a weekly clinic for people suffering from mental health conditions.

The doctors now send me all the referrals for patients with non-urgent mental health issues. I go through these with the Integrated Locality (ILOC) team at our twice-weekly meetings and together we decide on the most appropriate management pathway.

If we decide that I manage them, I use my skills/tools gained from the credentialing programme for the management of the patient's condition. I see them weekly, monthly, whatever is necessary. Once they are coping well I follow up with a regular phone call at a time/day decided by the patient and myself.

If we decide to refer to ILOC, the ILOC team update us at our regular meetings about the patient's progress. This enables us to know when a patient has been discharged from secondary services and we are able to put a plan in place to support them in our GP practice.

During the weekly clinic, I am also able to see people who need their monthly IM injections (who are managing their condition well). This enables me to monitor their condition and offer their appointments free of charge. Similarly, I have been offering monthly appointments for people who need metabolic monitoring, checking on their physical health and their mental health and keeping up to date with blood tests and Doctor's reviews.

I am also using knowledge from the credentialing programme to better manage our patients who have expressed thoughts about suicide. We have developed a management plan using information given during the credentialing programme, in conjunction with the Auckland regional health pathways, for suicide. A copy of this is in every nurse station, which has given other nurses confidence when dealing with a patient who is feeling suicidal, especially when working in triage.

Practice Nurse, Waiuku Medical Centre

For further information or to register interest for future programmes contact:

Programme Coordinator: Jill Moffat jmoffat@comprehensivecare.co.nz or call 021 811 882