

Mental Health and Addiction working group

10 May 2021

Role of this group

The role of this group is to support the uptake and sustainability of telehealth in the mental health and addictions sector. During the COVID-19 period, telehealth has been a significant tool for ensuring clients receive adequate access to healthcare across New Zealand. As a result, there have been significant gains in the adoption of telehealth for the delivery of health care. However, there are clear signals that in its current form and with the threat of COVID-19 diminishing within New Zealand, telehealth usage has dropped, led mainly by a return to more traditional methods of service delivery. In order to reverse and establish the 'wins' from COVID-19, it is imperative we work, with pace, in addressing the perceived sustainability of telehealth and look to embed these within the healthcare system (at all levels).

The role of the working group is to:

- Advise on requirements and priorities for telehealth deployments to support the mental health and addictions sector
- Advise on matters relating to environmental considerations, for example, barriers to uptake, technical considerations, protocols and guidelines, and standards related to the mental health and addictions sector
- Advise on matters of equity when it comes to deployment and utilisation of telehealth in the mental health and addictions sector
- Design, guide and implement projects undertaken by the working group
- Contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the working group to the maximum extent practicable.
- Align the work of the working group with the New Zealand Telehealth Leadership Group (NZTLG) and New Zealand Telehealth Forum (NZTF).

Purpose

Broadly, our intention is to establish telehealth as a viable, high-quality, enduring method of healthcare delivery, that benefits the consumer within the mental health and addictions sector.

Established

This working group was established during 2020 as part of the NZTLG response to COVID-19 and is one of a series of NZTLG working groups across the spectrum of telehealth.

Responsibilities of the group

The working group will comprise a chair, appointed by the NZTLG executive and members; a deputy chair appointed by the working group chair; and members appointed by the working group chair and other members.

Collectively the working group should have a strong clinical focus or strong understanding of the mental health and addictions sector. Some of the following expertise and attributes should be included in the membership:

- Knowledge and experience in the theory and practice of telehealth
- Knowledge of the enabling technologies
- Knowledge of New Zealand's current health services delivery in public and private settings
- An ability to think in terms of innovative solutions which can transform the traditional service delivery models
- Experience in having a governance role in similar organisations
- The passion and commitment to ensure the working group, wider telehealth forum and NZTLG succeeds in its objectives.

Membership

The composition of the working group will be at the discretion of the working group chair, NZTLG and should recognise both the skills of certain roles and the presence of stakeholder organisations. There should be no more than 20 members in the working group, not including co-opted time limited members. Sub-groups may be formed. It is expected that participants will bring the required skills to support and deliver on the purposes of the group.

Term

Members of the working group will be appointed for a period of two years in the first instance. After two years, appointments will be reconfirmed or altered. This same process will occur if a member is unable to complete their two-year appointment.

Co-opting members

At any stage, as relevant to the work of the working group, a person may be co-opted to the committee for a temporary period.

Communications

The only spokesperson for the working group, NZTLG and NZTF, is the residing NZTLG chairperson, unless permission has been granted and duties delegated by the NZTLG chairperson.

Regular updates from the working group will be provided by the working group chair and/or programme manager to the NZTLG executive.

All new projects/proposals should be brought to the attention of the NZTLG executive, as they are being designed/developed.

Meetings

The working group will determine a schedule of meetings as required. All meeting arrangements will be made by the support people, working group chair or delegate/s (video conference, in-person) as required.

- While we expect members to attend every meeting, we appreciate the schedules of our various participants. Hence, we expect that by joining the group, the allocated member will do his/her outmost effort to participate in the vast majority, if not all of the sessions.
- Attendance of three quarters of members will constitute a quorum
- Some business may be conducted out of session where required.

Support

Administrative and programme management support for the working group will be provided (as it is available) by the NZTLG. The administrator will support the chair in meeting minutes, formal meetings and distribution of any hard copy materials. The programme management support will facilitate the function of activities and ensure all the necessary approvals are logged and signed off by the NZTLG chairperson and executive.

Confidentiality

Working group members shall not disclose any confidential information obtained during the course of their activities without the prior approval of the working group chair. Working group file sharing and storage will be available on Microsoft Teams. This is a platform where all NZTLG business can be reviewed and is visible by all invited NZTF members. Documents stored on Microsoft Teams will be clearly identified as confidential or available for public dissemination.

Decision making

Where decisions are required, it is important to try to gain a unanimous outcome between all members present however, where there is division, a majority decision is appropriate to move forward.

Conflict of interest

Working group members will not, during the currency of their membership, make any commitments which conflict the member's obligations under the Terms of Reference (ToR). Members will register all interests in the working group register and any real or perceived conflict arising will require a conflict management plan. This plan will be developed by the programme manager, working group chair and NZTLG executive.

Reimbursement

The NZTLG and NZTF are volunteer organisations. There is no remuneration for meeting preparation, attendance at in-person meetings or participation in videoconferences.

Review provisions

The working group Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership will be reviewed every two years. The next review date is May 2023.

Mental Health and Addictions working group members 2021

Name
Dr Yariv Doron, working group chair and deputy chair of NZTLG
Dr Charis Frethey, programme manager, NZTLG
Dr Emily Gill, GP, UOA academic
Dr Mark Lawrence
Dr Francis Goodstadt
Dr Alice Law
Sharon Necklen