



ERO's Evaluation of *Awhi Mai*, *Awhi Atu/Counselling in Schools*

Phase 2: Implementation & Early Outcomes

May 2023



About this report



- *Awhi Mai, Awhi Atu/Counselling in Schools (CiS)* is a pilot initiative funded through a Budget 2020 package of support.
- ERO was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to independently evaluate how well the CiS initiative is going in primary and intermediate schools.
- ERO's evaluation is being undertaken in three phases.
- This report presents interim findings from Phase 2 of the evaluation, which includes:
 - early outcomes for learners accessing CiS
 - lessons learnt about implementation and ongoing delivery of the initiative
 - good practice examples from case studies.



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*About Awhi Mai, Awhi Atu/
Counselling in Schools*

Original purpose and design features



- The aim of the of the CiS initiative is to:
 - increase the provision of mental wellbeing/hauora support to learners in primary, intermediate, and smaller secondary schools
 - help learners deal with mental wellbeing/hauora issues they might be experiencing.

Key design features of the proposed initiative were:

Increased access	Professionally supervised, qualified, registered counsellors	Collaborative approach to design	Community provision of counselling support	Evaluation
For learners to access counselling support, with the support of their whānau, through referral and/or self-referral and accessible venues for counselling	To provide 'evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and culturally sustaining counselling support' <i>(MOE RFP, 15 January 2021)</i>	Co-design between schools, providers, the Ministry, board members, whānau, hapū, iwi, other community groups, and wellbeing providers delivering services to schools <i>(MOE Start-up guide, 2021)</i>	Enables flexibility to provide different approaches for primary and intermediate schools than the existing model of guidance counsellors in secondary schools	ERO to evaluate the implementation and outcomes for primary and intermediate schools involved

What do we know about what works?



There is a well-established literature base on the effectiveness of school-based counselling. We know that good practice for supporting learners' access to mental wellbeing/hauora support includes:

Support available on school site	Qualified and specialised staff/ personnel	Programmes suited to the school	School, whānau, and community engagement	School culture that recognises and values learner wellbeing
Being school-based reduces barriers for families (e.g., cost, time, and location), although there is some perceived stigma for learners <i>(Barrett & Pahl, 2006)</i>	Programmes delivered by mental health professionals are associated with better outcomes than those delivered by teachers <i>(Werner-Seidler et al., 2017)</i>	Programmes being suited to schools' values, goals, and priorities <i>(Hetrick et al., 2021)</i>	Authentic, ongoing engagement between school, whānau, and broader community <i>(Hetrick et al., 2021)</i>	School-based social and emotional wellbeing promotion, support for behavioural issues <i>(Fox et al., 2015)</i>

What has changed since the initiative was introduced?



Since CiS was introduced in 2021, some changes have been made, including the following:

Design changes

- The original intent of the initiative was to have registered counsellors delivering the service. Due to a limited supply of registered counsellors, the decision was made to expand the criteria to include practitioners who are registered with a professional body (for example, *Counsellors; Social Workers; Occupational Therapists; Psychotherapists; Psychologists; Creative Art Therapists; Music Therapists; Teachers; and Mental Health Nurses*).
- In order to reflect the diverse contexts and needs across communities and regions, practitioners who are not registered with a professional body were also included. Those not registered are required under contract to work under the supervision of a registered counselling practitioner and to have an appropriate qualification. Examples of practitioners who are required to work under such supervision may include: Facilitators of Equine Therapy; Master Carvers; Rongoā Māori Practitioners.
- As of January 2023, 215 schools across eight regions were included in the CiS pilot: 102 Primary, 12 Intermediate, 69 Contributing, 15 Composite, and 17 Secondary schools.
- The number of providers has increased from nine in Phase 1 of the evaluation to 42.
- More schools continue to be added and new providers recruited to the pilot.

Implementation changes

- Development of an updated Service Guide document.
- Introduction of a database for providers to use for reporting purposes.



ERO's evaluation

A three-phased evaluation



- ERO's evaluation of the CiS initiative aims to answer the following questions:
 - Is CiS increasing access to counselling for primary and intermediate school learners?
 - What impact is CiS having on learners' wellbeing, engagement, and learning outcomes?
 - What lessons are there around implementation of the initiative?
- ERO's evaluation is in three phases:

Phase	Focus	Timing
1	Report 1 to Minister: Early implementation – Based on Fieldwork 1, Term 4 2021	May 2022 (completed)
2	Report 2 to Minister: Implementation & early outcomes – Based on Fieldwork 2, Term 1 2023	May 2023 (completed)
3	Publication Report 3: Implementation & final outcomes – Based on Fieldwork 3, Term 1 2024	May 2024

Summary of what we found in Phase 1



Phase 1 of the evaluation included 112 primary and intermediate schools. Given that Phase 1 data was collected in Term 4, 2021 – a few months after CiS began – the findings were early indications about how implementation was going.

Going well

- Even in the context of Covid-19, provision was able to be stood up.
- Schools were identifying learners' needs.
- Practitioners were finding suitable sites for counselling on the school site, which was consistent with good practice in school-based counselling.

Too early to say

- While there were green shoots of culturally responsive practice for Māori, further work was needed.
- There was minimal evidence of culturally responsive practice for Pacific learners.
- Practitioners were often part of school wellbeing/hauora teams, but there was some confusion about role clarity between counselling practitioners and other pastoral care roles (e.g., Social Workers in Schools).
- There was not yet enough evidence to assess the level of linking up with community networks/other wellbeing/hauora services.

Noted for improvement

- Schools had done well to get the initiative up and running, and to set up referral processes through the schools. The next step, though, was for schools to put in processes that allow for self-referral by learners and their whānau.
- The lack of supply of qualified counsellors means that practitioners are not always registered with an appropriate professional body.
- Communication with and involvement of whānau and community was minimal – possibly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

What we looked at in Phase 2 of the evaluation



1. **Outcomes** – What impact is CiS having on:
 - Learner and whānau wellbeing?
 - Learner engagement and learning progress?
 - School/classroom practices?
2. What lessons are there about what supports **successful implementation**, including:¹
 - Service delivery
 - Ensuring access
 - Qualified workforce
 - Culturally responsive practice
 - What is helping?
 - What is getting in the way?

¹Note: these are the same implementation factors that were examined in Phase 1 of the evaluation.

How we gathered information



To understand how well the CiS initiative is going, we used a mixed method approach.

Administrative data

- Administrative data is provided to the Ministry of Education by providers and schools. This data forms the basis of the outcome findings on learners' wellbeing, engagement, and learning progress and provides a picture of those who are accessing CiS.

Case studies

- Five primary schools (chosen as examples of success)
- Education regions – Tai Tokerau, Hawkes Bay/Tairāwhiti, Wellington, Otago, South Canterbury
 - Due to cyclone Gabrielle, we did not go to schools or providers in Tairāwhiti
- We talked to school leaders, whānau, learners, provider managers, practitioners, and the Ministry Lead Advisor (Wellbeing) working in those regions.

Surveys

- Four surveys – Learner, Whānau, School, Provider
- Responses – 128 learners, 69 whānau, 85 schools, 38 providers (13 managers and 25 counselling practitioners)
 - Due to cyclone Gabrielle, surveys did not go to Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti regions.



Summary of interim evaluation findings



Outcomes and experiences of learners

1. CiS is increasingly reaching learners with mental wellbeing/hauora needs. More than 1050 learners across 134 schools have accessed one-on-one counselling since September 2021. The majority of learners accessing CiS are Māori (64 percent).
2. The most common reasons for learners being referred to counselling are: behaviour, relationships, and anxiety.
3. The majority of learners who receive CiS are positive about their experience. They feel listened to, that their practitioner understands their culture and language, and that they are given strategies that work.
4. There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on learner wellbeing, engagement, and learning.
 - Learners report feeling better in themselves (71 percent), at school (61 percent), and about things outside school (63 percent), such as activities and friendships.
 - Teachers report 53 percent of learners showed an improvement in participation in classroom activities and 52 percent an improvement in learning after receiving CiS support.
 - Whānau are similarly positive, with 89 percent reporting improvements in their child's wellbeing, 78 percent an improvement in engagement at school, and 83 percent an improvement in their learning.



Implementation

1. Service delivery continues to go well, with schools and providers adopting different models to suit their community and learners' needs, and most holding counselling sessions in a dedicated space onsite.
2. Schools are still making the majority of referrals, but there are signs that self-referrals are increasing – and awareness of the CiS initiative among the school community is now high.
3. CiS is being delivered by a range of practitioners, which is supporting learner access and enabling different models of support. However, given the complex and high needs of some learners, we need to ensure practitioner suitability to support these learners.
4. There are signs that culturally responsive practice for Māori learners is improving.
5. Key enablers that support good practice and learner outcomes are: a) a trusting relationship between the school and whānau; b) having a practitioner that is a good fit for the school and learners' needs; c) having a dedicated, safe space, onsite for counselling sessions; d) involving and engaging whānau; e) clear communication between all stakeholders.
6. Key challenges to good outcomes and practice are: a) finding a practitioner who is a good fit; b) having enough practitioner hours to meet learners' needs; c) lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, including escalation procedures for at-risk learners; d) poor communication; e) a reluctance among some whānau to engage.



Part 1: Who are the learners using CiS?

Who are the learners using CiS?



CiS is increasingly getting to learners with wellbeing/hauora needs.

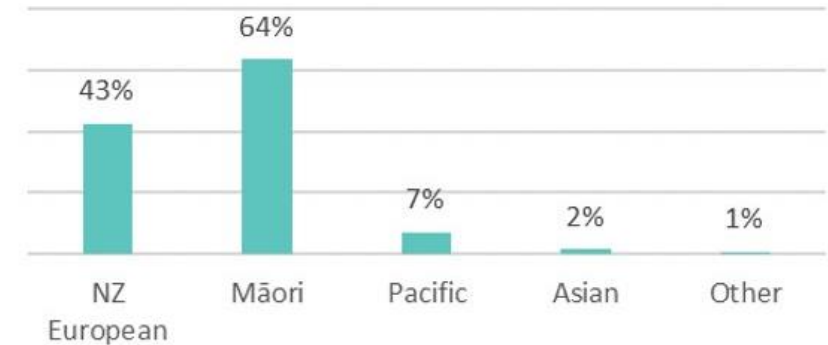
How we gathered information

- To understand the profile of learners who are accessing CiS, we looked at administrative data provided by the counselling providers and schools.

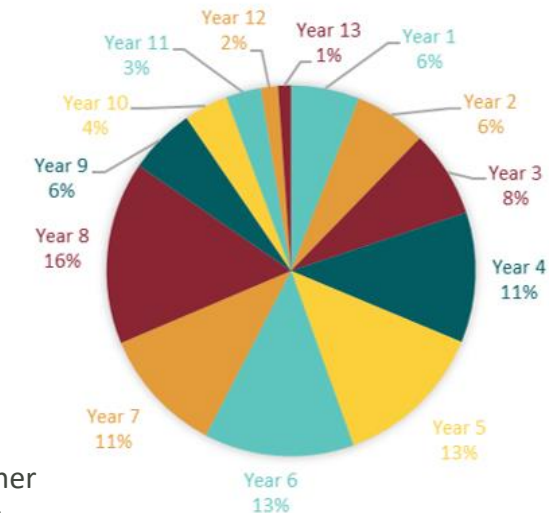
What we found

- Based on the data provided, more than 1050 learners across 134 schools have accessed one-on-one counselling since September 2021.²
- Māori make up the highest proportion (64 percent) of learners receiving CiS, followed by New Zealand European (43 percent).
- Eighty-four percent of learners are from primary and intermediate schools while 16 percent are from secondary schools.
- Year 4 to 8 learners make up the largest proportion (64 percent) of those learners accessing CiS.
- Males (53 percent) are slightly more likely to receive CiS support than females (47 percent).

Reported ethnicity of learners who have accessed counselling
(learners can identify with more than one ethnicity)



Year levels of all learners accessing counselling



² Note: These figures exclude schools and whānau who did not consent to provide learner information. It also does not include other forms of counselling, for example, group, whole of school, or time spent on whakawhanaungatanga by practitioners and providers.

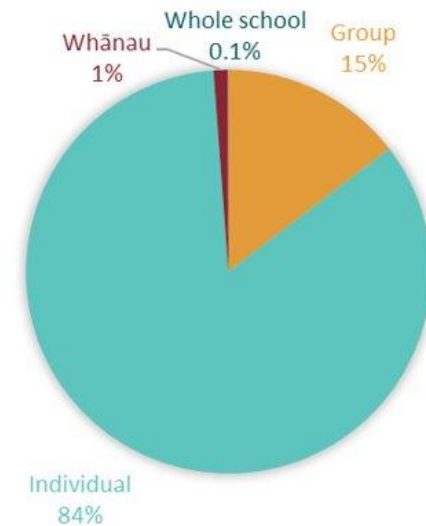
Who are the learners using CiS? (cont.)



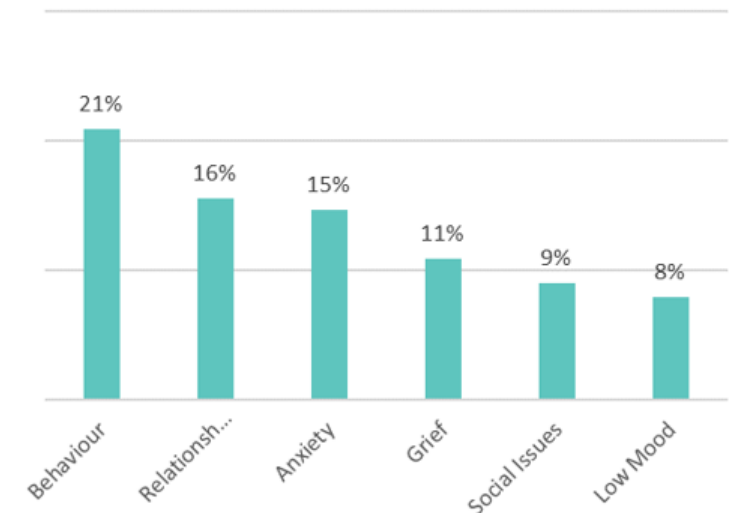
- Of all counselling sessions:
 - eighty-four percent are one-on-one / individual
 - one percent involved whānau
 - fifteen percent were group sessions
 - only 0.1 percent were whole of school.
- The six most common reasons for learners being referred for counselling are:
 - behaviour (21 percent)
 - relationships (16 percent)
 - anxiety (15 percent)
 - grief (11 percent)
 - social issues (9 percent)
 - low mood (8 percent).
- Other reasons for referral (21 percent) include: family issues, self-harm, trauma, transition, anger, bullying, attendance, and gender identity.

“My moko needed help due to her parents divorcing.”
- Whānau

Counselling session types



Six most common referral reasons across all learners





Part 2: What are the outcomes and experiences of learners?

What are the outcomes and experiences of learners?



How we gathered information

- To understand what outcomes learners are achieving as a result of CiS, we used pre- and post-counselling scores from the administrative data. Data from the *Child Outcome Rating Scale* provided results in relation to learner wellbeing, while data from the *Learning Engagement Measurement Tool* provided results in relation to learner engagement (attendance and participation) and learning progression.³
- Survey responses and interviews were used to provide additional perspectives (whānau, school, and provider) on learner outcomes and to capture learner and whānau experiences of counselling sessions.

What we found: an overview

- There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on learners' wellbeing, engagement, and learning.
- The majority of learners who receive CiS are positive about their experiences. Most feel listened to, that the practitioner understands their culture/language, and that they are given strategies that work.
- Whānau who participate in counselling sessions are also positive about their experiences.

³ More information about the two outcomes tools can be found in Appendix 1.

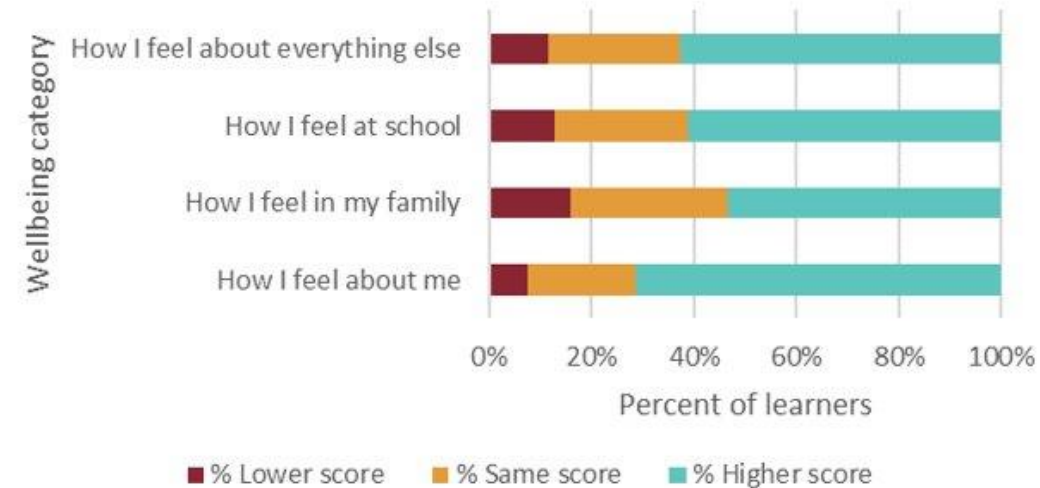
Learner outcomes – *Wellbeing*



There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on learner wellbeing.

- Of all learners who completed pre- and post-counselling scores:⁴
 - more than two thirds (71 percent) report feeling better in themselves after counselling
 - sixty-one percent are feeling better at school
 - sixty-three percent feel better about things outside school, such as activities and friendships
 - fifty-three percent feel better in their family life.
- In our interviews we heard learners are using the strategies they have learnt in their counselling sessions to manage their emotions and behaviour. These strategies include:
 - going to a quiet ‘chill out’ place
 - breathing techniques
 - identification of feelings using the “Zones of Regulation” model.

Change in wellbeing pre- and post-counselling across all learners



“I feel better, I got to the end of my problems and became split up from the problems.”

- Learner

⁴These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.

Learner outcomes – *Wellbeing (cont.)*



- Eighty-nine percent of whānau who responded to our survey reported an improvement in their child’s wellbeing after receiving CiS support.
- In our interviews, whānau who were aware of the strategies their child was using, or who had also worked with the practitioner on the same strategies, reported a large improvement in their child’s wellbeing and in their whānau dynamics more generally.
- Whānau also often noted:
 - the visible change in their child’s emotions after only a few counselling sessions
 - early enjoyment of sessions and getting along with the practitioner made a huge difference to their child’s experience and the overall outcomes they achieved.

“My child’s confidence has grown so much.”

- Whānau

“They seem to be able to express their thoughts, rather than bottle them up.”

- Whānau

“Their whānau are also doing better, also using strategies to take care of their emotions and that of their tamariki.”

- Provider

Learner outcomes – *Wellbeing (cont.)*



- School leaders and teachers were similarly positive, with 82 percent of those who responded to our survey reporting an improvement in learners' wellbeing.
- The 'stand-out' outcome that counselling practitioners observe in learners is improved self-confidence and self-esteem and that this is a result of practicing greater emotional self-control.

"There has been noticeable improvement in general hauora with involved students. Staff have noticed improvement in happiness and engagement."

- School leader

"The children are amazing and are open to ideas and strategies to learn and grow. These young adults are wanting help."

- Provider

"We have seen a difference in the calmness, adaptability, resilience, and positivity of the students involved."

- School leader

"The groups/pairs that have worked with the counsellor for the longest have started to support each other and encourage use of agreed strategies outside of the counselling room."

- School leader

"Even though it has been only going for two terms, we have had positive outcomes from most students involved."

- School leader

"[Learners'] mana/confidence is increasing."

- School leader

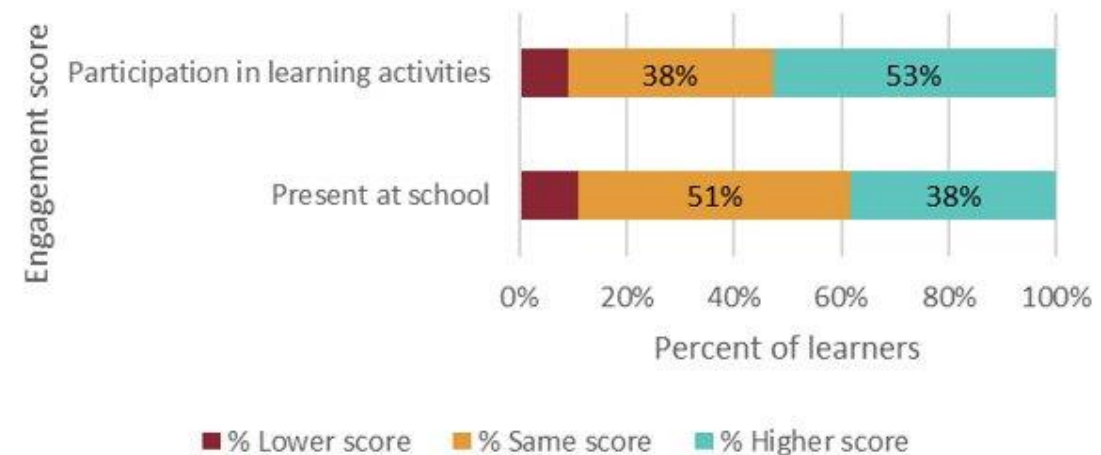
Learner outcomes – Engagement (attendance & participation)



There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on learners' engagement. Schools report an improvement in participation in classroom learning activities and in attendance at school.

- Through pre- and post-counselling scores, teachers assessed 53 percent of learners as showing an improvement in participation in classroom learning activities after counselling.⁵
- Teachers also report an improvement in attendance in 38 percent of learners, with 51 percent recording the same score pre- and post-counselling.
- In our survey, 75 percent of schools and 78 percent of whānau reported improvement in learner engagement in schooling after receiving CiS support.
- In our interviews, schools noted that learners had improved social skills, better skills in developing friendships, and were more likely to be accepted or involved in the classroom learning environment. They reported that these skills helped support an improved attitude to learning.

Change in engagement scores pre- and post-counselling across all learners



“Much improved engagement from ākonga and whānau.”

- School leader

“Those types of outcomes that meant that the children are actually attending school now.”

- Ministry Lead Advisor

⁵ These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.

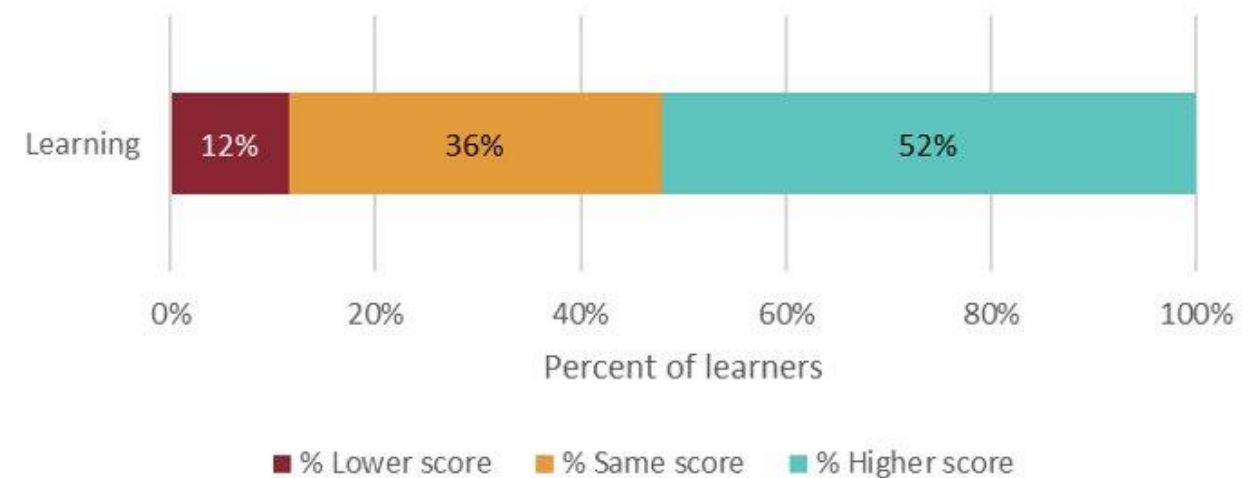
Learner outcomes – Learning



There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on learners' learning, with more than half having better learning progress at school.

- Through pre- and post-counselling scores, teachers assessed more than half (52 percent) of learners as showing improvement in learning after receiving CiS support.⁶
- In our survey, schools were even more positive, reporting a 71 percent improvement in learning after receiving CiS support.
- Eighty-three percent of whānau who responded to our survey reported an improvement in their child's learning after receiving CiS support.

Change in learning scores pre- and post-counselling across all learners



“Feedback has shown that having an opportunity to use play, art, outdoor activities or talk therapy to look at the source and triggers of behaviour has led to more engagement, confidence, and enjoyment in learning.”

- Provider

⁶These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.



The majority of learners who receive CiS are positive about their experiences. Most feel listened to, that the practitioner understands their culture/language, and that they are given strategies that work.

Engagement

- Most (93 percent) learners who responded to our survey agreed that the school provides a good, comfortable location onsite, and that they had no difficulty getting to their counselling sessions.
- In our interviews, we heard that learners look forward to their counselling sessions because of the enjoyable activities and useful strategies they are given to help with their challenges.

Cultural responsiveness

- More than two thirds (71 percent) of all learners who responded to our survey feel their practitioner understands their family culture.
- Māori learners are slightly less likely (66 percent) to report that their counsellor understands their culture or that the practitioner speaks the language they do at home.
- Low response rates from Pacific learners limits what we can say about cultural responsiveness for Pacific learners and their whānau.

“[The counsellor] like eases you into it. You can play with the sand stuff and it can calm you down and stuff like that.”

- Learner

“A teacher [was] saying how lovely it had been to have a little boy go along to see the counsellor, and then come skipping back to classroom having had a lovely time – and feeling perky.”

- Ministry Lead Advisor



The majority of whānau who participate in counselling sessions are positive about their experience.

Engagement

- The extent of whānau involvement with the practitioner and in counselling sessions varies considerably. Of those who responded to our survey:
 - almost two thirds (63 percent) had met with their child's practitioner while 58 percent had spoken with the counsellor by phone
 - fifty-eight percent reported feeling comfortable to get in touch with the practitioner
 - almost a third (32 percent) are in regular communication with their child's practitioner, but others are unsure about how much they should be involved and wait to be contacted by the practitioner or school.
- In our interviews, we heard that some whānau find it very useful to attend sessions with their child while others prefer to allow counselling to remain confidential between their child and the practitioner.
- Many whānau we spoke to are relieved their children can access help and feel supported by their school.

"She [my child] feels safe and supported."

- Whānau

Cultural responsiveness

- Sixty-three percent of whānau reported that their child's counsellor had an excellent understanding of their whānau's cultural needs/values.

"Best child counselling we've ever received for our child. She [practitioner] has changed a lot within my child and for that I am truly grateful."

- Whānau



Part 3: How well are Māori learners and whānau doing?

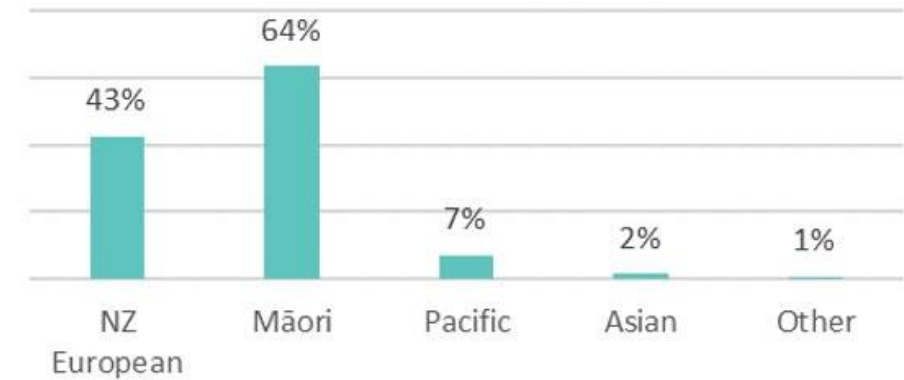
Who are the Māori learners using CiS?



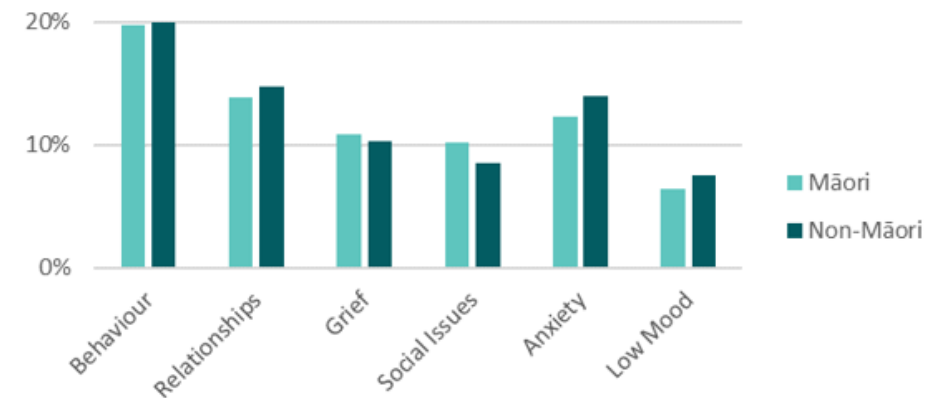
Māori learners are accessing CiS.

- Through the administrative data, we received information about 684 Māori learners, across 114 schools, who had accessed individual counselling.
- Māori make up the highest proportion of those learners receiving CiS (64 percent). Māori also make up 63 percent of the population across all of the CiS pilot schools.
- The largest number of Māori learners accessing CiS are in Years 5 to 8 (53 percent) – similar to non-Māori.
- The gender breakdown for Māori learners who have accessed CiS is only slightly different to non-Māori (51 percent Māori male and 49 percent Māori female compared to 53 percent non-Māori male and 47 percent non-Māori female).
- Counselling referral reasons for Māori learners are similar to non-Māori learners.

Reported ethnicity of learners who have accessed counselling
(learners can identify with more than one ethnicity)



Six most common referral reasons for Māori and non-Māori

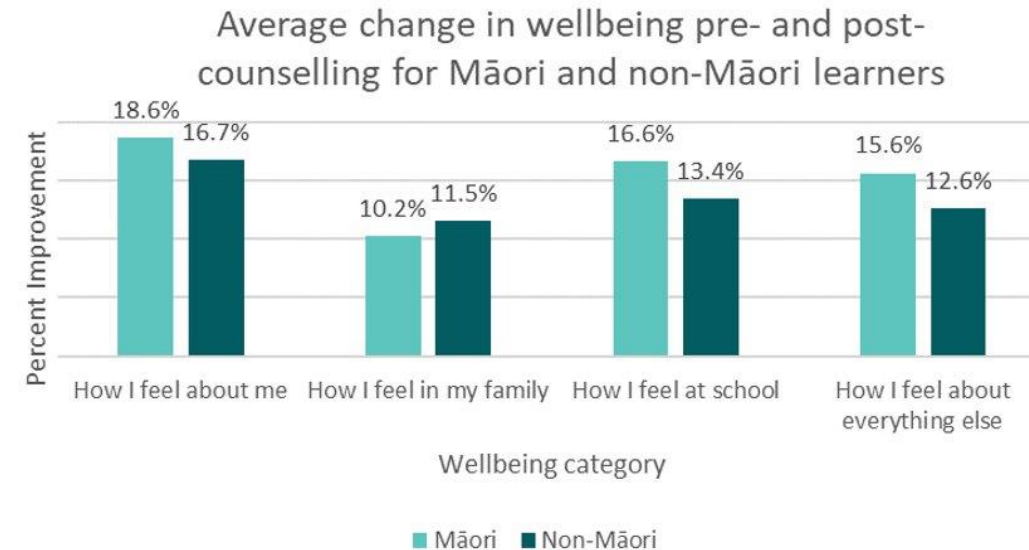


Māori learner outcomes – *Wellbeing*



There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on Māori learners' wellbeing.

- Across all wellbeing measures, more than half (63 percent) of Māori learners report feeling better as a result of CiS, which is similar to wellbeing outcomes for non-Māori learners (61 percent).⁷
- The largest improvement for Māori learners is in the “How I feel about me” category, with 72 percent feeling better about themselves at the end of their counselling.
- The least improvement is in “How I feel in my family” (51 percent feel better).
- The graph compares average change for Māori and non-Māori learners across all wellbeing categories. Māori learners improved more in how they feel about themselves, how they feel at school, and how they feel about everything else than non-Māori learners, but less in the how they feel about their family.



⁷These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.

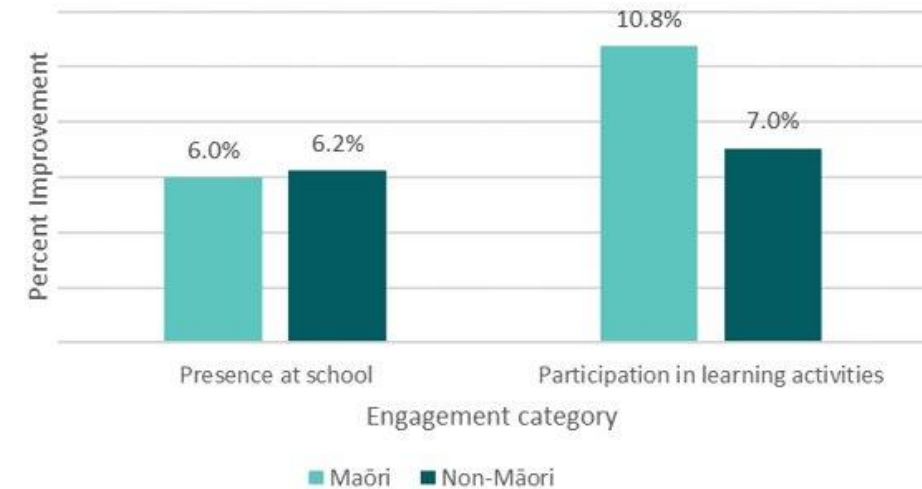
Māori learner outcomes – *Engagement and learning*



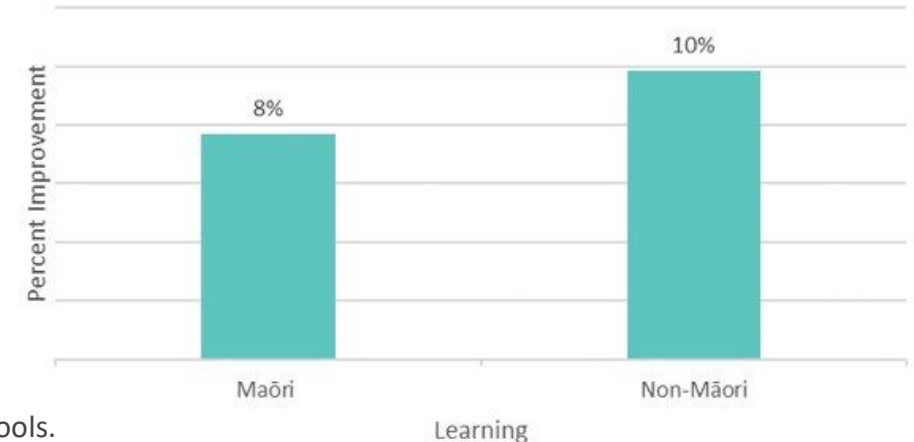
There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on Māori learner engagement and learning.

- School leaders and teachers report more than half (52 percent) of Māori learners show improvement in participation in classroom learning activities after CiS, which is similar to non-Māori learners (54 percent).⁸
- Māori learners, like non-Māori learners, are less likely to show improvement in presence at school (37 percent Māori compared to 41 percent non-Māori).
- Compared to non-Māori learners, fewer Māori learners (46 percent compared to 62 percent) have experienced an improvement in learning as a result of CiS.
- The graphs compare the average change for Māori and non-Māori learners across the engagement categories and in learning. Māori learners improved more than non-Māori learners in participation in learning activities but, on average, have shown slightly less improvement in learning progress.


Average change in engagement pre- and post-counselling for Māori and non-Māori



Average change in learning pre- and post-counselling for Māori and non-Māori



⁸These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.



Part 4: How well are Pacific learners doing?

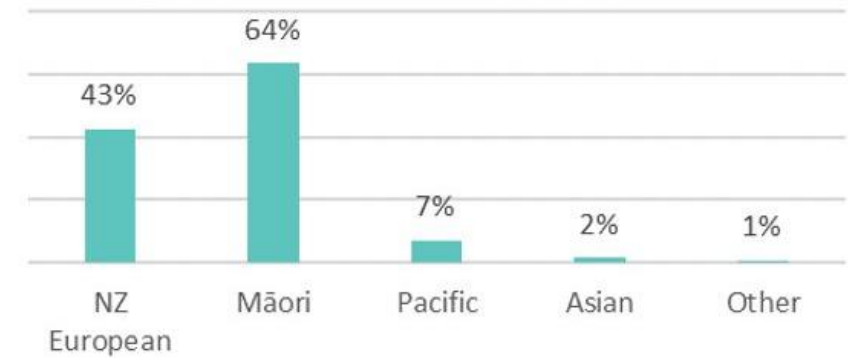
Who are the Pacific learners using CiS?



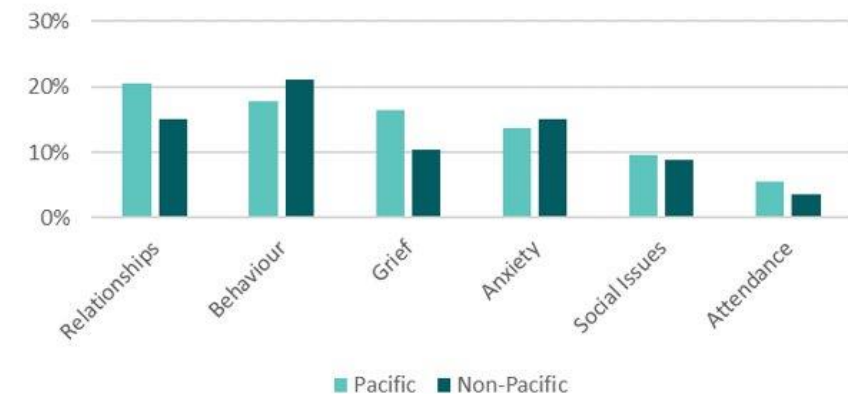
Pacific learners are accessing CiS, but at a slightly lower rate than Māori and New Zealand European learners.

- Through administrative data we received information about 77 Pacific learners across 45 schools who have accessed individual counselling.
- Pacific learners make up seven percent of those receiving CiS (compared to 9 percent of the population across pilot schools).
- Pacific learners are accessing CiS at a slightly younger age than non-Pacific learners with the largest numbers in Years 3, 6 and 7 (compared to Years 4 to 8 for non-Pacific learners).
- Counselling referral reasons for Pacific learners are similar to non-Pacific learners, though Pacific learners are more likely to be referred for relationship issues and grief and are less likely to be referred for behaviour issues.

Reported ethnicity of learners who have accessed counselling
(learners can identify with more than one ethnicity)



Six most common referral reasons for Pacific and non-Pacific

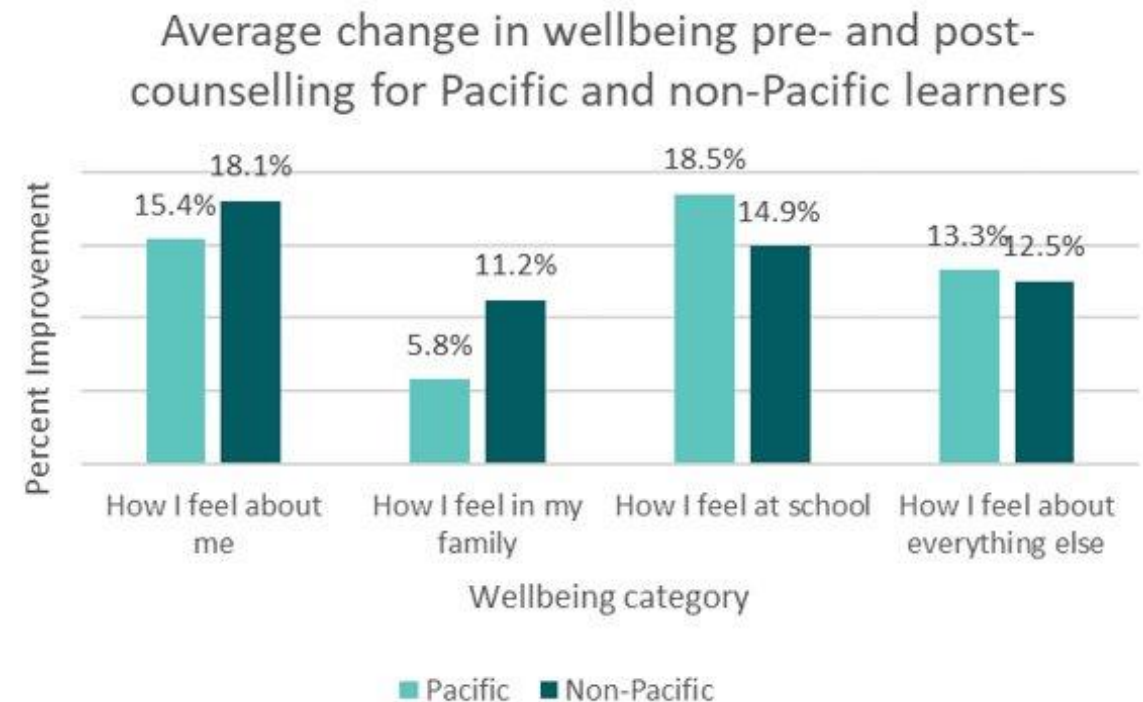


Pacific learner outcomes – *Wellbeing*



There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on Pacific learners' wellbeing.

- Across all wellbeing measures, the majority (68 percent) of Pacific learners feel better after receiving CiS support, which is similar to wellbeing outcomes for non-Pacific learners (62 percent).⁹
- The graph compares average change for Pacific and non-Pacific learners across all wellbeing categories. Pacific learners improved more in how they feel at school and how they feel about everything else than non-Pacific learners, but lower in the how they feel about themselves and their family.



⁹These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.

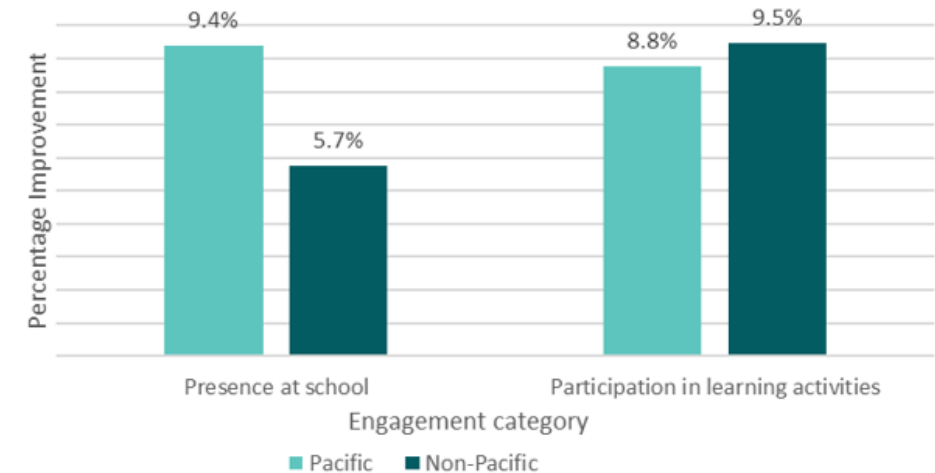
Pacific learner outcomes – *Engagement and learning*



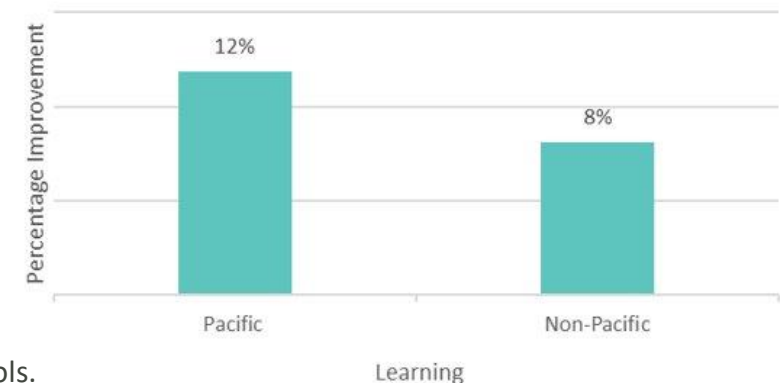
There are indications that CiS is having a positive impact on Pacific learners' engagement and learning.

- School leaders and teachers report half (50 percent) of Pacific learners show improved engagement after counselling, which is similar to non-Pacific learners (45 percent).¹⁰
- Fifty-six percent of Pacific learners show improved learning progress at the end of counselling, compared to 52 percent of non-Pacific learners.
- The graphs compare the average change for Pacific and non-Pacific learners across the engagement categories and in learning. Pacific learners improved more than non-Pacific learners in attending school, but slightly less in participation in learning activities. On average, Pacific learners show a larger improvement in learning progress than non-Pacific learners.

Average change in engagement pre- and post-counselling for Pacific and non-Pacific learners



Average change in learning pre- and post-counselling for Pacific and non-Pacific learners



¹⁰These findings are based on administrative data – pre- and post-counselling scores. See Appendix 1 for details on tools.

Part 5: How well is implementation going?

1. Service delivery
2. Ensuring access
3. Qualified workforce
4. Culturally responsive practice
5. Learner and whānau involvement
6. What is helping?
7. What is getting in the way?

1. Service delivery

Going
well



Service delivery continues to go well with schools and providers adopting different models to suit their community and learners' needs.

- CiS services are now provided in eight regions in 102 Primary, 12 Intermediate, 69 Contributing, 15 Composite, and 17 Secondary schools.
- The number of providers has increased from nine in Phase 1 of the evaluation to 42 in January 2023.
- A broader range of providers and practitioner types is supporting schools to develop counselling models that best suit their community and learners' needs.
- Our administrative data tells us that the wait time from referral to the first session varies from region to region but, on average, 78 percent of learners see a practitioner within two weeks of being referred, and 86 percent within four weeks.
- Most counselling sessions are with individuals (84 percent), but a number of schools are also running group sessions (15 percent), and 27 schools have used whole-school counselling (which includes counselling practitioners attending school events such as breakfast club, kapa haka, and parent evenings and more informal counselling-related conversations).
- Providers and schools are working together to ensure service delivery meets the needs of Māori learners, with 64 percent of learners accessing CiS being Māori.

"The turnaround time from referral to working with the student, sometimes happens the same day."

- Provider

2. Ensuring access: Learners' needs



Support continues to get to learners with wellbeing/hauora needs, including learners with complex and high needs.

- The reasons learners are referred for counselling are similar to Phase 1, and most commonly include:

➤ Behaviour (22 percent)	➤ Grief (11 percent)
➤ Relationships (16 percent)	➤ Social issues (9 percent)
➤ Anxiety (15 percent)	➤ Low mood (8 percent)

“A large number of students who wouldn’t normally be able to access counselling services are having their needs met.”

- School leader

- In our surveys and interviews, we heard the need level of learners is not always as initially intended for the initiative (mild to moderate wellbeing/hauora needs) with practitioners also providing support for learners with complex and high needs (e.g., trauma, family harm, physical or emotional abuse, and mental health concerns), when support from other agencies is not available, or when wait times are very long.
- We also heard from principals that there are many more learners who would benefit from CiS than there currently are allocated spaces for. To support these learners, principals are finding innovative ways to share resourcing across the wider community. For example:
 - principals across clusters, or communities of learning, are working with providers to prioritise practitioners’ time so they are able to support learners with more urgent needs in a timely manner. Principals say there could be more flexibility brought into regional models to develop this practice further.

2. Ensuring access: Suitable site



Schools continue to predominantly hold counselling sessions in a dedicated space onsite.

- In interviews with principals, we heard that the benefits of onsite counselling include:
 - whānau not needing to drop off their child to counselling, thereby improving attendance
 - having a dedicated room for counselling which helps learners to feel safe and that the sessions are confidential – 93 percent of learners who responded to our survey agreed counselling was in a good and comfortable location
 - helping the practitioner to become part of the school community, which in turn helps to ‘normalise’ counselling.
- However, we also heard examples of schools who are still struggling to find an appropriate, dedicated space for counselling sessions.

“Having counselling onsite brings school/whānau/counsellor together.”

- Principal

“There is a real need for ‘counsellors’ to work in spaces uninterrupted, where students can feel their privacy is being respected – and other people are not just going to barge in.”

- School leader

Example: *One school has created a dedicated space onsite, just for the practitioner. The building where this room is has a common area and kitchen, and the plan is to create a welcoming ‘community hub’. The intent is to encourage more whānau engagement in the school in general. The Principal wants “to do it justice and capitalise on the service.”*

2. Ensuring access: Referral process

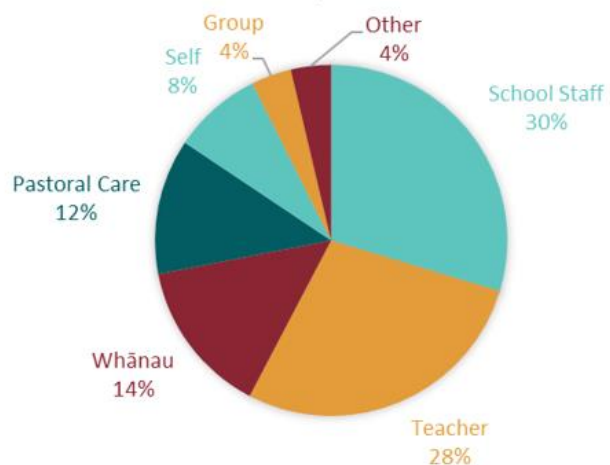


Schools are still making the majority of referrals, but there are signs that self-referrals are increasing.

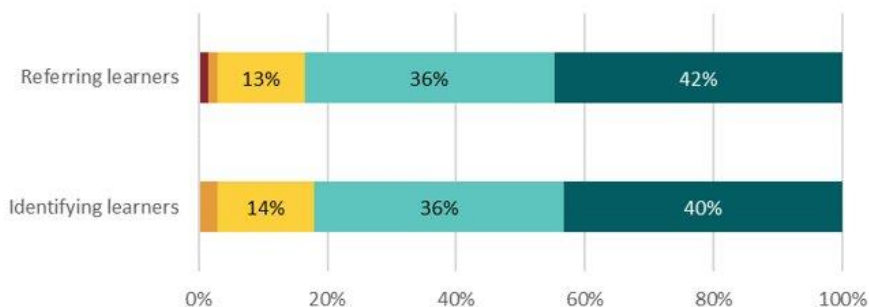
- Similar to Phase 1, referrals are mostly being made by principals, teachers and the pastoral care team (70 percent), but there are signs that self-referrals are increasing, with 14 percent of referrals now coming through whānau.¹¹
- In interviews we heard that, in some instances, schools are prioritising referrals for learners with more urgent or high needs, before opening up to the wider school community and self-referrals.
- As shown in the bar charts below, schools who responded to our survey are confident they:
 - have effective systems in place to identify learners for CiS
 - have a clear process for referring learners for CiS
 - support Māori and Pacific learners to access CiS - although confidence is slightly less for Pacific learners, who make up a much smaller proportion of the pilot schools' population.

I actually asked for help, [I] could see my son was struggling at school making friends, [I] talked to office staff and asked if there is a counsellor.
- Whānau

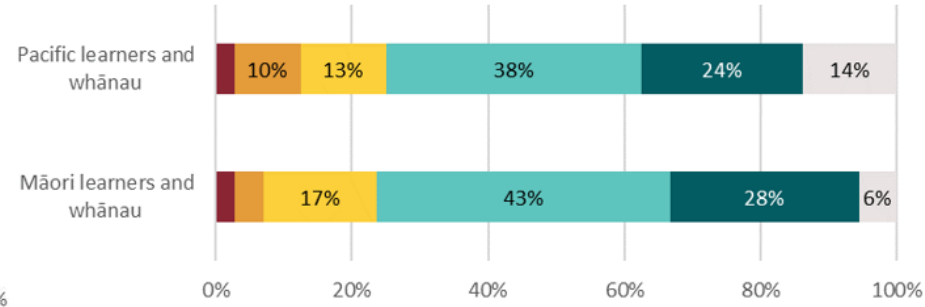
Most common ways learners are referred



School confidence in having processes in place to identify and refer learners for counselling



School confidence in supporting Māori & Pacific learners and whānau to access counselling



■ Not confident ■ Slightly confident ■ Moderately confident ■ Confident ■ Very confident ■ Don't know

3. Qualified workforce

Not
enough
evidence
to say



CiS is being delivered by a range of practitioners. While this is supporting learner access and enabling different models of support, it needs to be monitored given the high needs of some learners.

- Expanding the range of practitioners who are providing ‘counselling’ services has increased learner access to support and enables schools to adopt models that best suit their community and needs of their learners.
- However, given the complex and high needs of some learners, processes need to be in place to ensure practitioners are suitably experienced to support these learners.
- A recommendation from Phase 1 of the evaluation was that the Ministry of Education record and monitor counsellor qualifications and supervision. This monitoring responsibility still sits with contracted providers and we were unable to access this information for this phase of the evaluation. However, providers have recently begun uploading practitioner registration and supervision information through the new database, so ‘qualified workforce’ is something that will be examined in Phase 3 of the evaluation.

“We finally have a capable and experienced counsellor.”

- School leader

“The experience and expertise of the counsellor has helped create ease for students.”

- School leader

4. Culturally responsive practice: Māori



There are signs that culturally responsive practice for Māori learners is improving but is not fully embedded across all schools and providers.

- Sixty-four percent of learners accessing CiS are Māori,¹² which is proportional to the CiS pilot schools' population (on average 63 percent of learners are Māori).
- Māori learners are achieving similar wellbeing, engagement, and learning outcomes to non-Māori learners.¹²
- Māori learners (66 percent) and their whānau (78 percent) feel their practitioner understands them and their culture.¹³
- Through our surveys and interviews we heard examples of a range of frameworks, strategies, training, and support for practitioners to deliver culturally responsive approaches for Māori, including:
 - employing cultural advisors to work alongside counsellors
 - cultural practice training and cultural supervision
 - tikanga Māori and te reo Māori-based learning, including noho marae
 - ongoing practitioner registration depending on achieving pre-set cultural learning goals
 - kaupapa Māori based providers employing Māori kaimahi
 - schools working to develop relationships with local iwi through Māori staff and community connections.

"I am asking schools for information on the cultural needs of their students."

- Provider

¹² These findings are based on administrative data. See Appendix 1 for more details.

¹³ These findings are based on survey responses. See Appendix 1 for more details.

4. Culturally responsive practice: Pacific learners

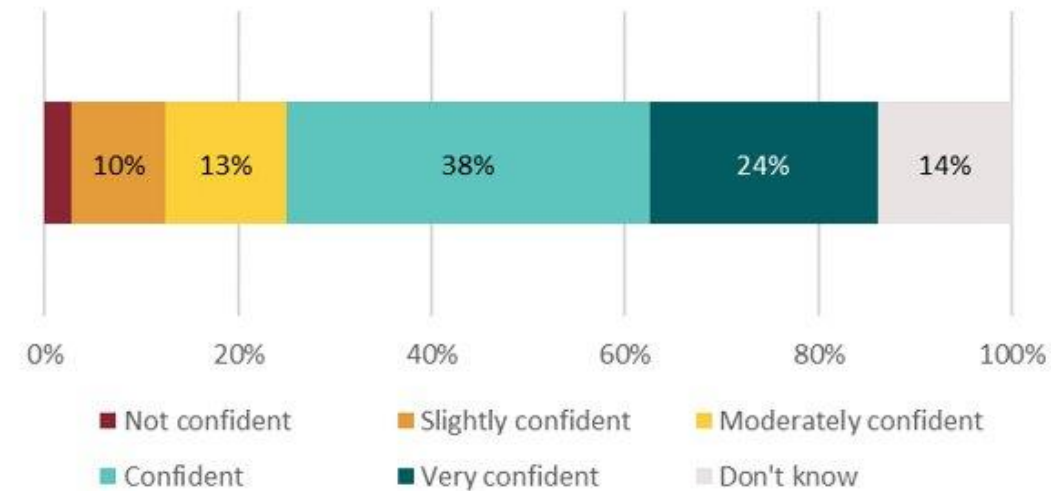
Not enough evidence to say



There is still not enough evidence to make conclusions about culturally responsive practice for Pacific learners, but there are some encouraging signs.

- Pacific learners are accessing CiS, but at a slightly lower rate than Māori and New Zealand European learners.
- Pacific learners who have received CiS are reporting improvements in wellbeing, engagement and learning.¹⁴
- Low survey response rates from Pacific learners limits what we can say about cultural responsiveness for Pacific learners and their whānau.
- In our survey, we heard examples of providers supporting their practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills, and experience to ensure they are specifically responsive to the needs of Pacific learners.
- Some providers we interviewed gave examples where they are drawing on external expertise from their Pacific communities.
- In our survey, three quarters of school principals and teachers said they are either confident or very confident that their practices support Pacific learners to access CiS (see graph).

School confidence in supporting Pacific learners and whānau to access counselling



¹⁴ These findings are based on administrative data. See Appendix 1 for more details.

5. Learner and whānau involvement

Going
well



While whānau and learner involvement in service design continues to be minimal, awareness of the initiative among the school community is now high.

- Awareness of the CiS initiative among learners and whānau is high – 83 percent of learners and 62 percent of whānau who responded to our survey were aware of CiS in their school.
- Schools are using a range of channels to reach and engage whānau and learners. Examples we heard include:
 - school newsletters and websites
 - community events
 - door knocking (for hard-to-reach whānau)
 - reframing counselling (e.g., calling the practitioner a life-coach or wellbeing specialist).
- Practitioners are working with schools to improve their visibility, to reduce any perceived ‘stigma’, and to encourage whānau engagement. Examples we heard include:
 - introducing practitioners at assembly
 - calling practitioners by their name, rather than their title
 - practitioners being present at the school gate before and after school, and at community events outside school hours
 - having consistent days and times when the practitioner is at the school
 - schools building the counselling space into a ‘whānau area’.

“Where the practitioners are involving the whānau – so where families are engaged – it really is making a really big difference.”

- Ministry Lead Advisor

“Without whānau, very little would change for the child.”

- School leader

6. What is helping?



From our evaluation, we have identified six key themes of what is helping.

When asked what was going well, survey and interview participants mentioned the following at least four times:

Enablers for good engagement and outcomes for learners:

- Having a practitioner that is a good fit for the school and the needs of their learners – but this may take time to get right.
- Having a visible and consistent practitioner presence onsite, for example, regular days/times, and attending school sports and other events.
- Having a dedicated, safe space, onsite for counselling sessions.

Enablers for implementation to go well:

- Trusting relationships between school and whānau – which providers/practitioners are then able to leverage.
- Good communication and partnerships between provider and school.
- Involving and engaging whānau.

“It takes time to establish relationships and we have spent time working on whakawhanaungatanga, to be seen as a credible and useful resource to our area.”

- Provider

“Therapists and school staff...have been able to engage whānau and children who [would] not typically engage with services.”

- Provider

“When it’s the right fit it’s great, rolls along fabulously.”

- Ministry Lead Advisor

7. What is getting in the way?



From our evaluation, we have identified eight key challenges.

When asked what was challenging, survey and interview participants mentioned the following at least four times:

Challenges to good outcomes for learners:

- Finding a practitioner who is the right fit for the school and learners.
- Lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, including escalation procedures for at-risk learners.
- Reluctance among some whānau to engage with counselling.
- Disruptions (e.g., Covid-19, weather events) and learner absences.

Challenges to implementation going well:

- Having enough hours to provide a service that meets the needs of the school.
- Communication issues between all key stakeholders (schools, providers, Ministry).
- Variable understandings of the model, for example, the fee-for-service model and the need for it to also cover non-contact costs.
- Providers spending extensive time on reporting.

“Too many students to refer!”

- School leader

“Engaging with whānau who lack trust in social/government systems.”

- Provider

“What’s been tricky is having sufficient hours in each school to have visibility and presence – through that you get an increase in referrals.”

- Ministry Lead Advisor

“School closures from COVID, storms, and some children being absent quite regularly made it hard to gather momentum last year.”

- Provider



Part 6: Next steps

Next steps



- We will share the findings from the Phase 2 evaluation with those who participated in the research, including schools and providers.
- We will collect outcome data over the rest of the year and carry out further fieldwork in Term 1, 2024.
- Our next report will come to you in May 2024, which will include final outcomes and implementation findings.

“More counsellors, more hours, more primary schools able to access this wonderful initiative.”

- School leader

“It is an important programme...and I would like to see [it] continue well into the future.”

- School leader

“Keep it going. These children need ongoing, long-term support which is only achievable when this service is accessible...without staff changes.”

- Provider

“All schools should have access to a counsellor.”

- Provider

Next steps for Phase 3 of the evaluation



For Phase 3 of the evaluation, ERO will do the following:

- Examine:
 - practitioner qualifications and suitability to support learners with complex and high needs
 - the longer-term outcomes for learners
 - how these compare to comparable programmes.
- Undertake a deeper investigation into:
 - whānau involvement in counselling sessions and what difference this is making
 - experiences and outcomes for Pacific, Asian, and disabled learners.

Acknowledgements



We acknowledge and thank all the learners, whānau, provider managers, counselling practitioners, school leaders and teachers, lead advisors, and others who shared their experiences, views, and insights through interviews and surveys. We thank you for giving your time, and for sharing your knowledge and experiences with us.



Appendix 1: Methods



Administrative data

- Administrative data is provided to the Ministry of Education by providers and schools. This data forms the basis of the outcome findings on learners' wellbeing, engagement, and learning progress and provides a picture of those who are accessing CiS.
 - Note: Not all schools and whānau consent to provide learner demographic or outcome information.

Outcome tools

- Practitioners record how learners score themselves on a simplified version of the *Child Outcome Rating Scale* (CORS) when they begin counselling and when they complete counselling. The CORS covers these four areas:
 - how learners feel in themselves
 - how they feel about interactions within their family
 - how they feel things are going at school
 - how they feel about everything else (such as friendships, and things happening outside school).



Outcome tools (cont.)

- Similarly, teachers complete a *Learning Engagement Measurement Tool* (LEMT) assessment of the learner before and at the conclusion of counselling. The LEMT scale is assessed in three areas:
 - learner presence at school
 - how well the learner participates in learning activities
 - an assessment of learning progress.
- Results are presented as “lower score”, “same score”, or “higher score” (where the post-counselling score for the tools is lower, the same as, or higher than the pre-counselling score respectively).
- There could be a number of reasons for differences in scores pre- and post-counselling, that are not necessarily related to the counselling. However, the data does not allow us to ‘unpack’ what other factors may contribute to this.



Methodology

- Four surveys – Learner, Whānau, School, Provider
- Surveys were sent to all schools and providers involved in CiS, except those in Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti regions (due to cyclone Gabrielle)
- Responses were as follows – 128 learners, 69 whānau, 85 school leaders/staff, 38 providers (13 managers and 25 counselling practitioners)

How we used survey data

- Surveys (alongside case study interviews) helped complete the picture about the experiences of learners and their whānau.

Limitations of survey data

- The majority of learner survey responses (80 percent) were from secondary schools, and the primary school learner voice was not equally represented, so learner survey data has only been used where the year level bias is not relevant.



Appendix 2: Pilot schools

CiS pilot schools vs administrative data schools



In total, there are 215 CiS pilot schools across eight regions:

- Auckland
- Canterbury/Chatham Islands
- Hawkes Bay/Tairāwhiti
- Otago/Southland
- Tai Tokerau
- Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu
- Waikato
- Wellington

However, not all schools consent to have their information included in the evaluation. The table below shows the number of each type of school in the pilot compared with administrative data collected (January 2023).

School type	Number of schools in CiS pilot	Number of schools in admin data sample
Composite	15	12
Contributing	69	46
Full Primary	102	55
Intermediate	12	6
Secondary	17	14
Grand Total	215	134



Appendix 3: Good practice examples from case studies

How we explored examples of good practice



Through case studies of a selection of schools, that were chosen as examples of success, we explored what is needed to support good practice and outcomes in the CiS initiative.

As part of these case studies we spoke to school leaders, provider managers, counselling practitioners, whānau, and learners.

What we looked at

- What does existing research evidence say about what works for increasing learners' access to mental wellbeing/hauora support?
- What do these practices look like across a range of schools in the CiS initiative?
- What insights, strategies, and approaches can be helpful to schools?

What does the evidence say?



There is a well-established evidence base on the effectiveness of counselling in schools. We know that good practice for supporting learners' access to mental wellbeing/hauora support includes:

1. support being available on the school site
2. programmes being suited to the school's values, goals, and priorities
3. authentic and ongoing engagement between the school, whānau, and community
4. a school culture that recognises and values learner wellbeing.

In the following slides, we outline what the evidence says about each of these practices, and provide examples of what schools, in partnership with providers, are doing to optimise success.

1. Support available on the school site



Encouraging learner participation and reducing stigma

What does the evidence say?

- School settings offer many benefits in delivering wellbeing interventions, such as counselling, as it is a natural and familiar setting for learners, which can make it seem less threatening.¹⁵ It can also reduce many of the barriers to accessing treatment, such as time, location, and cost.¹⁶
- But being referred to counselling support, even when it is onsite at a school, can still be a ‘scary’ prospect for learners and is often accompanied by anticipated or real experiences of stigma. This may contribute to lower levels of learner engagement, experiences of uncertainty or anxiety, restricted disclosures, and distancing from support.¹⁷

¹⁵ Catron & Weiss (1994), as cited in Barret & Pahl (2006)

¹⁶ Barret & Pahl (2006)

¹⁷ Hetrick et al. (2021)

1. Support available on the school site



Things we heard that help to encourage learner participation and reduce stigma

- Building a whole-of-school approach to mental wellbeing/hauora. As well as promoting wellbeing across the school, it helps to minimise any perceived stigma associated with one-on-one counselling.
- Finding a dedicated, private environment for counselling sessions to occur onsite so learners and whānau can feel safe.
 - One school we spoke to had the counselling room located in a block slightly removed from the main school area, giving learners privacy while still remaining accessible on the school site.
- Making the practitioner a visible part of the school community by inviting them to school events.
 - Some schools introduce the practitioner during assembly or classroom visits, or invite them to sports days.
- Having regular, consistent days/times when the practitioner is at school – so learners come to see them as a regular feature.
 - At some schools, the practitioner is always at the school on the same weekday, and learners know that they can drop in to the practitioner’s room as needed.

“The more [the practitioner] is seen in the school, the more whānau and students become attached to the idea of counselling.”
- School leader

1. Support available on the school site



Good practice example

Whakawhanaungatanga and making sure the practitioner is known in the school

At one school, the practitioner is at the school gate when whānau are doing school drop-offs and pick-ups. The provider for this school intentionally does this to ensure visibility, and to create informal opportunities for engagement with learners and whānau. The connections made during these morning and afternoon times have made a difference to learner and whānau participation.

“[The counsellor] goes to chat at the gate, and playground. Proactive – so people can go straight to him; the counsellor ... forms strong connections.” – Principal

“Chats with parents before and after school at the gate [are] about whakawhanaungatanga and developing relationships.” – Practitioner

This approach reaches different groups, as the practitioner is “available for parents who might go to work, is available to speak to classroom teachers before/after class, is available to students before/after school.” – Provider

“It wouldn’t work offsite or [the] counsellor would never see parents. Need a designated space.” – Principal

2. Programmes suited to the school and learner needs



What does the evidence say

- Having an evidenced-based programme is essential, but it is also important that the programme is suited to the school's values, goals, and priorities. This might mean tailoring an approach so that it makes sense, addresses needs, is engaging and meaningful, and can be delivered in a way that works for those in the school community.¹⁸

Things we heard can work well to ensure the programme is suited to the school

- Making sure the programme is aligned with your school's values and wellbeing strategy (if you have one).
- Having joint input into the development of the School Delivery Plan with the provider.
 - Schools might do this by deciding that, rather than one party completing the School Delivery Plan and the other simply signing it, both provider and school collaborate to agree on what the service should look like for that particular school.
- Undertaking regular reviews to ensure the programme and School Delivery Plan are still relevant, and refine as necessary.
 - Schools might do this by treating the School Delivery Plan as a 'living document' that providers and schools update together.

2. Programmes suited to the school and learner needs



Things we heard work to ensure the programme is suited to the school (cont.)

- Building a strong, collaborative working relationship with the provider.
 - We heard from schools that it is useful to establish a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and communication channels at the outset, including escalation procedures for at-risk learners.
- Making sure the practitioner is a good fit for the needs of your learners and wider school community (this may take time to get right).
 - School leaders told us it was helpful for the provider to get to know the school first before choosing which practitioner to assign (either via recruitment or selection of existing employees).
 - Some schools shared that it is useful to ‘induct’ the practitioner by sharing the school’s processes, tikanga, and by inviting them along to school events.

“We talked about the importance of building relationships and having that presence and familiarity with the school systems.”
- Practitioner

2. Programmes suited to the school and learner needs



Things we heard work to ensure the programme is suited to the school (cont.)

- Practitioners working as a team alongside Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), Social Workers in Schools (SWiS), Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), and other pastoral care staff.
 - We heard from schools that it is useful to invite the practitioner to wellbeing/pastoral care meetings – particularly those that might involve discussions about learners who they are working with.
- Allowing flexibility in the counselling approach/model based on the needs of individual learners, whānau and school community, and the ability to respond to local events.

“Encourage specialist going to regular SENCO meetings, RTLB, SWiS etc. to navigate kids coming up and agree who is supporting them.”

- Ministry Lead Advisor

2. Programmes suited to the school and learner needs



Good practice example

Counselling flexibility across a cluster of schools

In one region, a cluster of schools have a joint School Delivery Plan (SDP) as they “wanted a triage process in the SDP, and flexibility to respond to local events if one school had needs”. Other reasons for the joint SDP approach include being able to prioritise referrals across the cluster, as well as organising a timetable for the practitioner.

“Multiple referrals for the same concern may trigger a more systemic approach [using] the schools’ own wellbeing resources, e.g., wellbeing-focused curriculum, Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour-led professional development.” – Excerpt from School Development Plan

One thing that works well in this region is having a single, responsive provider. The provider has recently added more practitioners to this school cluster. This has meant each practitioner can establish consistent routines for the schools they are in – while still having the flexibility to respond to acute events as needed.

3. School, whānau, and community engagement



Developing authentic partnerships

What does the evidence say?

- A key recommendation from the literature is that interventions sit within an approach where learners, schools, whānau, and community work together to improve the mental wellbeing of young people. While schools represent a significant context for building social and emotional skills, whānau and community involvement are also shown to play an essential role in reinforcing and supporting the development of these skills.¹⁹

Things we heard that help in developing partnerships with whānau and community

- Establishing regular and ongoing communication, for example, through school and community channels.
 - Some schools are doing this via their school newsletter and/or their website, and through community networks.
 - For ‘harder-to-reach’ whānau, some schools are visiting them at their home.
- Being open and transparent with whānau about what the practitioner offers/provides and how it will benefit their children.

3. School, whānau, and community engagement



Things we heard help in developing partnerships with whānau and community (cont.)

- Using other terms instead of ‘counsellor’, like ‘wellbeing specialist’, or simply referring to the practitioner by name, can help reduce/avoid stigma.
- Involving whānau in learning about the concepts and skills being taught to their children – this will also help to improve the impact of the counselling.
- Encouraging practitioners to get to know learners before counselling sessions start and/or allowing time for learners to become comfortable opening up in counselling sessions.
- Having one point of call that whānau can communicate with about initiating referrals.
 - We heard some schools find it useful for the principal to hold the central coordination role.
- Building relationships within the wider community to provide holistic support to learners and whānau.
 - Some schools told us they reach out to local hapū, marae, churches, sports clubs, and/or other schools.

“Trusting relationships with whānau makes counselling a success.”

- Principal

“Been helpful being in so many schools that do connect – Kahui Ako.”

- Provider

3. School, whānau, and community engagement



Good practice example

Reframing the practitioner as a 'life coach'

Re-framing the practitioner as a 'life coach' helped one whānau come around to the idea of counselling. The learner was initially reluctant to go, due to some stigma around 'needing counselling', but the school listened to and encouraged both the learner and their parent. The school helped the whānau to think of the practitioner as a life coach. Re-framing the initiative helped change both learner and parent perception. Calling the practitioner by their first name also helped 'normalise' counselling and make it seem less 'scary'.

The result of this approach, including acknowledging those initial feelings of stigma, was that this learner engaged in counselling and their parent saw the benefits – through their child learning new skills and strategies, and becoming generally more settled with emotions, responding to situations, and with friends.

In the end, this parent “found CiS incredibly helpful, and I can see an increase of how well [my child] is settled at school.”

“Amazing and totally essential for lower primary and intermediate. Good that schools can access counsellors. They are amazing teachers, [but] they are not trained to be counsellors, they are trained to teach. It is beneficial to have access to an external person who has the expertise to offer the service.” – Whānau

4. School culture that values learner wellbeing



What does the evidence say?

- Targeted interventions, such as one-on-one counselling, are made stronger by a solid background of whole-school mental wellbeing promotion, where the overall environment is set up to minimise stigma, promote mental health, and where skills of mental wellbeing are actively taught and practiced.²⁰

Things we heard that help build a culture that values wellbeing/hauora

- Linking counselling to school-wide wellbeing strategies.
 - For example, one school we spoke to was integrating CiS into PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) and the school's wellbeing strategy.
- Practitioners providing training to teachers/school staff on strategies that they can use in the classroom generally and to support individual learners receiving CiS support.

²⁰ Hetrick et al. (2021)

4. School culture that values learner wellbeing



Things we heard that help build a culture that values wellbeing/hauora (cont.)

- Schools and teachers supporting the strategies learners are learning in counselling.
 - At some schools we heard teachers use language around emotional regulation that is consistent with what learners are using/learning during their counselling sessions.
- Fostering supportive peer relationships.
 - We heard from schools and providers that learners will often confide in a close, trusted friend, and share that they are having counselling. To encourage this, schools are pairing learners up with a friend or an older student – tuakana-teina.
- Providing a safe space for learners to remove themselves if they need to.
 - One school we heard from had established a hub in their school, with a comfy couch, where learners can take time out to regulate their emotions.

4. School culture that values learner wellbeing



Good practice example

Developing a joined-up approach

In one school, the practitioner and the school work alongside each other to support learners in regulating how they are feeling. This happens through the school implementing a programme called ‘Zones of Regulation’. The practitioner works on individual strategies taught during counselling sessions, to support learners with regulating their emotions. This also fits with the wider school initiative where teachers adopt the same strategies in the classroom.

The result is a common understanding of shared language to use around different emotions and feelings – across learners and their peers, teachers in class, whānau at home, and with the practitioner during counselling.

“When they’re in the red zone, they’re not in their thinking brain. They need their time and their space to come out of that zone and calm down...You can’t reason when you’re in the fight and flight.” – Practitioner

“The school know how their learners arrive, regulate, relate, reason. So once we regulate...we have a higher capacity for relationships and for safety.” – Provider

*“First of all, it’s all about the language and knowing what zone you’re in – the parents modelling it as well.”
– Practitioner*



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