

A Mandate for Mindfulness

We call on the "Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction" to recommend mindfulness as central to mental health in a flourishing Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is mindfulness and why it's important

- Digital age. Mental health problems, isolation. [Grasp people from the start - and the panel]

What is Mindfulness? (<https://mindfulnesseducation.nz/what-is-mindfulness/>) [Mindfulness Works website](#). Disconnected. Flourishing - **Nick**

Evidence: It Works!

We recommend that mindfulness be embedded within diverse sectors of society that impact on mental health:

In education: The international evidence base shows that when taught in schools, mindfulness boosts cognitive performance and builds resilience. **(hyperlink to be added by Tash when I get it from Grant!)**

In workplaces: EG mental skills training leads to greater focus and productivity - **Nick**

In health care: for the health professionals and as an intervention - **Nick**

In justice and reducing recidivism Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) have been used in a number of small pilot projects in the UK, and in the US there has been some early research which indicates its potential for reducing violence in prisons and re-offending rates. Wider research into mindfulness also points towards its potential to address a number of psychological processes and states that are relevant to risk of recidivism (ref Mindful Nation UK)

In early childhood and parenting - **Brigid**

Vision. For New Zealand to lead on the world stage - values. Works with Māori, pacific, LGBTQI+ **Nick**

Let's make Aotearoa a world leader in the provision of mental health care.

Sign the Open Submission to support the call for **mindfulness as central to mental health in a flourishing Aotearoa New Zealand.**

Who are we? Mandate for Mindfulness Working Group.

Natasha Rix, Director, Mindfulness Education Group

Four names with titles. **Nick**

Mental Health Inquiry Submission Process

Key Information

Link to consultation document:

<https://www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Mental-Health-Inquiry-Consultation-Documents-English-Version-PDF2.pdf>

Link to Terms of Reference - Summary Doc - provides a sense of the scope of the inquiry:

<https://www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Summary-version-of-the-Terms-of-Reference-17-April-2018.pdf>

Link to “Have Your Say” Portal:

<https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/consultation-document/have-your-say/>

“Have Your Say” questions:

1. **What do you think is currently working well?** Why do you think it is working well?

Who is it working well for?

1. **Mindfulness in NZ schools** is working very well when taught through New Zealand’s only locally-developed, evidence-based, mindfulness in schools programme called **Pause, Breathe, Smile**. Pause, Breathe, Smile is supported by the Mental Health Foundation of NZ and **is working well because**:
 - It is evidence-based; all the lesson plans are based on neuroscience, psychology and the science of positive mental wellbeing. and wellbeing science.
 - It is culturally relevant and incorporates Te Whare Tapa Wha throughout the programme. All resources have been, or are in process of being, translated into Te Reo Maori.
 - It is aligned to the NZ Curriculum and is taught by school teachers.

Pause, Breathe, Smile is working well for New Zealand school children across a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, including schools with high Maori and Pasifika rolls, and children impacted by the Canterbury earthquakes.

Three published research studies completed by AUT University and University of Auckland (attached in part 5 of this submission) show that participation in PBS:

- Improves focus and attention
- Increases calm and self-awareness
- Helps develop conflict resolution skills and promotes pro-social behaviour

- Reduces stress and improves wellbeing for teachers
- Leads to statistically significant increases in wellbeing

2. **Mindfulness for high-priority youth** is working well when taught through the *Kindness Institute's Atawhai programme*.

3. **Mindfulness in the general adult population** is working well. **It is working well because:**

Privately taught mindfulness courses are working well for:

Mindfulness is working well for many South Auckland Maori and Pasifika adults through Nirvana HealthCare's locally developed, evidence-based *Mindfulness and Awareness Aotearoa* programme.

2. **What isn't working well at the moment?** What mental health and addiction needs are not currently being met? Who isn't receiving the support they need and why? What is not being done now that should be?

In NZ schools what isn't working well at the moment is: acknowledgement and understanding that the brain needs security to function, and calm for learning. One of the best ways to create a secure and calm environment for learning is through mindfulness.

The centrality of mindfulness as an evidence-based and proven means of achieving positive mental health outcomes is well understood in the international literature. (Refer section five attachments).

NZ school children and teachers are not receiving the support they need due to absence of funding for evidence-based and proven programmes such as Pause, Breathe, Smile and Atawhai.

3. **What could be done better?** What are your ideas about what could be done better or differently to improve mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand? What could be done better or differently to prevent addiction from occurring? What could be done better or differently to prevent people taking their own lives and support those affected by suicide? How could support be better provided to those who need it?
4. **From your point of view, what sort of society would be best for the mental health of all our people?** We want to hear what your ideal, healthy New Zealand would look like. What would be the foundations, principles or values that would support positive mental wellbeing for all New Zealanders, and how we might best assist those who need help. What would a refreshed system look like, how would it be different from what we have today, where would you start, and where would you focus your efforts?
5. **Is there anything else you would like to tell us?** [Tash send links of supporting docs to be uploaded.](#)

6. **Demographic information.** They ask whether this is a submission on behalf of an individual, group, or organisation. They ask which box(es) best represent you - i.e. personal experience of mental health or addiction challenges, NGO, service provider, etc. They ask for your gender and age.

Tash to Nick - can we enable this info to be provided individually through platform like Action Station?

7. Is there anything in this submission that you would like kept confidential? Tash to Nick - can we provide this option for people who may wish to add more of their own story to the submission?

Vision / Possibilities:

- We are connected to those active in the mindfulness scene in different sectors of society (first-degree connections). The people they are connected to (second-degree connections; “end users” who benefit from mindfulness practice, bearing in mind that the former group are also subsumed within this group) are numerous.
- The submission process looks as though it is relatively easy to engage in (low barrier to submissions), so the question is: what is needed, where does this group focus its limited time and energy to create the conditions for the best possible outcome?
- **Best possible outcome:** There is a possibility to marshal and co-ordinate the support of our first- and second-degree connections to get them to submit to the Inquiry, and to provide support to do that. In doing so, to create visibility around what is already happening in the mindfulness space, a sense of the potential that it has for systemic change in different sectors, and where the government should focus its resources if it wants to support this. We catalyse submissions from every sector of society that provide empirical evidence and powerful stories of the benefits of mindfulness, thereby helping to embed mindfulness as part of a refreshed, rejigged mental health system (and wider society), in Aotearoa from 2019 onwards. :
 - Yoga is welcome, but we’re not interested in trying to capture everything for everyone. If somebody else wants to refer to yoga, mindfulness, embodied practice, qi gong, tai chi.
 - In the way that mindfulness is taught, first foundation of mindfulness is the body. So mindfulness is aligned with body work, etc. Greatest area in terms of evidence-base for mind-body science is around mindfulness. The term mindfulness internationally is used.
 - Keep this ^^ in awareness as we move forward with this process.
 -
 -

Context:

- This is a communication exercise - trying to communicate with the commissioners, commission, ultimately with govt, do in a way that is heard and influences their thinking.

- Need to understand our audience(s):
 - Advisors to commissioners
 - Commissioners - health lawyer, young Pacific Islander, Pacific Island Psychology Professor
 - Ministers and their officials
- Think about the fact that there are oral and written submissions. Oral likely to get 5 minutes at the most. One more impactful than the other? The oral in terms of the commissioners.
- General themes - make the thematic analysis easy, so the right things pop out at them.
- Idea: Get the rangatahi from the Kindness Institute in front of the commissioners. **Diverse as possible** people in front of them telling their story of what hasn't been working, what has been. Particularly people from the margins. People who embody the story the commissioners are looking to hear.
- Oral submissions: can leave a voice message, or send a video, or attend a regional meeting. Regional meetings are very soon.
 - Oral going to them is most powerful. Better to talk more from the heart.
 - Video
 - Story in writing
- If we get quite a few of us it will look like its happening all over.
- Kindness Institute will be putting in a tight, structured submission, joint submission around mindfulness in education. Lots of the key words. A way that might come together - Tash drafts up responses to the five questions, share that with the wider community. "If you support this, copy and paste and add your name, your story. "We need to galvanise the MfC community behind those of us that are doing the mahi that is on the ground and working right now, as well as the vision of what could be possible.
 - Two different kinds of submissions: copy paste add name - that five of us create together. Then give people the opportunity to add to it.
 - Is there a need for statements to be evidence-based? It adds weight for officials. Could be included in appendix. Up front want the crunchy summary, powerful stories that get their heart, then more detail, evidence later.
 - Want to pitch at about a 10-11 reading age up front. Can get into more detail later.
 - Section 5 is where you can add documents, etc. Provide sample text for copy and paste into online submission form, delineate what goes in each box. Then provide files - some of the evidence. Grant and Tash have good amount - education, health, workplace,
- Thematic analysis: what do we want to pop out at them?
 - Well-written succinct bullet points: less is more
- Specific people:
 - Sam O'Sullivan, Nick Laurence as young psychologists
 - CoLiberate - great presenters, should come to Wellington Regional meeting
 - Jase Te Patu - great presence and mana, Māori voice, great to present orally.
- Networks we want to engage with - use Facebook, blast emails, keep on sending reminders:
 - Mindfulness Works (Nick)
 - Wangapeka - and Sphere Group (Auckland network - Grant and Tash)
 - Facebook groups
 - Tough Talk (Nick)

- Ovio Mindfulness (Nick)
- Mindfulness for Change email list (Nick)
- Mindful Leaders Conference delegates (Nick to contact Andrew)
- Sue Dykes - Mindfulness Auckland
- Tui Williams (Nick)
- Jamie Howell
- MEG
- Steven Archer
- Original Nature
- CoLiberate
- MHF - Tash to engage. Could share it with their Facebook. Might not have thought to create something for others from NZ to engage with.
- AUT, mindfulness research team - Grant. Brian Broom Mind/Body - Marlies knows them
- Australasian Integrative Medicine Association
- Brigid's public health network
- Retreat centres - Mana, Dharma Gaia, Te Moata (Caroline), Riverslea, Waihoanga, Bella Raksha (Tash)
- International connections: Chris Ruane, Jon Kabat Zinn, Michael Bunting, Craig Hassed
- Bart, Ants, Gina, Sam Rye, Chelsea,
- Lifehack
- Engage with other mental health orgs, offer to share what we come up with: The Nutters Club, .
- Rowan Brooks
- Te Ao Māori?
- Pasifika?
- How can we motivate people to engage? "Once in a generation" - call to action. Other key messages? The time has come.
- Ways to submit:
 - Sign and send email - just forward to this email address. Or use Action Station.
 - Be available as a resource if people want help to specialise, target a specific.
 - Treatment, prevention, promotion.
- Action points:
 - Tash to forward review articles on evidence base for mindfulness.
 - Let everyone know about the dates and locations for regional meetings - Brigid to post for Auckland community, Caroline to wider group.
 - Update the posts on MfC FB group: Brigid. Prime them that there will be a call to action soon.
 - Draft document: Tash happy to put out rough bullet points as starting point.
 - Tash to share doc by Monday/Tuesday 7th/8th
 - Nick, Caroline, Brigid to review and add their comments, suggestions
 - Finalise doc on Tuesday 15th, 11.30am-1.00pm in Zoom meeting, finalise plan for sending out at that point.
 - References: Nick to find, add links to draft doc that Tash prepares.

- Find out about platform e.g. Action Station - Nick
- Reach out to specific people about regional meetings: Sam O'Sullivan, Nick Laurence as young psychologists, CoLiberate - great presenters, should come to Wellington Regional meeting, Jase Te Patu - great presence and mana, Māori voice, great to present orally.
- Some general publicising. FB post, this is what we've done, these are the regional meetings, this is the plan, share with Wangapeka etc. Caroline to post on MfC Group, Brigid to post on Auckland MfC Group.
 - Brigid to do draft by tomorrow. Post it to FB on Saturday, email on Monday.
- **Questions surrounding best possible outcome:**
 - **How do we inspire and support as many of our connections as possible to make submissions?**
 - **What are the components of a powerful submission?** If it's a personal account, what makes the personal account impactful? (Loo could be good to consult here, with her science communication / storytelling background). What evidence do we include, and how do we tell a powerful story with the evidence that is already out there?
 - **How could we help to coordinate the submissions so that there is alignment between them?**
 - **How could we communicate the vision of not only what is already happening, but what this points to as being possible?** That New Zealand could be a world leader on this, we have so many factors in our favour: Māori culture, people delivering mindfulness in all sectors of society already, a world leader on compassion in healthcare & the possibility of an Institute of Healing Science. Pointing to a paradigm shift in how we structure our organisations, to favour mental health and wellbeing, valuing participation, co-creation, subjective experience more, not just the head? Story of interpersonal neurobiology, mindful awareness, sensing and responding in the present moment, not trying to control outcome from higher up the pyramid?

Proposed Action Points:

- This group commits to meeting once a week for next five weeks. Each week commit to conversations with people in our networks - e.g. Karl Baker from Mindfulness Works, Kerene from Mindful at Work, Kristina from Kindness Institute, stories from teachers and students involved in PBS. Report back on what we're hearing, sense and respond to see where the possibilities for coordination are.
 - Sub-point: Create list of people who we think should be priority to talk with, assign names beside each person. Check up on this the following week.
- Subset of group works on putting together resources to aid the submission process. Evidence for mindfulness-based interventions in different settings (e.g. mental health, healthcare, education, workplaces, government). Find and circulate guide for telling a powerful story.
 - Can we get access to reports that Grant wrote when working at MHF to use + update as a basis for the evidence-based side of things?

- Subset of group works on communication of vision for future, perhaps based on Brigid's work and Mary O'Hagan's Mental Wellbeing Manifesto. Sense and respond to co-ordinate this with people's submissions.
- Organise Meetup(s) to discuss Inquiry process?

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Sign the Open Submission

1. **Promoting the values that are integral to a mentally healthy society as above:** evidence shows that mindfulness increases empathy, compassion, social cohesion in practitioner, therefore a mindful society is the foundation for a mentally well society.(ref). Discuss how this aligns with the goals and rhetoric of the government leading the way towards a kinder and more empathetic society.
2. **Mediating a direct positive effect on mental illness and wellbeing:**
 - a. Prevention of mental illness (is there actual evidence for this? ref)
 - b. Treatment and prevention of relapse of mental illness (evidence)
 - c. Promotion of mental wellbeing: ?evidence for promoting flourishing?
3. **Mediating an indirect positive effect on mental illness and wellbeing:** as a health promotion tool i.e. increasing wellbeing enhancing behaviours/lifestyle e.g. physical activity, nutrition, sleep: evidence
4. Values
5. Direct impact on mental health
6. Indirectly: changes to other behaviours that impact on health
7. Digital age: attention.