

2022 Match Summary

Name of Match: Child and Youth Mental Health/Wellbeing Sub-Match of the Perinatal, Infant, Child, Youth, Family and School Based Mental Health/Education Match

Location of Match: Virtual (October 11th and 18th NZST, October 10th and 17th ET).

1. Describe the **purpose** of the match: (Maximum 500 words)

Through a series of meetings between the match hosts, and through valuable contributions from match participants about what the content and structure should look like, a decision was made to create a two-part virtual match with a program of presentations and discussions based on the theme of “Community Trauma and the Impacts on Children, Youth and their Families.”

The format of the virtual match for the first session enabled rich discussion by notable leaders in the field, and a second session was focused on processing and discussion among participants.

More specifically, part one of the virtual match began with a mihi-whakatau as an opportunity to be welcomed into the process and to get to know each other. An overview of the host organization was provided, and then participants had the opportunity to share about their organizations and roles.

The first session of the match contained rich presentations by four experts in the field, including Dr. Julie Kaplow on “Trauma, Grief, and Traumatic Loss: Impacts on Children, Youth and Families;” Risa Troughton on “Responding to Community Trauma: Mosque Attacks in Christchurch, NZ;” Dr. Anna Brooks on the “Impacts of Long Covid;” and Brad Morgan on “Emerging Minds Australia: Overview of Emerging Minds and Trauma Resources.”

Part two of the virtual match began with words of welcome and brief introductions, and then the session centered around discussions and reflections from the previous week. Participants responded to theme areas (e.g., building trust through connection and authentic community engagement, reducing mental health stigma, addressing workforce issues, among others).

The match brought leaders together to enhance connections, deepen knowledge around the topic and the impact on our respective communities, as well as provided opportunities to share solutions and approaches to effectively address current challenges.

The shared focus and purposeful participation led to a meaningful opportunity to co-create this learning environment, share innovations, and enhance international partnerships. The rich discussions and increased connections made—leading up to and during the match—support continued dialogue, as participants took away key pieces to integrate into their respective organizations and communities.

2. Describe the **leaders** who participated in the match (for example, were some of them peers, youth, family/caregivers, practitioners, policy makers, clinicians? Were they from community settings, government, NGOs, clinical settings?): (Maximum 500 words)

The match hosts included Dr. Gary Blau (Senior Advisor at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute in the United States), Dr. Bronwyn Dunnachie (Senior Advisor at Whāraurau in New Zealand), and Abi Milnes (Director of Whāraurau in New Zealand), representatives in the field of youth and family mental health and policy.

The match visitors included executive directors, program directors, policy advisors, youth mental health officers, project managers, public health officials, university department heads, therapists and

clinicians, and operations and support staff. A total of 102 people registered with most attending at least one match session, with many participating in multiple sessions,.

Match visitors represented eight countries, including New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland, Israel, Australia, Canada, Poland, and the United States. match

The range of participants, representing community, government, and clinical settings, enabled diverse and inclusive participation, as well as the opportunity to highlight both broad and focused solutions to the global issues that were discussed.

3. What do you see as the **game changer** for this match topic? (Game changer is defined as: a newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way.) (Max 500 words)

Issues around workforce capacity were discussed, which impacted all the individuals and communities represented at the match. To address workforce shortages, participants highlighted (1) the need to capitalize on opportunities for those who are interested in working in the field of mental health, (2) for organizations to examine the budget and ways to mitigate negative impacts on retention, and (3) to consider alternative pathways to increase the workforce through trainings, certification of youth and family peers, engagement with primary care, and business and faith organizations, etc.

The presentations emphasized how a concerning number of children and youth are dealing with trauma and loss at the same time, in addition to the ongoing cumulative stressors (e.g., the impacts of COVID and environmental crises). Discussions around connectedness, community support, and improved understanding of trauma- and grief-informed approaches to care offer hope in building healthy children, youth, adults, and communities. The group emphasized the remarkable resilience and adaptability children possess, the opportunities for teaching emotional literacy and self-regulation in early childhood and school settings, as well as the importance of supporting young people in ways that help them feel a sense of power over their futures (e.g., via activism, peer support, etc.).

To address mental health stigma, the group underscored the importance of reflecting on our own biases, and the need to consider ways to engage with others who have varying degrees of stigma (i.e., start where they are). A three-prong approach to tackling stigma was shared, which includes (1) having contact with a person who identifies with that condition, (2) providing education and responding to misperceptions by sharing facts and experiences, and (3) by being conscious of language and how words matter.

Modeling strategies and approaches to share knowledge, particularly across cultures, was quite noteworthy during this match. The focus on ways to respectfully and humbly build trust with individuals in the community, while remaining adaptable and flexible, is of critical importance and a guiding approach as we each proceed in our work. The “learning never ends” was a consistent theme, and there continues to be room for better representation, more empathy, and more collective action.

4. How will the match **support inclusion, resilience and growth** for this match topic and for the leaders who attended: (Maximum 500 words)

The match hosts’ intentionality when coordinating the session helped create a positive, inclusive environment where match visitors understood the value in attending and ways they can meaningfully (and equally) contribute to the discussion. Meeting equity, where everyone had equal opportunities to communicate and share ideas regardless of physical location, helped create an inclusive environment and a sense of shared accountability in the co-development of solutions.

Inclusion instills trust, and trust in a group offers a chance for people to fully participate and feel heard. From the diverse perspectives in the virtual space, participants could learn from one another about what is working (and not working) in their community, and to mindfully consider what pieces may be integrated into their own community.

Match hosts facilitated the discussion seamlessly, allowing for the discussions to flow organically and for the dynamics of the group to allow space for each voice. The shared commitment towards improving the lives of children, youth, and families enabled the group to be open and flexible to where the conversations led, and to eagerly share resources that may be applicable to the various environments in which the visitors work.

The group's cohesion allowed for high trust and increased vulnerability, and at the same time, the varied environments and experiences enabled alternative recommended courses of action and differences in approaches to localized care.

The group's discussion made it clear that there's a common value around cultural humility and the need to understand that no one person alone is an expert; rather, we're each on a continuous learning journey. With ever-evolving challenges in the world, these connections (focused on sharing experiences and wisdom) are vital to growing resilient communities that can recover, restore, and strengthen. As a result of this match, the international partnerships built, and the knowledge shared, support the overarching goals of the meeting, which included the ability to gain expertise, expand networking, and highlight strategies to support leaders. In hopes that the group can reconvene, there's optimism around the capacity for continued personal and community change and ongoing connection.