



The New Zealand Psychological Society

Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

11 May, 2012

Prime Minister Hon- John Key
Cc Minister of Health –Hon Tony Ryall
Prime Minister's Chief Science Adviser Professor Sir Peter Gluckman

Dear Prime Minister

Youth Mental Health Package

The New Zealand Psychological Society very much welcomes the Government's initiatives on youth mental health announced this week. We agree with the direction of the initiatives in early identification of mental illness in young people and in finding innovative ways to address mental health needs.

We are particularly pleased to see schools as a focus for the implementation of these initiatives and note that there are many psychologists working in the education system who are uniquely placed to make a contribution to the well-being of young people and their families. We suggest that it would be useful for the Ministry responsible for the implementation of this initiative to engage with the Ministry of Education to look at ways in which the considerable breadth of skills of educational psychologists could be utilized in the interests of youth mental health. These skills are currently underutilized and narrowly focussed and could be mobilised to make an important contribution to this initiative. We are pleased to see that more educational psychologists will be trained through the new programme at Victoria University .

Clinical, health and counselling psychologists also have a range of skills which are currently utilized in mental health and could be applied to this initiative. Health psychologists in particular are able to address the prevalence of co-morbid physical and mental health issues which exists in many young people. Community psychologists can also assist in youth focussed community initiatives.

My purpose in writing to you is not to promote the profession of psychology but to let you know that New Zealand already has a highly skilled workforce which can make an important contribution to the proposed initiatives. There are likely to be cost savings in mobilising the skills of these practitioners who are already “on the ground” and who are able and willing to play a part in making these initiatives work in the settings identified.

Please feel welcome to make contact with the Society if we can assist in any way. We are as noted above fully supportive of this initiative and are delighted that the voices of Professor Sir Peter Gluckman and many others advocating for better services for young people have been heard and responded to by your Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela Hyde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Pamela Hyde
Executive Director