

Challenging societal norms for improved wellbeing of stigmatised persons and groups: My experiences in the field of child sexual abuse prevention

The Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa New Zealand states clearly that psychologists have responsibilities to society to challenge unjust norms, practices and policies that disempower individuals and groups. In this presentation I will discuss my attempts to challenge unjust norms, drawing on my work in the field of sexual abuse prevention. Individuals with sexual interest in children epitomize stigmatisation; they are often labelled based on their sexual interests, experience high levels of stigma-related stress and struggle accessing psychological services until it is too late to prevent incalculable harm. I will share successes and learning experiences on my journey to promote person-first language, improve access to psychological services, implement holistic approaches to assessment and treatment, and advocate for evidence-informed legislation.