



Presentation on Micro-interventions
Choice and Partnership Approach National Forum
June 2025

Micro interventions

Small, timely steps while waiting

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Photo: Takitahi in fresh green (before it has dried).
This is the most 'basic pattern'. What does it mean?
One over one –people woven into one another

Dr Kirsten Smiler *Te Whānau a Kai, Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, Whakatōhea*

micro-interventions:

Bite-sized timely chunks that

offer immediate value &

not a treatment replacement – add up

with human warmth

Uncertain & extended delays:

- sense of being 'cruelly ignored'
- declining trust in the system, worsening symptoms
- uncertainty about what to do & which information to trust.

- Adolescents - distress and suicidality in the face of even short waits, - frustration that they are not getting help, despite taking challenging steps to ask
- Family - increased stress and impacts on employment and activities
- Providers – stress, moral compromise
- System – multiple follow up, duplicate referrals, escalation of concerns, compromised or out of scope service

Tertiary students experiences of waiting for adolescent mental health services

Esta Wilson-Burke



“I'm not getting any concrete dates. I'm not getting concrete information... I remember feeling very frustrated and very upset... especially after I'd make a phone call and I would be given nothing”

“I remember like a month afterwards just my Mum brought it up, like ‘you had this going’ ‘oh right’ (laughs) ‘have they contacted you?’ ‘no, not at all’, ‘ah shit’. But then it’s like, did I need to contact them first or?”



"When you call the phone number and you need help, you're on hold for an hour... And then you're given very basic regurgitated responses... Not treated with any sort of unique element or any sort of personal advice"

“It’s really exhausting to always have to like advocate for yourself... and it's like... I'm trying to survive over here, you know?”

Simple steps would help so much

- Shorter waits (<1/2)
- Acknowledgement that waiting is hard
- UPDATES
- Human contact
- Tailored messaging: skills & reminders

"While I had COVID this like, this man called me from... the COVID team or whatever. Just to like check-in... I remember afterwards just like, sobbing like, it was just like the kindest thing, it just felt like a guardian angel. Like it was so nice... maybe if it was something like that if you're on a waitlist"



I think knowing where you are, ...if they sent out 'this is what's happening. These are the updates, you are still definitely in the line waiting. This is our predicted date for you. Do you have any questions?'

Skewmorphism





Share a
Coke with...



#ShareaCoke

Micro interventions - informed by



Youth Voice & concepts of:

- Manakitanga
- Active components of therapy & SSI
- Mental Health Helpseeking Journeys
 - Addressing Help negation, Effort overwhelm
- Behavior change
 - Nudges, Timely, Chunking down, Perceivable rewards
- Digital Health
 - Live, Coming TO me, Via someone I trust

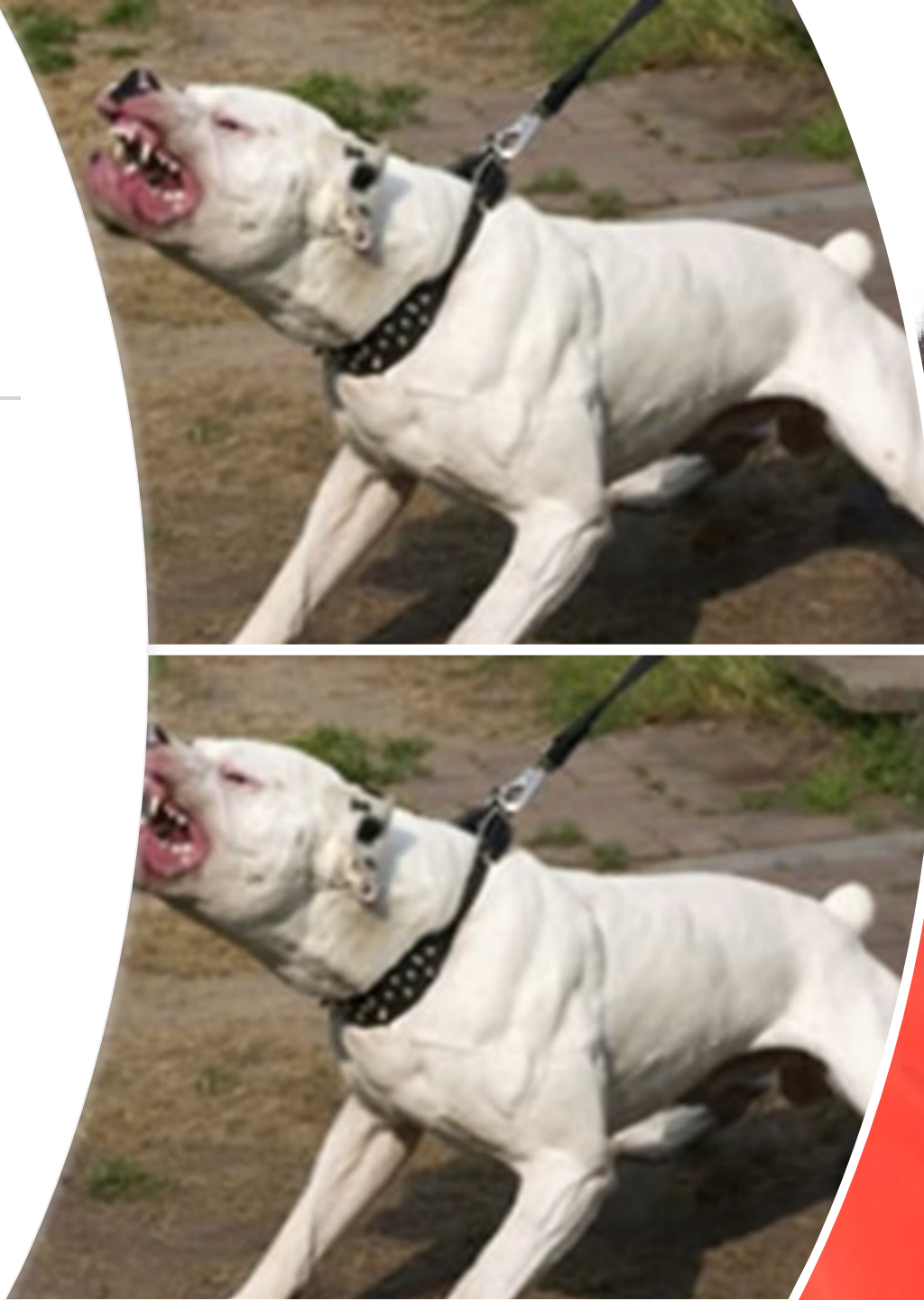
Imagining getting mental health help

- When people are doing OK, most can identify people, services or things that they could do that might help if they were feeling down
- It doesn't necessarily feel so hard...
- However, increased emotional distress associated with increased



2. Help negation & Stigma

- Triad of negative beliefs
- Disengage or withdraw from helping opportunities
- Perseveration on negative thoughts; difficult processing accurate info about help, recalling helpful events...
- Internal & social stigma
- Concerns about making it worse



Effort negation & overwhelm

- Even though goals are rational & people want to achieve them, they are overtaken by competing cognitive, emotional & environmental processes.
- Those waiting for MH help face multiple competing demands



Okay, I'll get the doctor to see about antibiotics, now remember to take the full course. If you do that and get some rest, eat well, get back to school, wear a seat belt in the car, don't drive with anyone drunk or speeding, lose a little weight, start getting a bit more exercise, don't get too stressed or worry about your body image, keep up with the non-smoking, always use a condom, reduce the binge drinking, come and talk if you are feeling down and start doing smear tests you should be fine. Good?



Help Negation & Effort-optimized approaches

Focus on gains the in face of help negation & competing demands:

- Small, graded steps
- *Some* choice - Avoid option paralysis
- Timely
- Salient
- As effortless as possible to make a small gain
- Turning necessary efforts into sustainable assets.

Single Session Intervention (SSI)

Wiesz, Schleider

- specific, structured programs that intentionally involve just one visit or encounter
- designed to deliver “active ingredients” of EBT (e.g., cognitive reappraisal, behavioral activation) in a concentrated manner
 - Often aim to shift proximal cognitions (e.g., agency, hope, change expectancies, beliefs about self & characteristics (‘growth mindset’ re sadness, shyness...) which support naturalistic behavior changes allowing longer term gains. E.g.: Using (1) brain science to normalize concepts, (2) empowering youths to an expert role,- how would you explain it (3) saying-is-believing exercises to solidify learning, - writing advice to peers...and (4) testimonials from youth - valued others who have successfully adopted the approach (Schleider et al., [2020b](#)).

OMI

- Online 5-15 min interactions for immediate or short term gain (eg Bunge Walker Hunt et al, 2023)
 - small but significant *immediate* impact
 - Increase chance of return
- targeting thoughts, activities, sleep, assertiveness & esp BA associated with improvements at one week follow-up ([Bunge et al., 2016](#); [Bunge et al., 2017](#)).

Warm friendly welcome

During CAPA? +
Video, Booklet
Letter, or Call or
Text?

a warm friendly welcome; from the clinic

an apology re delays?

positive expectations

when and how to get extra help

Orientate for micro interventions - there are small steps that can help in the meantime;

Small steps over time

Phone call?
Text? Video,
Booklet, or
socials page

Relaxation Breathing

Expecting change

Talking about it some

Getting on with the good

Steps that help (sleep, PS..)

What to expect when you ARE seen

Digital tools & getting started

WAIHIA TITIKI

hā ki roto



TALKING TO SOMEONE

Why might it be good to talk to someone?



What if it's hard?



What if I don't know what to say?



Sometimes it is hard to know what to say. Try something like:

- *"I don't know what to say. I am having a really bad time"*
- *"I want some help because I'm worried about what's going on"*
- *"I don't know what to do"*
- *"I need someone to listen to me"*

Mana
Restore
for
Pasifika

Get
Help
Now

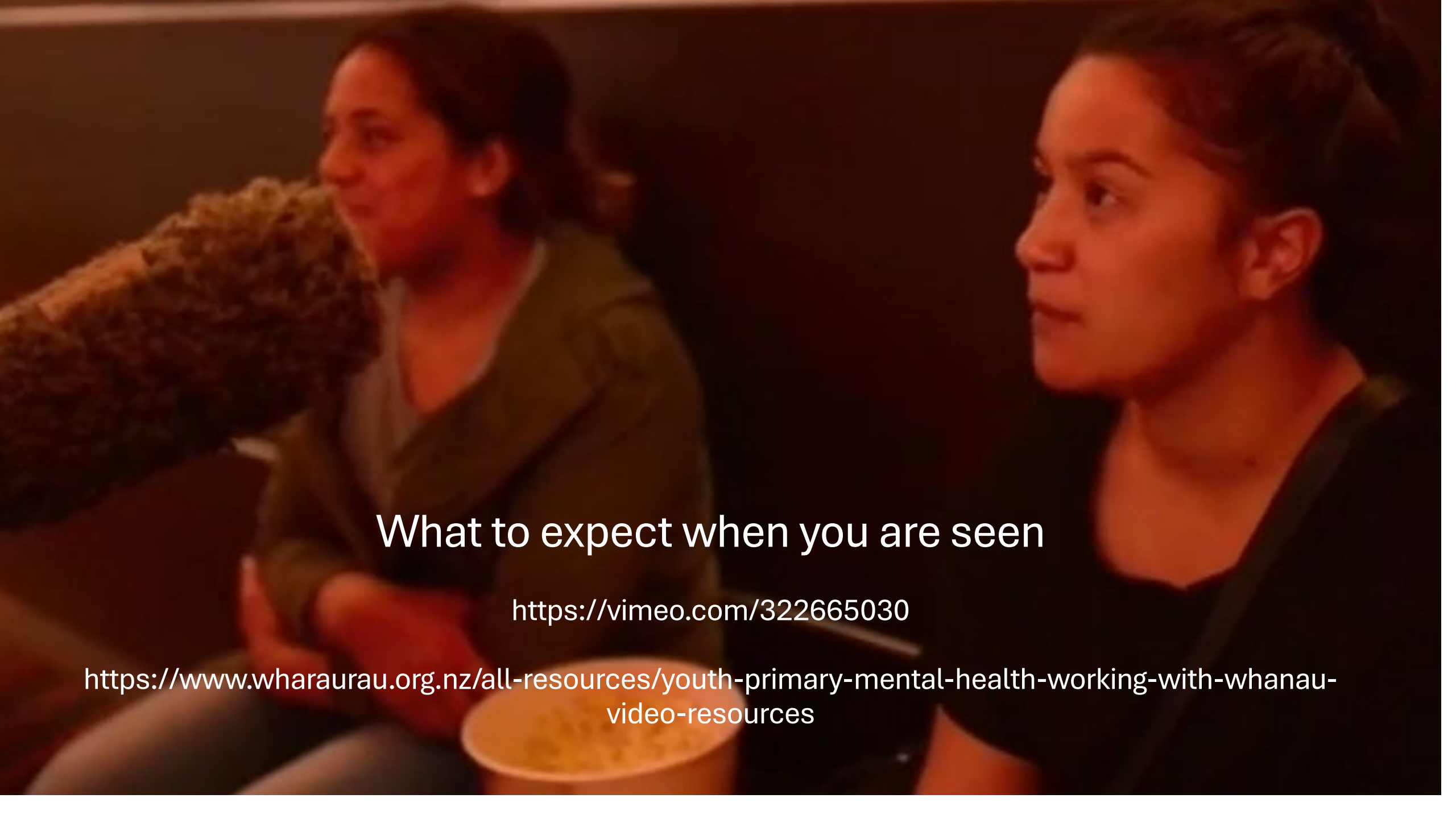
Healthy Gaming

Screen
Time
Tips

Sleep
Better

<https://www.mentalwealth.nz/manarestore/>

In-game, it's easy to tell if your champion is healthy – their

A video still showing two women sitting at a table. The woman on the left is holding a bowl of food. A large, fuzzy microphone is in the foreground on the left. The scene is dimly lit with warm, orange-toned lighting.

What to expect when you are seen

<https://vimeo.com/322665030>

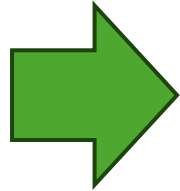
<https://www.wharaurau.org.nz/all-resources/youth-primary-mental-health-working-with-whanau-video-resources>

Digital:

I want it live, coming to me, via someone I trust

From

- Long list of sites
 - Some might be outdated
 - Hard to load on phone
 - Wrong vibe
- No follow up



To

- Personalised
 - Look with them, Select 1; check they can start
- Ask to try it for 10 min & feedback to you
- Follow Up



Micro interventions

**reducing distress & growing
skills while waiting**

manākitanga
connection
effort optimisation

Photo: Dr Kirsten Smiler *Te Whānau a Kai, Te
Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata,
Whakatōhea*

References

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- Schleider JL, Mullarkey MC, Chacko A. Harnessing Wise Interventions to Advance the Potency and Reach of Youth Mental Health Services. *Clin Child Fam Psychol Rev*. 2020 Mar;23(1):70-101. doi: 10.1007/s10567-019-00301-4. PMID: 31440858.