

A Regional Approach to Perinatal Mental Health & Addictions

Samara Kelly | Central Region | 31 March 2026

Regional Coordinator – Maternal Mental Health & Addictions

Regional Coordination as System Enabler

The role of the Regional Coordinator:

- Developing shared pathways and reducing regional variation
- Supporting implementation of agreed Models of Care
- Establishing shared clinical governance structures
- Aligning NGO, primary, specialist and HSS partners
- Strengthening workforce capability through a Community of Practice

Environmental Scan 2023:

Environmental Scan – System-level shifts required:

1. Clearly defined continuum of care
2. Stronger responsiveness to Māori
3. Shared regional Model of Care guidance
4. Intentional focus on priority populations (Māori, Pacific, LGBTQIA+, and others)
5. A coordinated regional approach aligned with Kahu Taurima

What a Systems Response Looks Like

- Governance structures that support quality, consistency and equity
- Infant mental health recognised as central across the continuum
- Birth trauma and bereavement embedded in service design and pathways
- Addiction care integrated within perinatal pathways
- Alignment with Kahu Taurima, Tuituia Te Kahu (the Perinatal Bereavement Care Pathway) and equity priorities

What Success Looks Like

- Seamless and equitable access from community/primary to specialist care
- Coordinated, clearly established regional pathways
- A skilled and culturally capable workforce – including retention and succession planning
- Addiction, bereavement and infant mental health embedded within services
- Measurable equity improvements for whānau
- Shared data that enables monitoring of access, consistency and outcomes

Regional and National Initiatives

- Regional community POC implementation
- Mother and baby residential addiction treatment pathway
- Perinatal mental health and addictions education and training with Whāraurau
- Tuituia Te Kahu (Perinatal Bereavement Care Pathway) released 2026
- Te Ari Ari clinical framework for whaiora with co-existing mental health and AOD problems

The next 6 – 12 Months

- Developing mother and baby residential addiction pathway
- Strengthening governance and leadership structures
- Delivering a regional service guideline for perinatal mental health services
- Support the implementation of community package of care and relationships
- Supporting regional community of practice
- Collaboration across the commissioning life courses to ensure we are across new initiatives



Community of Practice

Community of Practice exists to:

- Create a safe, non-judgemental space for specialist MMH teams to think together
- Share practice wisdom
- Notice patterns across the system
- Strengthen consistency, equity, and clinical confidence across the region



Community of Practice

A system approach only works if it represents your voices and your experience.

Let's start with what we have..... YOU!

In district groups spend time discussing:

- Innovations present or planned?
- Gaps in clinical practice/services/ model of care?
- Who isn't accessing your service and why?
- Something that has inspired you today?



Learnings

Please share any learnings from the group discussion



Poipoia te kākano, kia puāwai

Nurture the seed and it will blossom