



# IPMHA professional development grants

Evaluation report for 2025

April 2026

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# Executive Summary

## Background

The 2025 IPMHA professional development grant was made available to IPMHA workers employed as HIPs, health coaches, or support workers in primary care and community settings. The grant contributed towards learning activities that support grant recipients to grow their knowledge and skills to better support Māori and Pacific peoples, and align their practice with the values, attitudes and Real Skills of [Keeping it Real | Kia Pono Te Tika](#). This report summarises insights from people who have completed their learning activity and submitted a final report.

People who received the grants submitted a final report after completing their learning activity. This report summarises feedback from 18 (85%) out of the 21 grant recipients.

## Key outcomes

- 94% of grantees gained new or strengthened skills, and all recipients (100%) were satisfied with the grant and would recommend it to colleagues.
- Grantees reported improved ability to create culturally safe spaces through whanaungatanga in their mahi.
- People are applying cultural frameworks such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, Fonofale, tikanga Māori, Pūrākau, maramataka, and the Pacific concept of va.
- Learners enhanced their clinical, assessment, counselling, and therapeutic skills, including structured assessments, reflective listening, and holistic care models.
- One grantee commented: *“I am sincerely grateful to Te Pou for the opportunity to receive this grant, which played a crucial role in helping me complete my study. Without this support, the journey would have been significantly more challenging for both my whānau and me”.*

## Conclusion

These findings highlight the importance of continued investment in culturally grounded professional development for the IPMHA workforce. Sustained support for these learning opportunities could strengthen services, support equity for Māori and Pacific peoples, and reinforce person-centred, safe, and culturally responsive practice across primary mental health and addiction care.

## Background and brief description

The IPMHA professional development grant for 2025 was for people working in roles as part of the integrated primary mental health and addiction (IPMHA) programme, and employed as health improvement practitioners (HIPs), health coaches, or support workers in primary care and community settings. The grant support actions in the Mental Health and Addiction workforce plan to continue to grow the workforce by investing in new roles (Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, 2025).

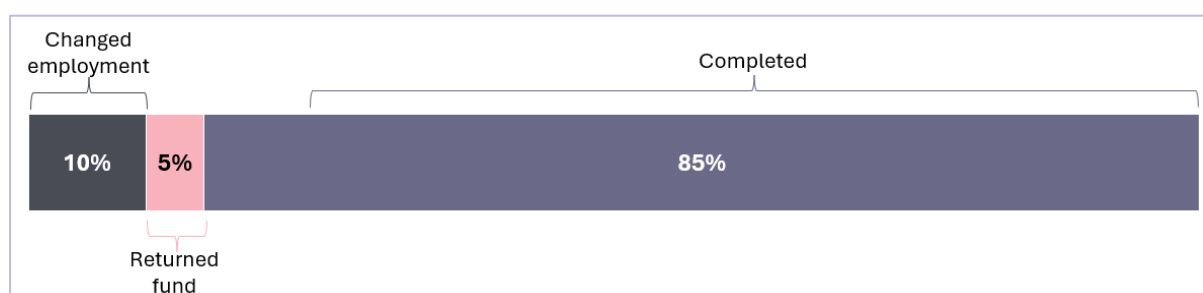
The grant helped cover the costs for people to take part in learning activities that develop professional knowledge and skills, enhancing their role in delivering IPMHA services.

The 2025 grant prioritised learning activities that:

- sought to increase knowledge and skills to better provide services for Māori and Pacific peoples
- are aligned to the values, attitudes and Real Skills as described in *Let's get real* (now [Keeping it Real | Kia Pono Te Tika](#)).

A total of 21 people were funded, out of which 18 (85 percent) have completed their learning activity and submitted a final report. Of the remaining three people, two (10 percent) did not complete their final report due to change of employment and subsequent change of contact details. One person (5 percent) returned the funds. See Figure 1. This report summarises feedback from grant recipients who completed their learning activity and submitted a final report.

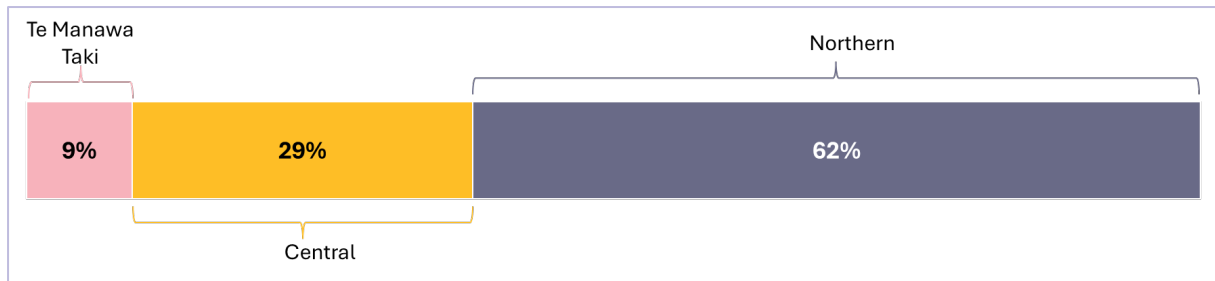
Figure 1: Status of grants (21 people)



## Recipients' sociodemographic information

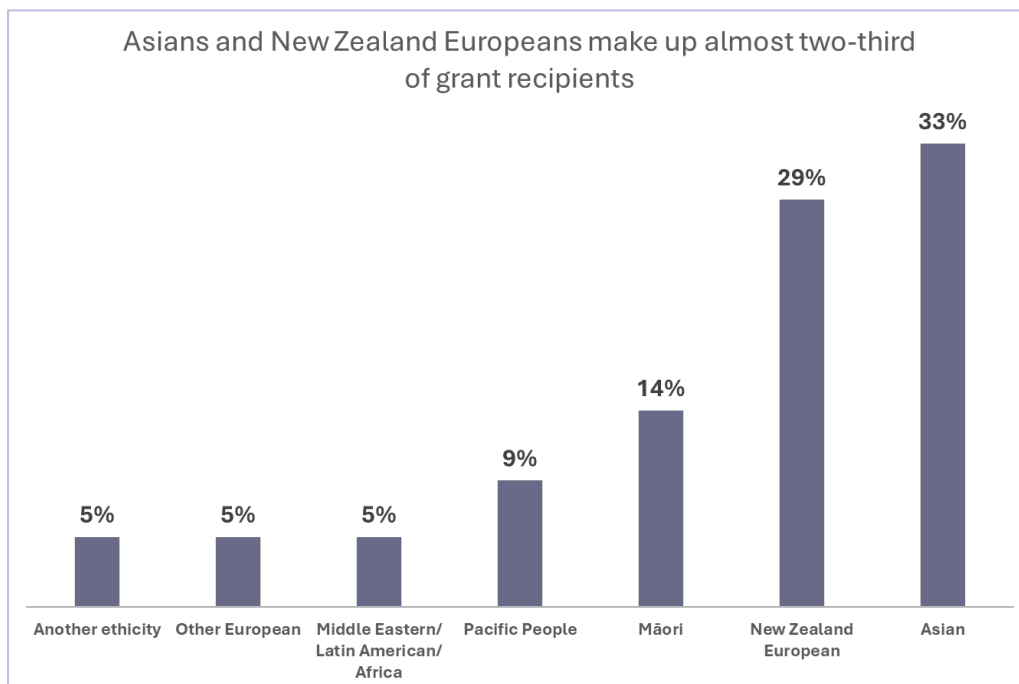
Three out of five (62%) grantees were from the Northern region. Around one third from the central and one in ten are from Te Manawa Taki. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Grantees region (21 people)



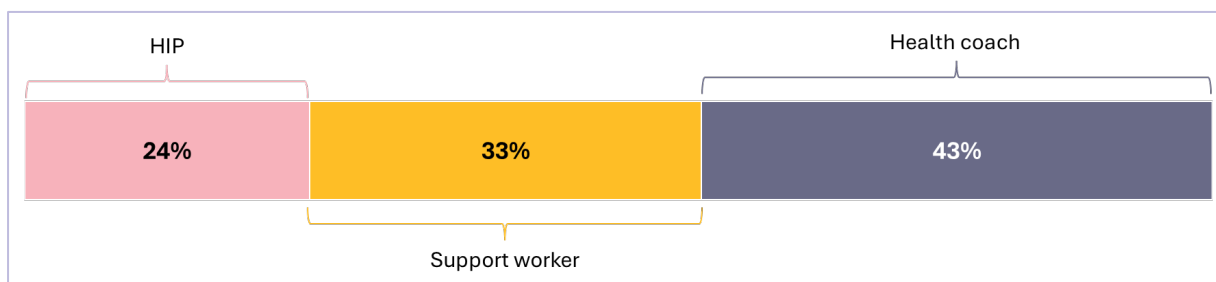
People from Asian communities (33 percent) and New Zealand Europeans (29) make up almost two-third of grant recipients (62 percent). Fourteen (14) percent are Māori and 9%, Pacific people. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Grantees ethnicity (21 people)



Health coaches make up the largest proportion of grantees (43 percent), followed by support workers (33 percent) and HIPs (24 percent). See Figure 5.

Figure 4: Grantee roles (21 people)



## Courses funded through the grants

Grantees completed courses across various levels from certificate programmes to bachelor and to postgraduate courses. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the full list of courses funded by level.

Table 1: List of courses funded

Certificate	Bachelors <sup>1</sup>	Postgraduate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Couples Counselling</li> <li>Metabolic Nutrition Coach Programme</li> <li>Poutuarongo Toiora whānau</li> <li>ACT for ADHD</li> <li>Advanced Study of Fields of Practice in Social Work</li> <li>Therapeutic Use of Lego</li> <li>Motivational Interviewing Skills Training</li> <li>Cultural Intelligence Workshop</li> <li>Certificate in nutrition coaching</li> <li>Understanding Patient Experiences of Behavioural Change in New Zealand through Health Improvement Practitioners (HIPs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor of Social Services</li> <li>Bachelor of Nursing</li> <li>Bachelor of Applied Social Work</li> <li>Bachelor bicultural social work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Applied Social Work</li> <li>Diploma in Counselling and Guidance Studies</li> <li>Master of Psychotherapy</li> <li>Certificate in Health Science (Human Nutrition)</li> <li>Certificate in Human Nutrition</li> <li>Masters in Health Practice</li> <li>Diploma in Social Work (Heke Toiora Whanau)</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Some people received funding for only part of their course, particularly those enrolled in bachelor's programmes.

## Methods

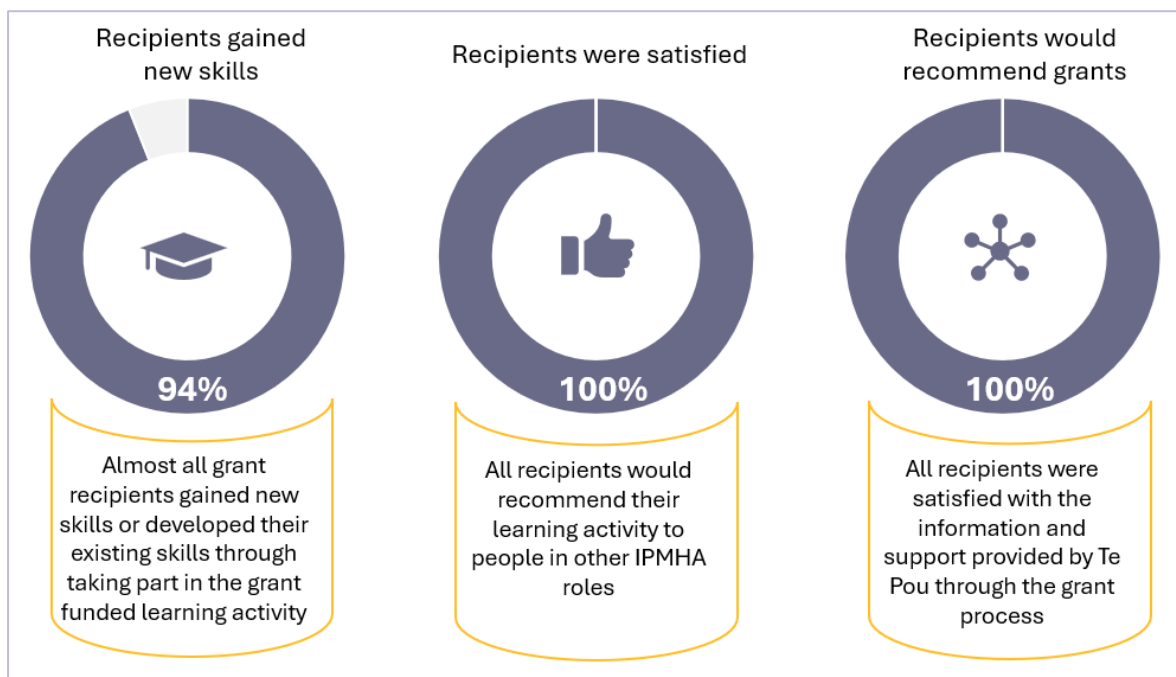
After completing their grant funded learning activity, 18 recipients submitted a final report reflecting on their experience of the grant and the support provided by Te Pou. The sections that follow presents key insights drawn from those final reports.

## Key outcomes

### Recipients gained new knowledge and skills

Almost all respondents (94 percent) reported that they gained new skills or developed their existing skills through taking part in the grant funded learning activity. All (100 percent) recipients were satisfied and would recommend the grants to other people working in primary care. See Figure 4.

Figure 5: Grantees knowledge, skills and satisfaction levels (16 people)



## Applying learning for better outcomes for tāngata whai ora

Grant recipients who responded to final evaluation shared that they would use their learning to improve how they support tāngata whai ora through person-centred, strengths-based, and culturally respectful practice. They plan to communicate better, use whanaungatanga, create culturally safe spaces, and use approaches such as reflective listening, anchoring techniques, storytelling. Grantees will also apply Pacific concepts like *va* to strengthen relationships with Pasifika aiga (families) and communities.

Through the learning activities, grantees plan to bring stronger clinical, assessment, and therapeutic skills into their roles. This includes using structured assessments, evidence-based counselling, nutrition knowledge, sleep and fatigue strategies, and holistic models like Te Whare Tapa Whā and Fonofale.

People also plan to use their learning to support equity for Māori communities, and advocate for systems change. Some comments are shared in the quotes below.

“Support people using a person-centred and strengths-based approach” (Grant recipient).

“In my current role, I use these skills to influence policy and resource allocation, ensuring that alcohol harm reduction initiatives are not only effective but also address structural barriers impacting Māori communities” (Grant recipient).

I have learned a deeper understanding of whanaungatanga and the role it plays. Not just in terms of pepeha and in hui, but also in the space of introducing myself to let the whānau of the whai ora know who I am, so they feel comfortable inviting me into their home” (Grant recipient).

“By learning the concept of *va* and the part it plays in the relationship building process of connecting with our Pasifika tāngata whai ora, I will be implementing better practices in my health coaching sessions to provide safe spaces, with active listening and communication skills to mend *va* when there are interruptions or knocks on my doors when I have Pacific patients and families in sessions” (Grant recipient).

“I gained a deeper understanding of theoretical models that can be adapted to my health coaching practice, such as strengths-based and

systems approaches. I will use these frameworks to better support peoples' holistic wellbeing and enhance collaboration with the wider care team" (Grant recipient).

## Putting equity into action

Respondents were asked to highlight methods, activities or events that support equity for Māori or Pacific peoples that they have started implementing or intend to, since completing their learning activity. Several culturally grounded methods or frameworks were mentioned, including Te Whare Tapa Whā, Fonofale, va, tikanga Māori, pūrākau, maramataka. These frameworks will strengthen whanaungatanga, involve whānau and aiga, and tailor care to cultural needs. Grant recipients also mentioned they will apply culturally sensitive approaches, as well as collaborate with Māori and Pacific services in their work. Comments reflecting these findings are listed below.

"Yes, since completing my learning, I have been actively implementing methods and approaches that support equity for Māori. In my practice, I prioritise tikanga Māori and apply kaupapa Māori frameworks such as Te Whare Tapa Whā and Ngā Pou e Waru to guide my engagement with whānau. I ensure that whanaungatanga is at the centre of my relationships, creating safe and respectful spaces for Māori voices to be heard and valued" (Grant recipient).

"I have actively implemented methods and activities that support equity for Māori and Pacific peoples. A key example is the revitalisation of the FASD Regional Forum. I worked to bring the forum back to life as a platform where Māori voices are prioritised, ensuring whānau, hapū, iwi, and community leaders are central in shaping responses to alcohol harm and FASD" (Grant recipient).

"Recently, I was able to establish a connection with the Pacific community liaison nurse ('nurse'). They were able to connect with tāngata Whai ora who were not accessing the clinic for their diabetes care (some have not had bloods for years!). Even though I tried to connect with these Pasifika tāngata whai ora, I was not successful. It was the nurse who was able to find them, go to their houses, do an assessment, blood tests, etc. So helpful!" (Grant recipient).

“Since completing the cultural intelligence course, I will be implementing various actions into my health coaching session with Pacific and Māori communities e.g. explaining that there is no shame in not completing their action plan and as a health coach my role is there for them to be accountable, support with problem solving not to be the person to judge or punish them” (Grant recipient).

## Grant increased grantees knowledge, skills or confidence in the Real Skills of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika

Respondents reported that the learning activities strengthened their knowledge, skills, and confidence across the Real Skills and values of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono Te Tika by helping them become more person-centred, culturally responsive, reflective, and respectful. Many gained stronger communication, relationship-building, and engagement skills, especially when working with Māori, Pacific peoples, and their whānau. They also developed deeper self-awareness, enabling them to understand their values, challenge biases, and make safer decisions. Several learners improved their ability to work with complex mental health needs, use supervision more intentionally, and advocate for equity. See comments in the quotes below.

“As I have learned the core values of Let's get real, I have intertwined this with Te Wānanga O Raukawa's Kaupapa Tuku Iho. Manaakitanga and Whanaungatanga to name a few. I have ensured that in any situation, I practice manaaki towards my tāngata whai ora. Ensuring their uniqueness and individuality as well as personal preferences is being respected, valued and seen” (grant recipient).

“This learning has increased my confidence to apply social work theories, cultural frameworks, and collaborative approaches within my health coaching role, aligning with the essential and enhanced levels of the Let's get real framework” (grant recipient).

“I have been supported to learn a range of ways to safely and effectively work with people with diverse and complex mental health needs” (grant recipient).

## Grants and Te Pou support are supporting workforce growth

Respondents reported that the communication support they received from Te Pou were clear, accessible, and responsive and that the grant helped reduce stress and allowed them to focus fully on their studies and professional development. One respondent commented that studying would have been significantly more challenging for them and their whānau were it not for the grant. See additional comments in quotes below.

“Thank you so much for the support. Studying while working has been really challenging, especially with the financial strain and debt that comes with it. I’m truly grateful for this grant, it’s made a real difference and helped me continue developing my skills and knowledge in my role” (Grant recipient).

“I am sincerely grateful to Te Pou for the opportunity to receive this grant, which played a crucial role in helping me complete my study. Without this support, the journey would have been significantly more challenging for both my whānau and me” (Grant recipient).

“I rated this question a 5 (strongly agree) because the information and support provided by Te Pou throughout the grant process was clear, accessible, and responsive to my needs. The financial support I received helped to minimise the stress of managing study-related costs, which allowed me to fully focus on my learning and professional development” (Grant recipient).

“I would be forever grateful to Te Pou for giving me the opportunity to enhance my knowledge for me to support my passion in fulfilling the vulnerable and oppressed community in Palmerston North. I am hopeful that in the future, I will be able to access this kind of generosity to further enhance my knowledge and capabilities in supporting our hapori. This is life changing for me and for our tāngata whai ora whom I support and will be supporting in the future” (Grant recipient).

## Discussion and conclusion

This section discusses how respondents' feedback connects their learning activities to the grant priority areas of, increasing grantees knowledge and skills to provide better services for Māori and Pacific peoples, and alignment to the values, attitudes and Real Skills of the Keeping it Real | Kia Pono Te Tika.

The feedback suggests that the grant-funded learning activities are not only building individual capability but are also contributing to meaningful shifts in practice across the primary care and community workforce. Respondents' reflections indicate that the learning is translating into culturally grounded behaviours and decision-making, particularly in how they engage with Māori and Pacific peoples.

The consistent references to frameworks such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, Fonofale, tikanga Māori, pūrākau, maramataka, and *va* demonstrate that grantees are internalising these models rather than treating them as theoretical knowledge. Respondents describe applying these approaches in ways that strengthen relationships, improve cultural safety, and support equity. This further suggests that grant funded learning activities are supporting grant recipients to engage more confidently and in ways that are values-aligned.

The examples of strengthened whanaungatanga, increased collaboration with Māori and Pacific services, and reconnection of tāngata whai ora to services indicate signs of broader service level engagements.

The grant also aligned well with supporting the values, attitudes, and Real Skills described in Keeping it Real | Kia Pono Te Tika. Respondents feedback that they are becoming more person-centred, reflective, culturally responsive, and confident in applying models that guide safe and respectful practice.

These findings highlight the value of continued investment in professional development for the IPMHA workforce. As the sector continues to work to improve outcomes for Māori, Pacific peoples, and all communities, ongoing support for culturally grounded learning will be essential. These findings suggest that continued investment in these priorities could contribute to more culturally responsive services within primary mental health and addiction care.

## Reference

Health New Zealand| Te Whatu Ora. (2025). Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan 2024 – 2027 (2025 refresh). [Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan 2024 – 2027 \(2025 refresh\) – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

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