



Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika : early evaluation findings

July, 2026

Acknowledgement

Te Pou sincerely thanks all those who contributed their time and insights to this evaluation. We also acknowledge the champions, educators, workforce leaders, and others who participated in Te Pou implementation activities, whose feedback, experiences, and engagement informed the findings and helped shape the implementation of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika.

Published in October 2026 by Te Pou.

Te Pou is a national centre of evidence-based workforce development for the mental health and addiction sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand.

PO Box 108-244, Symonds St, Auckland, New Zealand

ISBN: 978-1-997316-29-9

Web www.tepou.co.nz

Email info@tepou.co.nz

Table of contents

Executive summary.....	3
Background.....	4
Evaluation purpose.....	4
Methodology	4
Key findings	5
Reach and familiarity with the framework	5
Early organisational integration.....	11
Embedding the framework into organisational systems.....	11
Supporting a shared language and approach to practice	12
Factors supporting implementation	13
Sustaining implementation over time.....	13
Discussion	14
Limitations	14
Conclusion and future considerations	14
References	16

Executive summary

This report presents an early evaluation of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika implementation following its release in April 2025. Findings are based on resource analytics, pulse surveys, Champions Forum feedback, and interviews with framework champions. Together, these findings provide an indication of the framework's reach, familiarity, intended use, and early integration.

Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika is reaching a range of health workforce groups

- Between April 2025 and June 2026, Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework and supporting resources received more than 21,000 engagements, including webpage views, downloads, hard-copy orders and video plays.
- Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents reported at least some familiarity with the framework. This was highest among leaders and people in lived experience roles and lower among allied health professionals and students.

Many respondents are identifying practical ways to apply the framework in their mahi

- Seventy percent of survey respondents say they intend to use the framework in their mahi and intention to use is associated with familiarity with the framework.
- Nearly all Champions Forum participants (96 percent) intend to use the framework following forum participation.
- Respondents described using the framework to support values-led and relationship-focused practice, professional development and reflective practice, culturally responsive practice, and workforce and organisational development.

Early organisational integration

- Interview participants described embedding the framework into recruitment, onboarding, supervision, professional development, workforce planning, and educational programmes.
- Leadership support, champions, and practical resources were identified as important implementation supports, while time constraints, workforce turnover, and maintaining momentum were identified as ongoing challenges.

Overall conclusion

The evaluation found evidence of engagement with Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika resources, growing familiarity among people participating in Te Pou implementation activities, and strong reported intention to use the framework. Interviews with framework champions suggest the framework is beginning to move beyond awareness to being embedded into organisational and educational settings. Continued support through leadership engagement, champion networks, and practical implementation resources may assist organisations and educators to further embed the framework over time.

Background

Te Pou launched the updated Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework on 2 April 2025. The framework outlines the values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to work effectively with tāngata whai ora and whānau experiencing addiction and/or mental health challenges. Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika builds on the original *Let's get real* framework (Te Pou & Ministry of Health, 2008) and the subsequent 2018 update. The 2025 refresh reflects sector feedback, a stronger commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the increasing diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand communities and the workforce.

Since its launch, Te Pou has supported the sector to adopt and apply the framework and developed additional resources to enable its use across a range of settings.

This report presents an early evaluation of the implementation of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika. The evaluation is informed by a logic model that describes how implementation activities are expected to contribute to intended outcomes (Appendix A).

Evaluation purpose

This evaluation focuses on understanding early awareness, engagement, and use of the Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework, based on available data. It examines implementation rather than impact. The evaluation aims to:

- assess familiarity with and reach of the framework
- understand stakeholder engagement and intended use
- explore how the framework is being applied in practice
- identify early signs of integration and embedding.

Findings related to integration and embedding are still emerging, reflecting both the early stage of implementation and the current data availability. This evaluation does not assess the impact of the framework on workforce practice or outcomes for tāngata whai ora and whānau.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach combined quantitative and qualitative data to understand reach, familiarity, engagement, and use of the framework. Data came from four sources: website and resource analytics, a pulse survey, Champions Forum feedback, and champion interviews.

1. Website and resource analytics

Information on engagement with the framework and supporting resources between 2 April 2025 (framework launch) and 30 June 2026.

2. Pulse survey

The pulse survey was embedded within existing Te Pou resources and implementation activities, including e-learning modules, events, and sector engagement initiatives between November 2025 and June 2026. Responses may include repeat participants. Respondents were drawn from a range of Te Pou activities, not all of which focused on raising awareness of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika. Therefore, findings provide an indication of familiarity with the framework among people engaging with Te Pou activities rather than a measure of awareness across the wider mental health and addiction workforce. Pulse survey questions explored respondents' familiarity with the framework, their intention to use it in their mahi, and how they planned to apply it in practice.

3. Champions Forum feedback

Feedback on learning, usefulness, and intended application of the framework. A total of 108 participants attended four forums between July 2025 and June 2026, with 99 evaluation survey responses (92 percent response rate).

4. Champion interviews

Four semi-structured interviews with framework champions, including educators, a CEO of a Kaupapa Māori organisation and a learning and development lead from an NGO. To explore how the framework is being promoted, applied, and embedded in practice.

Qualitative data were analysed thematically using MAXQDA to identify patterns relating to application and integration.

Key findings

Reach and familiarity with the framework

Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika has been promoted through a range of implementation activities and supporting resources since its April 2025 launch. During this period, framework resources received more than 21,000 engagements, including webpage views, resource downloads, hard-copy orders, and video plays. Resource analytics represent engagement with resources rather than unique individuals. Engagement counts may include repeat visits, downloads, orders, and interactions by the same person across multiple resources.

The framework webpage was the most accessed resource, while supporting materials such as the guide for kaimahi, back-pocket resource, and trauma-informed practice resources were also widely accessed. Table 1 summarises engagement with these resources.

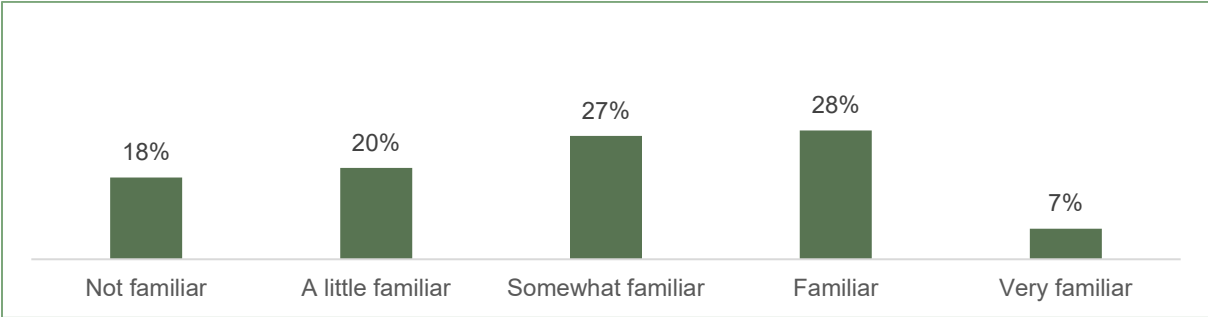
Table 1. Engagement with Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika resources (between 2 April 2025 to 30 June 2026)

Resource	Resource type	Engagement (by 30 June 2026)
Keeping it Real Kia Pono te Tika framework	Full framework outlining values, attitudes, and Real Skills	10,076 framework pageviews; 1,056 hard-copy orders; 977 pdf downloads
Keeping it Real Kia Pono te Tika: A guide to kaimahi	A fold-out A4 guide which supports understanding and application of the framework	1,908 hard-copy orders; 118 downloads
Back-pocket resource	Quick reference guide of the framework for everyday use	1,885 hard-copy orders; 299 downloads
Short introduction video	An animated video introducing the framework and its purpose	623 video plays
Being trauma-informed: Principles and actions	A pdf resource for kaimahi and organisations to create safe and supportive spaces	1,778 downloads; 2,007 hard-copy orders (published September 2025)
Trauma-informed approaches- a resource for leaders	A pdf resource that supports leaders to plan, implement, and sustain an organisation-wide trauma-informed approach	1,037 downloads (published September 2025) (not available in hard copy)

Note: Resources associated with the *Let's get real* framework, including e-learning modules, remain available and continue to be widely used. These resources are outside the scope of this evaluation.

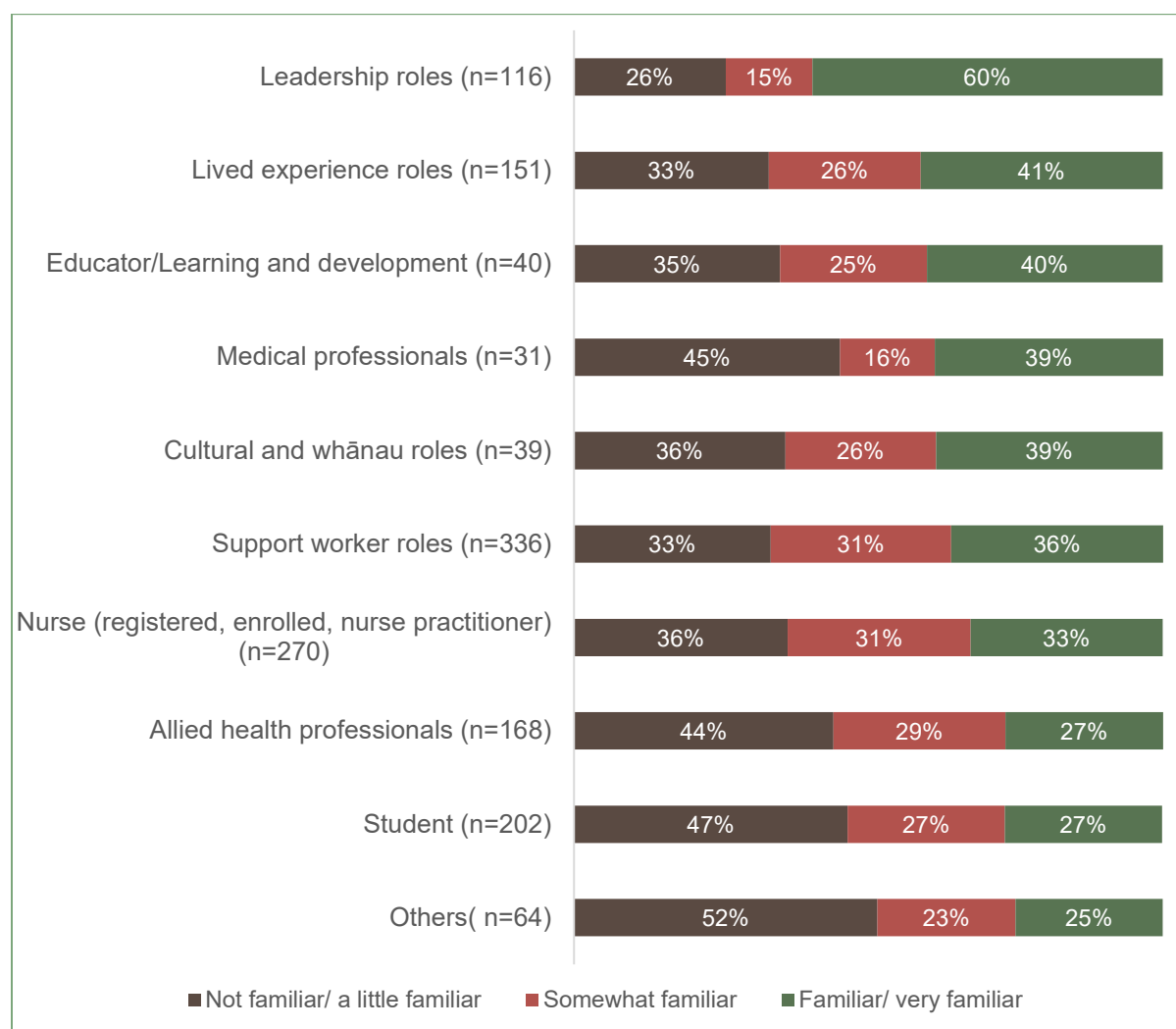
Survey findings suggest many respondents participating in Te Pou implementation activities are becoming familiar with Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika. Of the 1,801 respondents who answered the familiarity question, more than 60 percent reported being at least somewhat familiar with the framework, including 35 percent who reported being familiar or very familiar. Eighteen percent reported they were not familiar with the framework (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Respondents' familiarity with the Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework (1,801 respondents)



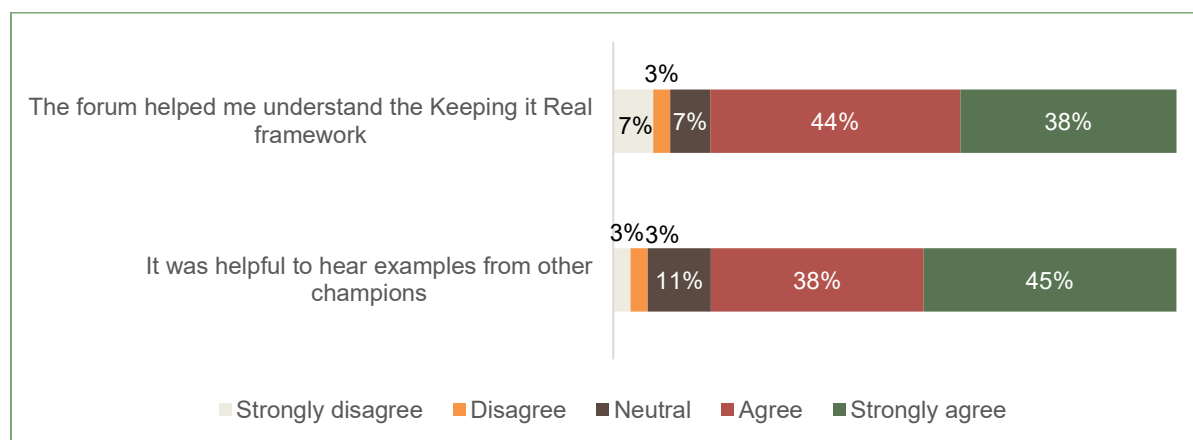
Familiarity varied across workforce groups. Respondents in leadership roles reported the highest levels of familiarity, with 60 percent indicating they were familiar or very familiar with the framework. Familiarity was also relatively high among lived experience roles (41 percent) and educators and learning and development staff (40 percent), while lower levels were reported among students and allied health professionals (27 percent each) (Figure 2). Differences in familiarity suggest implementation activities may be reaching some workforce groups more effectively than others. These differences may reflect varying levels of exposure to implementation activities rather than differences across the wider workforce. This indicates potential opportunities for targeted engagement with groups reporting lower levels of familiarity.

Figure 2. Familiarity to framework by roles (1,417 respondents)



Most Champions Forum participants agreed the forums helped build their understanding of the framework and provided opportunities to learn from others' implementation experiences (Figure 3). These findings suggest the forums may support understanding of the framework and peer learning for many participants.

Figure 3. Champions Forum respondents' ratings on awareness of framework post forum (98 respondents)



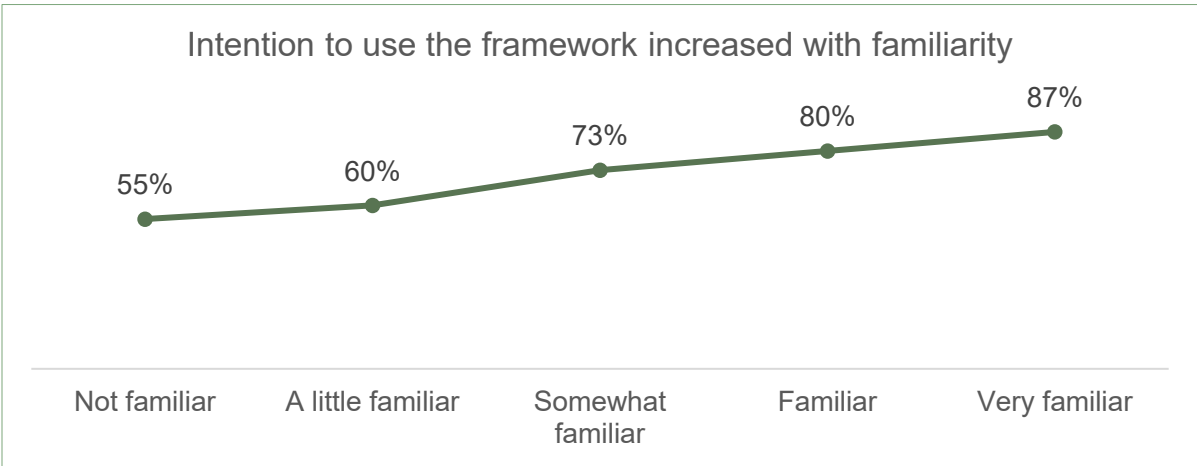
Findings suggest the framework and supporting resources have engaged a range of people through Te Pou implementation activities. Familiarity appears to be developing among respondents, although familiarity levels differed between workforce groups represented in the survey. These findings suggest opportunities for targeted engagement with groups reporting lower familiarity.

Engagement and intended use of the framework

Survey findings indicate considerable interest in applying Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika in practice. Intention-to-use responses were collected through pulse surveys embedded within implementation activities and resources, reflecting views following engagement with these activities. Of the 1,769 respondents who answered this question, seven in ten (70 percent) reported they intend to use the framework in their mahi, suggesting the framework is being viewed as relevant to both practice and workforce development activities.

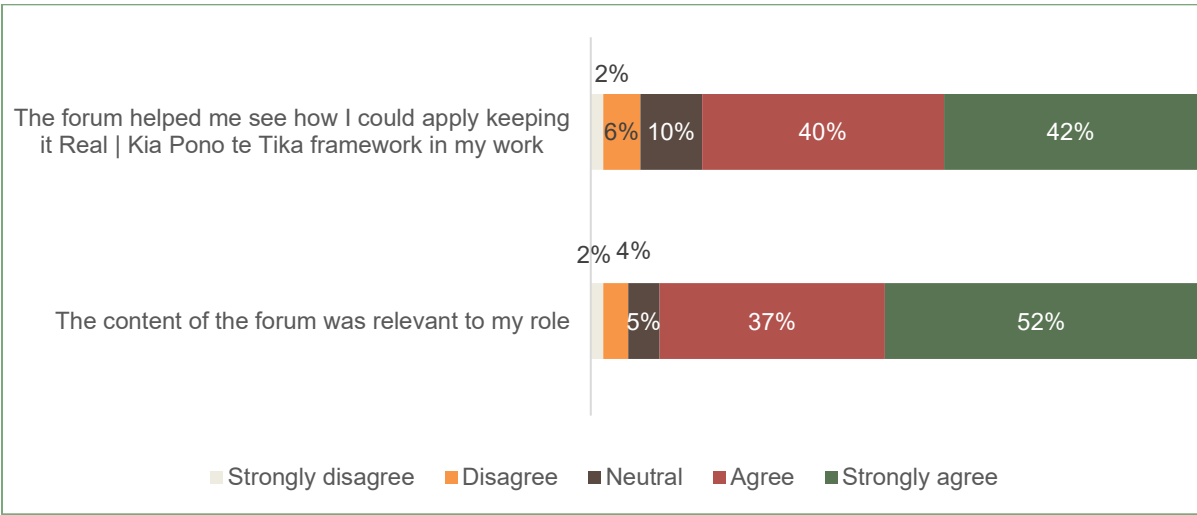
Intention to use was associated with familiarity with the framework. Respondents who reported higher levels of familiarity were more likely to intend to use the framework in practice, with intention to use increasing progressively across familiarity levels (Figure 4). While this relationship is expected, as people are generally more likely to use resources they know and understand, the finding suggests that activities that increase familiarity with the framework may support readiness to use it in practice. This highlights the potential value of implementation activities, such as training, communication, and workforce development initiatives, in supporting the application of the framework in everyday practice.

Figure 4. Intention to use by familiarity level (1,769 respondents)



Feedback from Champions Forum participants also indicates a high level of engagement with the framework. Most participants (82 percent) agreed the forum content was relevant to their role and helped them identify ways to apply Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika in their work (89 percent) (Figure 5). Following forum participation, almost all respondents indicated they intend to use the framework in their mahi.

Figure 5. Champions Forum participants' ratings of the forum's impact on engagement with the Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework (99 respondents)



Respondents from Champions Forum and pulse surveys described four main ways they intended to apply the framework. These included supporting values-led and relationship-focused practice, guiding professional development and reflective practice, strengthening culturally responsive practice, and informing workforce and organisational development activities (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Themes on intention to use the framework in mahi (658 respondents)



Many responses reflected a values-led and relationship-focused approach grounded in the framework's core values, including respect, manaaki, hope, kotahitanga, wellbeing, and whanaungatanga. Participants described using these values to guide how they work alongside tāngata whai ora and whānau and to strengthen authenticity, compassion, and understanding in their practice.

"I plan to be intentional about the use of the values and the skills and use the resources to really break down my thinking and actions." (Champions Forum participant)

A strong emphasis on relationship-building was evident throughout the responses. Participants highlighted the importance of trust, connection, partnership, and communication, including "listening actively and communicating honestly."

"By me applying the Keeping it Real principles I build trust and create a supportive space that empowers our clients to make positive lasting changes in their lives." (Pulse survey participant)

Others linked the framework to trauma-informed, person-centred, strengths-based, and recovery-oriented approaches, with one pulse survey participant emphasising the importance of "Ensuring that we see the people for who they are and not what they have done."

Participants also highlighted the role of lived experience in strengthening understanding and relationships, with one respondent stating, "Involve lived experience as a peer" to gain greater understanding when supporting others.

Respondents also described the framework as a practical guide for professional development and reflective practice. Many viewed it as "a clear framework to guide my practice", supporting decision-making, self-reflection, supervision, and consistency in practice. Ongoing learning was a recurring theme across comments.

"Continue professional development, training and apply learning within my role." (Pulse survey participant)

“Assessment with group. Tie in with learning framework and ongoing learning for gaps.”
(Champions Forum participant)

Strengthening culturally responsive practice was another prominent area of intended use. Participants described aligning their practice with Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, tikanga, Māori models of wellbeing, and partnership with tāngata whenua and whānau.

“The framework will help inform how I respond to Māori mokopuna, keeping in mind the need for connection to their whakapapa, whenua and whānau.” (Pulse survey participant)

Another described using the framework to ensure care is guided by respect, shared decision-making, and Te Whare Tapa Whā.

“Using the Keeping it Real framework when working alongside tāngata whai ora by ensuring I show respect, share decision making and encompass Te Whare Tapa Whā for good outcomes.” (Pulse survey participant)

Many respondents also described applying the framework at an organisational level through recruitment, induction, staff training, supervision, workforce development, service planning, and quality improvement activities.

“Strategic planning for service development. Training and education (session development, content and provision). Self-reflection and when providing clinical supervision.” (Champions Forum participant)

Together, these findings suggest respondents view Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika as a framework that can support individual practice, professional growth, culturally responsive care, and organisational development.

Early organisational integration

The four champions interviewed described how Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika is being integrated into organisational systems, workforce development activities, and educational programmes. Across these interviews, participants described a range of implementation approaches, including embedding the framework within recruitment processes, onboarding, supervision, performance development, workforce planning, and curriculum delivery. Rather than being used as a standalone resource, participants reported that the framework was being incorporated into existing organisational values, policies, and workforce development initiatives.

Embedding the framework into organisational systems

Interview participants described integrating Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika into existing organisational and educational processes, rather than implementing it as a standalone initiative. Examples included recruitment, onboarding, supervision, professional development, workforce planning, and curriculum delivery.

Several participants described embedding the framework into recruitment and workforce development activities.

“We're just at the moment re-establishing it back into our onboarding, our screening for our recruitment processes, using it in our interview questions.”

Others described integrating the framework into staff development and performance systems to support ongoing learning and reflection, some examples are below.

“I thought this would be a good opportunity to actually integrate it into our workforce development plan for the entire year.”

“The areas where they may need more development, they create a professional development goal for themselves.”

Educators also described embedding the framework within teaching and assessment activities.

“We always embed the Keeping It Real framework at the beginning of every semester.”

“We ask the students to do a group presentation, and we ask them to use the Keeping it Real values as part of the assessment point.”

Supporting a shared language and approach to practice

Participants described the framework as providing a common language for discussing values, attitudes, cultural safety, and practice. Rather than being used solely as a training resource, the framework was used to guide reflective conversations, supervision, and day-to-day interactions.

Participants described how the framework had become embedded in conversations across their organisation and how staff communicated and reflected on practice

“It's now more a shared language. So, during supervision with their supervisors, they can bring up certain topics, themes, and perspectives around language and what it means for them.”

“We've now started using more culturally safe language around our mahi and interactions with each other, not just with tāngata whai ora, but with each other as well.”

Educators also described using the framework's values, attitudes, and skills to shape teaching and encourage reflection on contemporary mental health practice.

“We role model those attitudes of compassion, we do all our teaching alongside our lived experience people.”

These examples suggest the framework is supporting a shared understanding of practice and encouraging reflection on how values and attitudes are demonstrated in everyday mahi.

Factors supporting implementation

Participants identified leadership commitment, champions, and practical resources as important factors supporting implementation. Leadership support was seen as particularly valuable where leaders actively promoted the framework and participated in implementation activities.

“Our CEO immediately took it on... He completed the self-assessment tool himself. He models the behaviour that we want to encourage.”

Others highlighted the role of champions in maintaining visibility and momentum.

“When you lose a champion for it... it's kind of been dropped.”

Participants also valued the range of resources available to support implementation, including self-assessment tools, e-learning modules, values cards, and practical guides.

“We heavily rely on resources to share with people... Te Pou does a great job with that.”

These findings suggest implementation is supported when leaders actively endorse the framework, champions promote its use, and practical resources are readily available to support learning and application.

Sustaining implementation over time

While participants described a range of implementation activities, they also identified challenges that may affect implementation over time. Time constraints, competing priorities, organisational change, and workforce turnover were commonly discussed.

Several participants emphasised the importance of integrating the framework into existing ways of working so it is not perceived as “another thing” for staff to do. Time was frequently mentioned as a challenge.

“It's time for us, it's finding the time to sit down and go, right, so we're going to use this.”

Maintaining momentum was also viewed as important, particularly where implementation relied on a small number of individuals. Similarly, another participant reflected on the importance of ongoing reinforcement.

“If you don't keep something going, then it gets fallen off or it falls off.”

Interview findings suggest sustaining implementation requires ongoing attention, reinforcement through organisational systems, and shared ownership beyond individual champions

Discussion

This evaluation provides early indications that Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika is extending beyond awareness-building activities. Survey and Champions Forum respondents identified intended applications of the framework, while interview participants provided early examples of implementation within organisational and educational settings. Leadership support, champions, and embedding framework into existing organisational systems emerged as important factors supporting implementation. These findings align with implementation literature highlighting the role of leadership engagement, champions, and organisational context in supporting implementation and sustainability (Damschroder et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2022).

Participants also identified challenges relating to workforce turnover, competing priorities, organisational change, and maintaining momentum over time. Similar barriers are commonly identified in implementation research, suggesting the importance of ongoing support, reinforcement, and succession planning (Morena et al., 2022)

Limitations

Findings should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. The evaluation was conducted during the early stages of implementation, and interview findings are based on only four champions. As such, findings provide an indication of familiarity, engagement, and early application rather than long-term implementation or impact. As pulse surveys were embedded across multiple Te Pou activities, some individuals may have completed the survey more than once. Reported percentages should therefore be interpreted as indicative of participant responses rather than representative of unique individuals.

Conclusion and future considerations

This evaluation provides early evidence that the refreshed Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework is being taken up across workforce and educational settings. While the original *Let's get real* framework was already well established within parts of the sector, findings suggest

organisations and educators are engaging with and applying the refreshed framework in meaningful ways. Survey and Champions Forum respondents identified practical applications for the framework, while interview participants provided examples of how it is being incorporated into organisational systems, workforce development processes, and educational programmes. Together, these findings suggest the Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework has extended beyond awareness-building activities, with early evidence that some organisations and educators are adapting and embedding the updated framework within existing ways of working.

While implementation remains at an early stage, participants identified leadership commitment, champions, and practical resources as important supports for ongoing implementation. The findings suggest that progress towards embedding is more likely where organisations actively integrate the framework into existing systems and provide visible leadership support for its use. Continued monitoring will help build understanding of how implementation develops over time, the factors that support sustained uptake, and the extent to which the framework becomes embedded across workforce settings. Findings from this early evaluation suggest several considerations for ongoing implementation of Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika:

- support organisations to embed the framework into recruitment, onboarding, supervision, professional development, and workforce planning
- invest in leadership engagement and capability, recognising the important role leaders play in promoting, modelling, and sustaining implementation
- target implementation activities towards workforce groups reporting lower familiarity with the framework, particularly allied health professionals and students
- strengthen champion networks and succession planning to reduce reliance on individual champions
- continue developing, promoting, and refreshing practical implementation resources that support application of the framework in diverse settings
- strengthen partnerships with education providers and workforce development initiatives to increase exposure to the framework among future workforce groups
- continue monitoring implementation to assess progress towards organisational embedding and longer-term workforce outcomes.

References

- Damschroder, L. J., Reardon, C. M., Widerquist, M. A. O., & Lowery, J. (2022). The updated Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research based on user feedback. *Implementation Science*, 17(1), 75. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-022-01245-0>
- Morena, A. L., Gaias, L. M., & Larkin, C. (2022). Understanding the role of clinical champions and their impact on clinician behavior change: The need for causal pathway mechanisms. *Frontiers in Health Services*, 2, Article 896885. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frhs.2022.896885>
- Santos, W. J., Graham, I. D., Lalonde, M., Demery Varin, M., & Squires, J. E. (2022). The effectiveness of champions in implementing innovations in health care: A systematic review. *Implementation Science Communications*, 3(1), 80. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43058-022-00315-0>

Appendix A: Programme logic model

Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika Logic model

Why? The tāngata whai ora and whānau have positive experiences and outcomes when accessing all health services. Keeping it Real is a framework designed to support everyone working in health to work effectively alongside tāngata whai ora and whānau experiencing addiction and/or mental health challenges.

Foundations- Values and seven skills, Responsiveness to our responsibilities to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Lived experience of people with addiction and/or mental health challenges, diversity and current legislation, theory of system change

Priority areas- Strategic influence and decision-makers, Education and professional groups, Leaders in health organisations, Workforce development, Lived experience of people with addiction and/or mental health challenges

