



Substance use, intoxication and withdrawal management workshop

Evaluation report, July to December 2025

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank and acknowledge all trainees who participated in the training and completed the survey.

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

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Summary of findings

Te Pou delivered three workshops (one in-person and two online) between July and December 2025, with a total of 44 participants. All participants completed the post-workshop survey, demonstrating strong engagement and reliable feedback.

Attendees represented diverse sectors, including addiction, mental health, and other areas, and worked across both community settings (64 percent) and clinical settings (36 percent). The Central region had the highest representation at 48 percent, reflecting the location of the in-person workshop.

Workshop outcomes

Almost all participants (98 percent) plan to apply learnings in their mahi. Key application areas include:

- recognition and safe response to substance use and withdrawal
- improved understanding of referral pathways and processes
- knowledge sharing and continuous improvement
- enhancing engagement and application of practical strategies
- strengthening organisational systems.

Improved knowledge and confidence

- Knowledge on how to identify someone in withdrawal or considering withdrawal increased from 33 percent before the workshop to 88 percent after, a 2.5 times improvement.
- Knowledge of how to refer a person in withdrawal to appropriate pathways improved 2.5 times, and 95 percent of respondents agreed they can now initiate referrals.
- Knowledge of resources and how to support someone experiencing problematic substance use increased nearly four times, from 21 percent to 81 percent.
- Ninety-five percent agreed or strongly agreed they now have the understanding to develop harm reduction strategies.
- Ninety-three percent agreed the workshop improved their ability to recognise stigma and discrimination.

Participants described the workshops as “*excellent*,” “*fantastic*,” and “*one of the best*.” Overall ratings were highly positive, with 98 percent rating the content and facilitation as very good or good. Cultural relevance and lived experience co-facilitation were consistently highlighted as key strengths. The positive feedback reinforces the value and impact of these workshops. It supports the need to continue workshops, expand regional in-person delivery, and include advanced content on motivational interviewing, youth-focused support, and prevention strategies.

Background and methodology

Substance use and withdrawal remain significant challenges across Aotearoa. Around one in four people (27 people) are at moderate or high risk of harmful substance use (Ministry of Health, 2024). Interactions with someone using substances or experiencing withdrawal occur in varied settings, including police cells, prisons, hospitals, and community services, where staff often lack specialised training (Ministry of Health, 2024). These challenges affect not only healthcare professionals, but also social workers, peer support workers, and first responders (Dee & Pyne, 2022).

To address this skill gap, Te Pou delivers online and in-person workshops that strengthen the capability of frontline workers in both clinical and community environments. These workshops support the mental health and addiction goals by promoting early identification of substance-related issues, timely referrals, and an initial introduction towards safe withdrawal management. They help build a skilled workforce, reduce long-term service demand, and advance a more equitable health system (Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, 2024).

The workshops aim to build participants' knowledge and confidence in responding to substance use, intoxication, and withdrawal. Key learning outcomes include ability to:

- recognise and support someone who is intoxicated
- engage effectively with people who use substances
- support and respond to someone contemplating or undergoing withdrawal
- understand the function of substance use and the impact of stigma on help-seeking.

These workshops are designed for people with prior experience or training in addiction services and are offered at no cost. For those without previous experience, it is recommended to first complete the Blueprint for Learning [Addiction 101 workshop](#) before attending. Participants can earn continuing professional development (CPD) points through the Drug and Alcohol Practitioners' Association Aotearoa, New Zealand (dapaanz).

At the end of each workshop, participants were invited to complete an online feedback survey (see Appendix A for the full list of survey questions). Time was allocated during the session for this purpose, and a follow-up email sent one week later to encourage additional responses. This report summarises participant feedback from workshops held between July and December 2025. Reports are published six-monthly to enhance evaluation quality and ensure findings are useful for continuous improvement. The insights presented here aim to strengthen future workshops and guide ongoing development.

Overview of workshops July - December 2025

Over the six-month period, three workshops were delivered, one in-person and two online with a total of 44 participants attending. All attendees provided feedback, resulting in a 100 percent

response rate. This high level of engagement suggests that the feedback is representative of the overall participant experience, enhancing the reliability and credibility of the findings.

Table 1. Overview of workshops July - December 2025

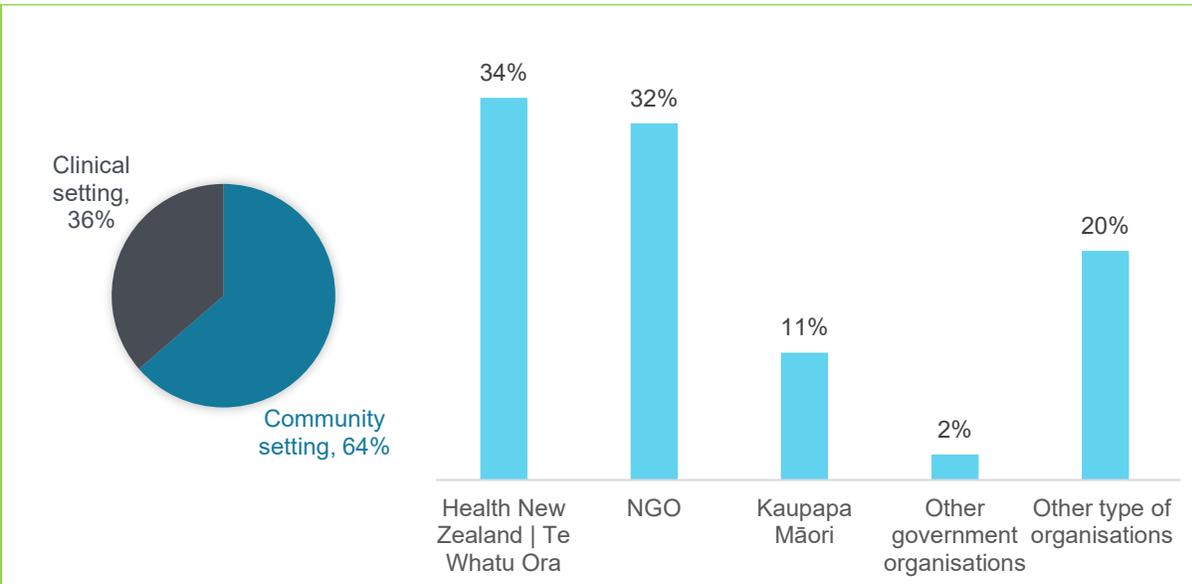
Format	Number of workshops	Workshop participants (n)	Survey respondents (n, response rate)
In-person	1 (Mary Potter Hospice, Porirua)	19	19 (100%)
Online	2	25	25 (100%)
Total	3	44	44 (100%)

Key workshop outcomes

Respondents profile

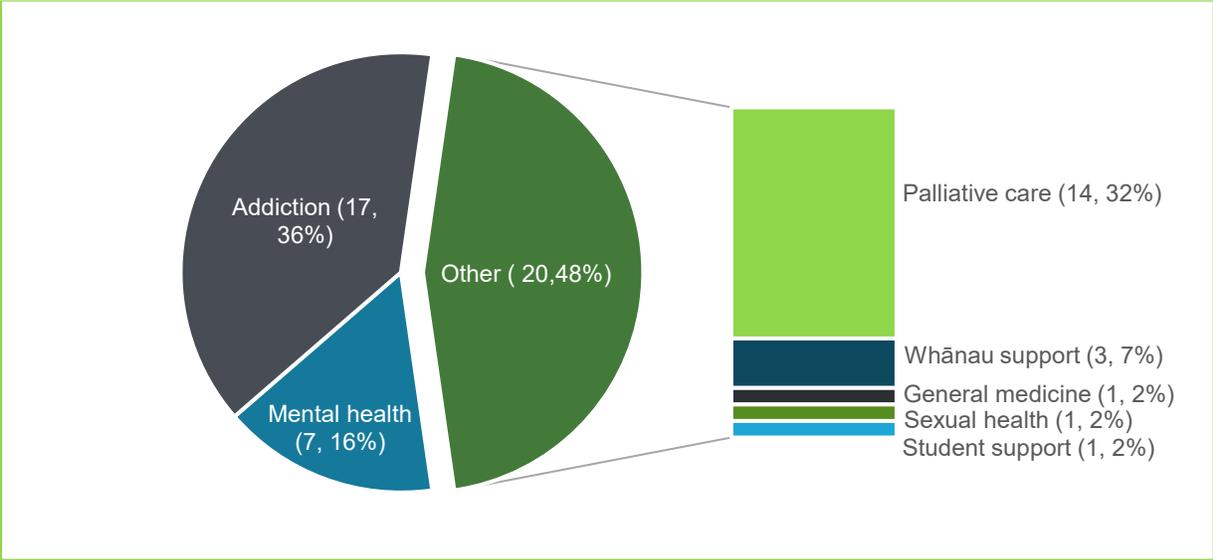
Most participants (64 percent) were from community settings, while 36 percent represented clinical settings. By organisation type, 34 percent were from Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, 32 percent from NGOs, 11 percent from Kaupapa Māori, and 20 percent selected ‘Other.’ Among those who chose ‘Other,’ seven respondents were from community hospices, and two indicated they were from not-for-profit, community-based organisations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by work setting and organisation type (44 respondents)



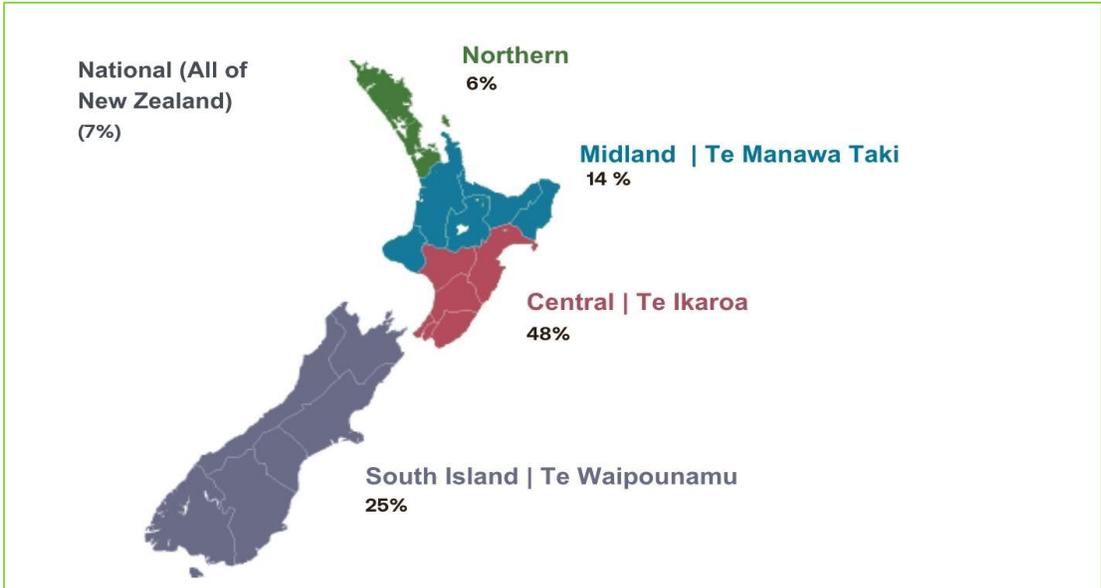
Participants represented a range of sectors, with nearly half (48 percent) selecting 'Other', 36 percent from addiction services, and 16 percent from mental health. Among those who selected 'Other,' most were from palliative care (32 percent), followed by whānau support (7 percent), general medicine (2 percent), sexual health (2 percent), and student support (2 percent).

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by sector (44 respondents)



The largest proportion of respondents were from the Central | Te Ikaroa region, likely reflecting the in-person workshop held in Porirua. However, participants represented all regions of Aotearoa, including South Island (25 percent), Midland (14 percent), Northern (6 percent), and National (7 percent). (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora region (44 respondents)



Implementation of workshop learnings

Almost all respondents (98 percent) indicated they plan to apply the workshop learnings in their mahi.

Figure 4. Percentage of respondents planning to apply learnings (43 respondents)



Further, 95 percent of respondents (42 respondents) described how they intend to use the learnings, and five key themes emerged.

Figure 5. Key themes on how respondents plan to use the learning (42 respondents)



Improved recognition and safe response to substance use and withdrawal

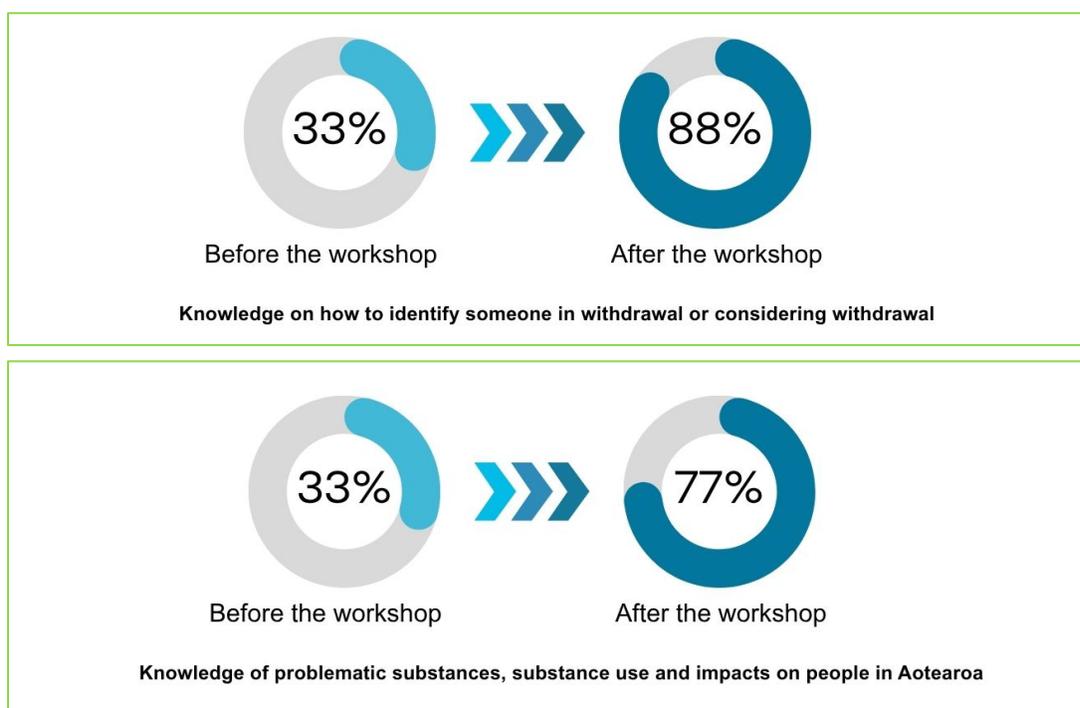
Participants highlighted an increased ability to recognise signs of substance use, and greater confidence in managing withdrawal safely. This aligns with the positive shift in their before-and-after ratings on knowledge of problematic substances, substance use and impacts on people in Aotearoa and identifying someone in withdrawal or considering withdrawal (See Figure 6). Examples of participants feedback include:

“Strengthened my understanding on processes for managing withdrawal safely. Assist in detox unit with more confidence”

“Wider understanding of the array resources and confidence improved as a result of the increased in ability to identify and support tāngata whai ora and refer on appropriately”

“Being more aware when I am with tāngata whai ora and more knowledge around substance abuse and withdrawal”

Figure 6. Percentage of respondents who rated their knowledge as “knowledgeable” or “very knowledgeable” (43 respondents)



Improved understanding of referral pathways and process

Respondents reported an increase in knowledge about referral processes and how to access referral pathways and resources. This improvement is reflected in the positive change in their ratings for knowledge and confidence to make referrals. Additionally, 95 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they can now initiate a referral process due to the workshop. (see Figure 7 and 8). Some examples from respondents:

“Referral pathways. Recognising the signs and symptoms of drug use and withdrawal.”

“To recognise substance use and withdrawal symptoms, to know referral processes and how to use motivational interviewing to assist.”

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents who rated their knowledge and confidence in making referrals as “knowledgeable” or “very knowledgeable.” (43 respondents)

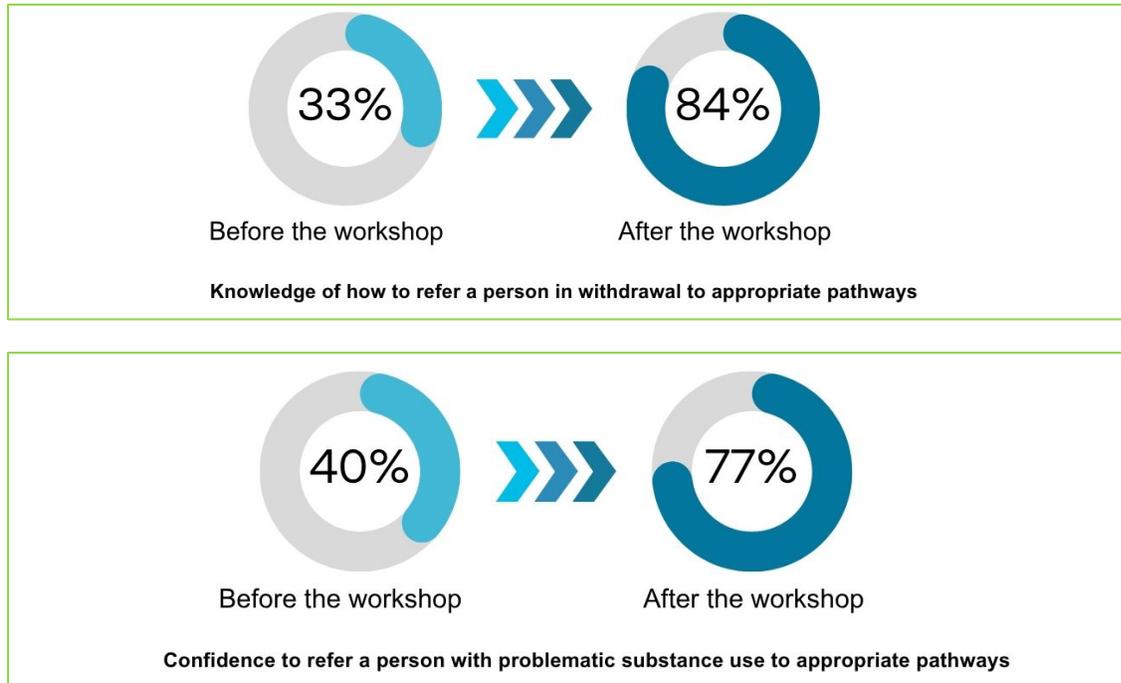
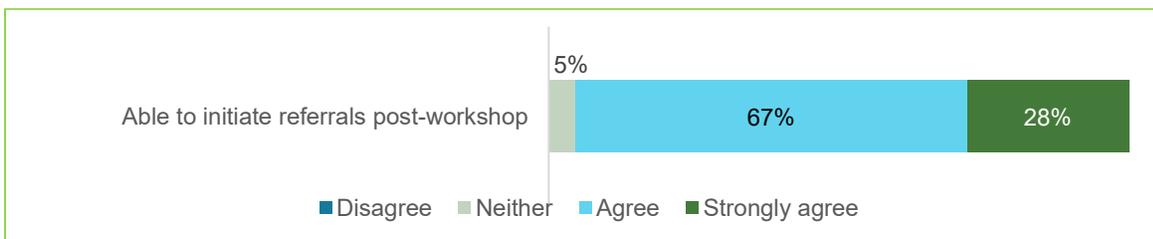


Figure 8. Respondents’ agreement ratings on the workshop outcome statement related to referral (43 respondents)



Knowledge sharing and continuous improvement

Participants plan to embed learnings by sharing resources in team meetings, reflecting on their own practice, and collaboratively discussing recommendations and tools introduced during the workshops. Examples:

“I will discuss these sessions in our team meeting and hand over the resources.”

“A lot of great sound bites during these sessions and course delivery that supported me to consider and reflect on my practices. Thinking about areas where I could improve upon, and continue further exploration of knowledge and updates approaches”

“We will discuss and reflect as a team, sharing recommendations and tools seen in the workshop”

Enhancing engagement and application of practical strategies

Respondents plan to apply their learnings by improving engagement with tāngata whai ora, using motivational interviewing skills and harm reduction strategies effectively, and sharing resources to support whānau and communities. This is reflected in their ratings, with 95 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that they now have the understanding required to develop a harm reduction strategy to support tāngata whai ora. Additionally, 93 percent reported that the information provided in the workshop on supporting a person experiencing withdrawal from substances was useful for their work when required. Post-training results also show an increase in the proportion of respondents who rated themselves as knowledgeable about resources to support individuals experiencing problematic substance use (see Figures 9 and 10). Some examples from respondents’ feedback:

“Try to open up dialogue between tāngata whai ora and myself and offer services based on my newfound Knowledge”

“Tāngata whai ora assessment and harm reduction to support hauora for tāngata whai ora and family”

“Using resources to inform students about substance use. The effects and where they can get support.”

“Support whānau with substance use and have conversations or provide resources as needed”

Figure 9. Respondents’ agreement rating on workshop outcome statements (43 respondents)

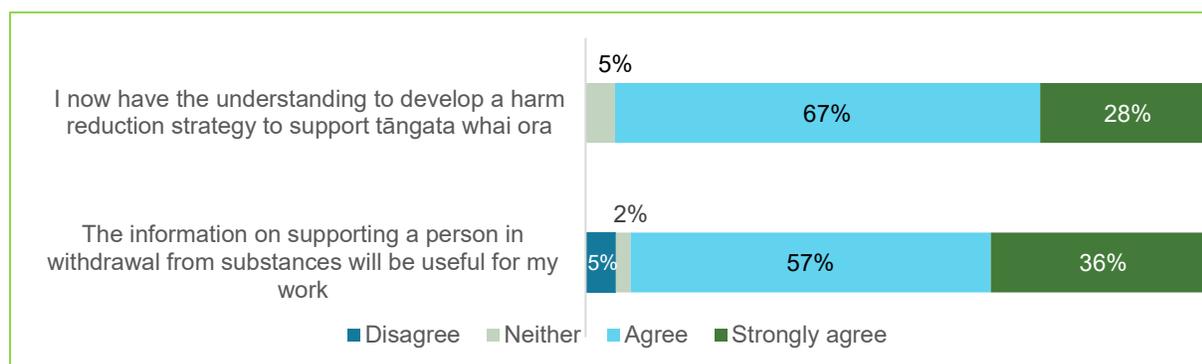


Figure 10. Percentage of respondents who rated their knowledge as “knowledgeable” or “very knowledgeable” (43 respondents)



Strengthening organisational systems

Some participants identified opportunities to strengthen organisational foundations by reviewing policies, improving recruitment processes to reflect the complexity of the work and communities served, and addressing service gaps.

“Looking at how to ensure our recruitment process reflects the complexity of the work and of the community our staff work alongside”

“Looking at policies within organisations”

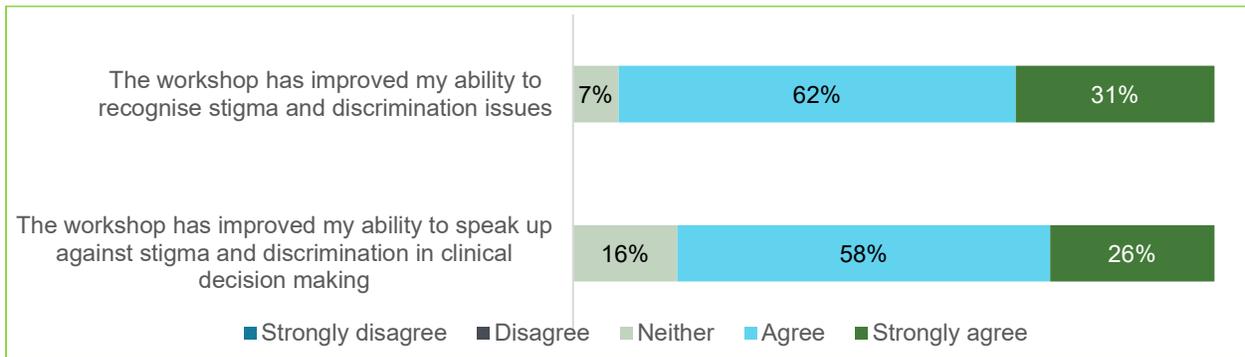
“Helping with further education for our wider team about substance use, intoxication & withdrawal and highlighting areas of improvement with leadership teams”

“As a consumer advisor, this workshop has been really useful for noticing gaps in the service”

Stigma and discrimination

One of the workshop’s key learning outcomes was understanding the function of substance use and the impact of stigma on help-seeking. Nearly all respondents reported positive change, with 93 percent agreeing the workshop improved their ability to recognise stigma and discrimination, and 84 percent agreeing it enhanced their ability to speak up against these issues in clinical decision-making (see Figure 11).

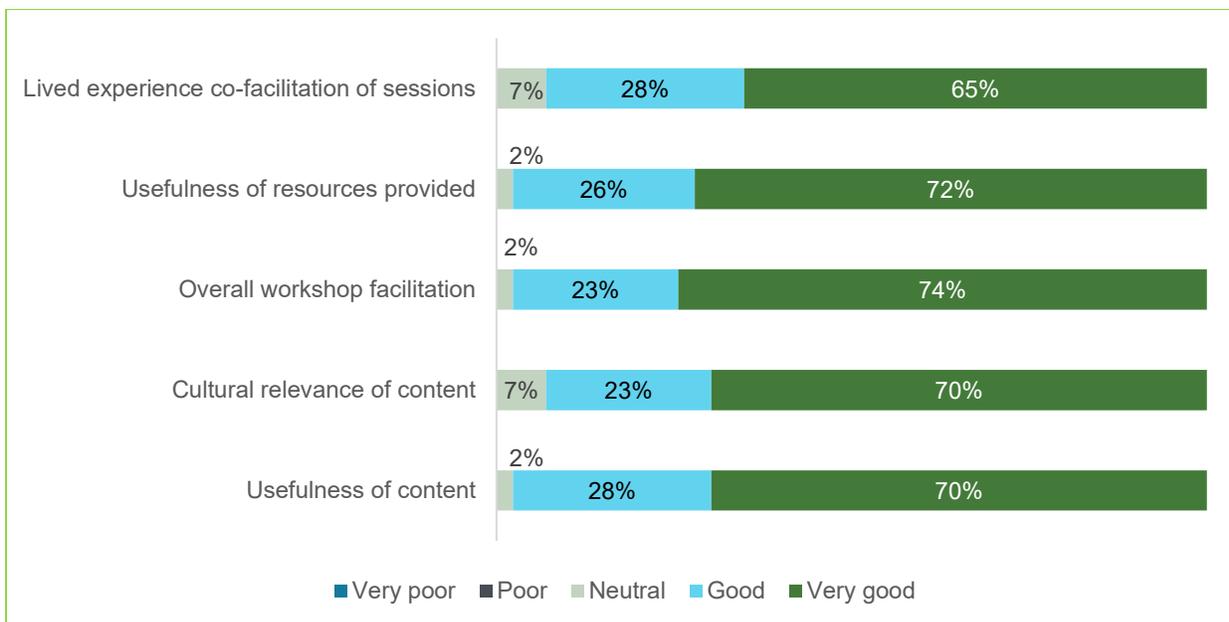
Figure 11. Respondents' agreement ratings on stigma and discrimination statements (43 respondents)



Overall workshop ratings and feedback

Most respondents rated the workshop highly, with 98 percent rating overall facilitation and usefulness of the content and resources as very good or good, and 93 percent rating the lived experience co-facilitation, and cultural relevance positively (see Figure 10). Comments reinforced these ratings, describing the workshop as “*excellent,*” “*fantastic,*” and “*one of the best.*” Participants found the content “*relevant to current mahi*” and noted that “*cultural aspects were the most useful.*” Facilitators were praised as “*excellent co-facilitators with a wealth of clinical knowledge,*” and the interactive approach was appreciated: “*I really enjoyed the interactive nature of the content.*” Increased knowledge was a common theme, with comments such as “*Soaked up the knowledge of this workshop*” and “*Very useful reminder of resources available.*”

Figure 12. Respondents' ratings on overall workshop delivery, content, and facilitation (43 respondents)



Suggestions for workshop improvement

Respondents were asked to make suggestions on aspects of the workshop that needs improvement. Of the 38 who responded, most said there were no changes needed. Twelve participants offered recommendations.

- Format, duration and delivery

There was mixed feedback on format and duration. Some wanted longer training with more content, while others felt there was too much information and suggested slowing down. One suggested a full-day online session instead of three shorter ones. There was also request for in-person workshop in their region and more opportunities for breakout sessions and knowledge sharing.

- Content and resources

Some respondents made recommendations for content and resources including:

1. more focus on Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
2. resources and discussion focusing on supporting young people
3. include information on a wider variety of drugs and associated risks
4. workshops focused on prevention strategies.

Conclusion and future directions

The substance use, intoxication, and withdrawal management workshops delivered between July and December 2025 strengthened attendees across both community and clinical settings in Aotearoa. A 100 percent feedback response rate demonstrates strong engagement and confirms the relevance of these workshops. Participants reported substantial improvements in knowledge and confidence particularly in recognising substance use, managing withdrawal safely, initiating referrals, and applying harm reduction strategies. Almost all respondents intend to embed these learnings into practice through enhanced engagement with tāngata whai ora, team knowledge-sharing, and organisational advocacy.

Positive ratings for cultural relevance, lived experience co-facilitation, and interactive delivery highlight the importance of maintaining these elements in future sessions. Suggestions for improvement included expanding content on MI, CBT, youth-focused support, and prevention strategies. Future directions could prioritise:

- regional expansion of in-person workshops to improve accessibility
- extended content on advanced interventions and youth-specific approaches
- integration of prevention strategies alongside withdrawal management

- ongoing evaluation to ensure continuous improvement and responsiveness to workforce needs.

These findings reinforce the value of these workshops to build a skilled, confident workforce capable of delivering safe, equitable, and stigma-free support for people experiencing substance use and withdrawal.

References

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Ministry of Health. (2024). *Mental Health and Problematic Substance Use: New Zealand Health Survey: 2016/17 and 2021–23*. Wellington: Ministry of Health

Appendix A: Survey questions

Thank you for participating in this workshop.

Please take the next 5 minutes to respond to the post workshop evaluation survey. Your feedback is important as it helps Te Pou understand what parts of the workshop are working and what parts need more work.

Participation is voluntary. The survey is anonymous. Data will be collected and used for programme promotion, improvement, and periodic monitoring reports to Te Whatu Ora. No one will be identified in the reports and completion statistics.

Please direct any questions about the evaluation to Katie Palmer du Preez on katie.palmerdupreez@tepou.co.nz.

* 1. Did you attend your workshop online or in person?

- In-person
 Online



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In-person workshops

* 2. Which city was your in-person workshop held in?

- Wellington
 Auckland
 Dunedin
 Other (please specify)
- Rotorua
 Christchurch

3. When did you attend the workshop?

Date / Time

Date

DD/MM/YYYY



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Online workshops

* 4. Which online sessions did you attend? (Please tick all that apply)

- Part one
- Part two
- Part three

5. When was the final session of your online workshop?

Date / Time

Date

DD/MM/YYYY



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Your work setting

* 6. What type of organisation do you work for?

- Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand
- NGO
- Iwi provider
- Other government organisations
- Other type of organisations (please specify)

* 7. Which Te Whatu Ora—Health New Zealand district do you mainly work in?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Te Tai Tokerau | <input type="radio"/> Whanganui |
| <input type="radio"/> Waitematā | <input type="radio"/> Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley |
| <input type="radio"/> Te Toka Tumai Auckland | <input type="radio"/> Te Matau a Māui Hawke's Bay |
| <input type="radio"/> Counties Manukau | <input type="radio"/> Wairarapa |
| <input type="radio"/> Waikato | <input type="radio"/> Waitaha Canterbury |
| <input type="radio"/> Lakes | <input type="radio"/> Te Tai o Poutini West Coast |
| <input type="radio"/> A Toi Bay of Plenty | <input type="radio"/> Nelson Marlborough |
| <input type="radio"/> Tairāwhiti | <input type="radio"/> Southern |
| <input type="radio"/> Taranaki | <input type="radio"/> South Canterbury |
| <input type="radio"/> Te Pae Hauora o Ruahine o Tararua MidCentral | <input type="radio"/> All of New Zealand (national) |

* 8. Which of the following best describes the place where you work

- I work in a community setting
- I work in a clinical setting



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Knowledge, confidence and skills

Please answer the following questions as they relate to your experience before and after the workshop.

* 9. My knowledge of problematic substances, substance use and impacts on people in Aotearoa.

Not knowledgeable A little knowledgeable Somewhat knowledgeable Knowledgeable Very knowledgeable

Before the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				
After the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				

* 10. My knowledge of resources and how to support someone experiencing problematic substance use.

Not knowledgeable A little knowledgeable Somewhat knowledgeable Knowledgeable Very knowledgeable

Before the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				
After the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				

* 11. My knowledge on how to identify someone in withdrawal or considering withdrawal.

Not knowledgeable A little knowledgeable Somewhat knowledgeable Knowledgeable Very knowledgeable

Before the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				
After the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				

* 12. My knowledge of how to refer a person in withdrawal to appropriate pathways.

Not knowledgeable A little knowledgeable Somewhat knowledgeable Knowledgeable Very knowledgeable

Before the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				
After the workshop	<input type="radio"/>				

* 13. My confidence to refer a person with problematic substance use and referral to appropriate pathways.

Not confident A little confident Somewhat confident Confident Very confident

Before the workshop/webinar

After the workshop/webinar



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Statements

* 14. Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly agree

I now have the understanding to develop a harm reduction strategy to support tāngata whai ora (people seeking wellness).

Due to the workshop, I can now initiate referral processes.

The information provided on supporting a person in withdrawal from substances will be useful for my work when required.



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Stigma and discrimination

* 15. Please rate your agreement with the following statements

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly agree

The workshop has improved my ability to recognise stigma and discrimination issues

The workshop has improved my ability to speak up against stigma and discrimination in clinical decision making



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Workshop content, facilitation and resources overall

* 16. Please rate the workshop content, facilitation, and resources overall.

Very poor Poor Neutral Good Very good

Usefulness of content

Cultural relevance of content

Overall workshop facilitation

Usefulness of resources provided

Lived experience co-facilitation of sessions



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General feedback

17. Please comment on your ratings

18. Do you plan to use your learning from this workshop in your work?

Yes

No

No

19. If yes, how do you plan to use your learning in your work?

20. Any suggestions for workshop improvements



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Thank you for taking the survey!

If you have any questions about your participation in the workshop or future workshops that Te Pou conducts, please reach out to Jason Jones on Jason.Jones@tepou.co.nz.

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