

Competencies for the Aotearoa CPSLE workforce

July 2026

Ki te kotahi te kākaho, ka whati; ki te kāpuia, e kore e whati

**When we stand alone, we are vulnerable,
but together we are unbreakable.**

(Kingi Tūkāroto Matutaera Pōtatau Te Wherowhero Tāwhiao

- Reference in Elder, 2020, p. 89)^a

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These competencies reflect a collective effort. They carry the voices, insights, and aspirations of many across the sector, and we acknowledge that this work will continue to evolve through ongoing partnership, reflection, and learning in the future.

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a. Elder, H. (2020). *Aroha: Māori wisdom for a contented life lived in harmony with our planet*. Penguin Books New Zealand.

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Foreword

All national mental health and addiction development plans since the 1988 Mason Inquiry report¹ focus on developing the lived experience workforce. This includes developing strategic roles, leadership roles, and face-to-face working roles. The purpose is to ensure all mental health and addiction services bring lived experience voices, guidance and leadership into service development, and the lived experience support workforce grows to give people accessing services nonclinical options and choices from those people who have experienced mental health and addiction challenges, service use, and recovery.

The lived experience workforce began to grow and flourish as roles like consumer advisors, peer support workers, lived experience educators, auditors, advocates and leaders were appointed over time. These roles were initially developed in an ad hoc fashion, responding to local needs and workforce skills available. However, a national hui in 2011 identified general sector confusion around these roles and that their place in systems and services was at times unclear and challenging to understand. It was agreed that the workforce needed to develop its own workforce descriptions of what they do, how they do it, and why they do it. Developing competencies was seen as a way to build workforce identity, provide consistency, and develop robust foundations for workforce development across Aotearoa. It was pivotal for the competencies to come directly from lived experience communities, networks and the workforce, and follow an expansive programme of consultation. In 2014, Dr John Crawshaw launched the first competencies – *Competencies for the New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Service User, Consumer and Peer Support Workforce* (the Competencies).²

Lived experience workers and people supporting the workforce have used the Competencies in many ways. The Competencies began with six values identified as being pivotal to lived experience work, followed by seven overarching competencies for all lived experience roles, and then specialist competencies for consumer advisors and peer support workers.

To ensure the Competencies stayed relevant and fit for purpose for a growing and developing workforce, the Competencies were first refreshed in 2021 following robust consultation processes and forums across the country. Strong feedback from the sector led to the shift in the competencies being brought about, the main changes in language, and strengthening cultural expectations throughout the competencies.

This is the second refresh of the Competencies. The refresh brought opportunities to ensure the Competencies provide a sturdy foundation for diverse people to build their skills on, for employers to understand and provide durable environments for lived and living experience roles to thrive and flourish, and to provide the best, useful options for people and their whānau needing support.

Introduction

This document sets out the competencies required for effective consumer, peer support, and lived experience (CPSLE) mahi in Aotearoa New Zealand. It supports a shared understanding of what effective CPSLE mahi looks like across diverse roles, settings, and levels of influence. It also provides guidance for CPSLE kaimahi, employers, leaders, and partners who work alongside the CPSLE workforce.

The CPSLE workforce includes people whose roles are grounded in lived and living experience of mental health challenges, addiction, recovery, and wellbeing. These roles recognise lived and living experience as a valued form of expertise that strengthens relationships, informs mahi, and contributes to consistent, more responsive, and equitable services and systems.

CPSLE kaimahi work across a wide range of contexts in paid and voluntary roles. While many roles sit within specialist mental health and addiction services in NGOs and health services, CPSLE roles are increasingly located in emergency departments, primary health, Kaupapa Māori and cultural organisations, social services, community-based organisations, and system level advisory, leadership, and governance spaces.

This CPSLE Competency Framework builds on the earlier competencies and reflects the continued workforce growth and maturity. It responds to evolving scopes and expectations of CPSLE roles and places a greater emphasis on values-led mahi. The competencies are designed to be used flexibly to support effective and responsive mahi and service development, professional development, reflective practices, workforce planning, and organisational learning and development.

While CPSLE roles vary significantly in function and context, they are united by a commitment to lived and living experience values and to improving outcomes for tāngata whai ora, whānau, and communities. This framework recognises both the diversity of CPSLE roles and the common values, capabilities, and responsibilities that connect them, supporting clarity, consistency, and impact for people accessing services across the workforce.

This CPSLE Competency Framework uses a range of key terms, which are explained in the [glossary](#).

Using this framework and understanding competency levels

This document is designed to support the CPSLE workforce and organisations to understand, apply, and grow capability in lived and living experience roles across Aotearoa.

The competencies are structured across three levels **Essential, Enhanced, and Leadership**, recognising that CPSLE mahi develops over time through experience, reflection, and learning.

- › **Essential** competencies describe the foundational knowledge, skills, and values expected of all CPSLE kaimahi. These support safe, effective, and values-led practice.
- › **Enhanced** competencies reflect increasing confidence and capability in applying CPSLE values in practice, including working independently, using judgement, and contributing to teams and services.
- › **Leadership** competencies describe advanced capability where kaimahi influence practice, support others, and contribute to service and system development.

Progression through these levels is not strictly linear or tied to role titles. Kaimahi may demonstrate different levels across different competencies depending on their role, experience, and context. The framework is designed to be flexible and used in ways that support individual growth, workforce development, and organisational capability.

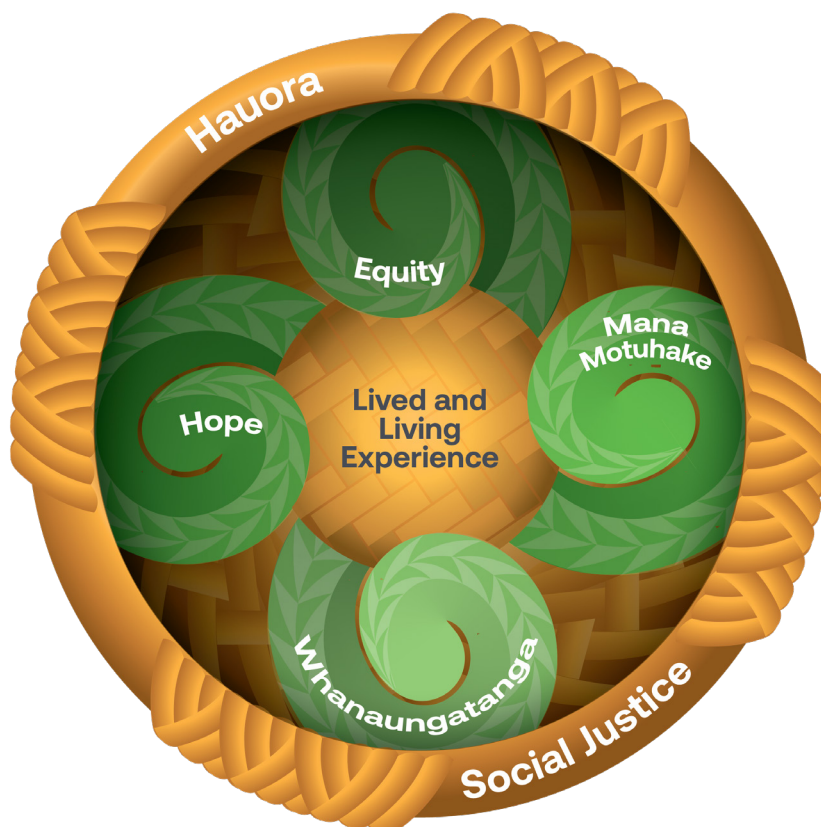
These competencies can be used to support:

- › role clarity and expectation setting
- › reflective practice
- › professional development and career progression
- › recruitment, induction, and performance processes
- › service development and organisational learning.

At all levels, the competencies are grounded in CPSLE values. As capability develops, the depth, confidence, and influence of these values in mahi also grows.

CPSLE workforce values

The values of the CPSLE workforce form the foundation of everything we do. They guide how we walk alongside tāngata whai ora and whānau, and shape how we relate to one another as colleagues, partners, and contributors across the wider health and social sector. These values express our shared commitment to working in ways that use our lived and living experience to support services to be responsive, informed, and focussed, and to support tāngata whai ora to create lives they value. The interwoven basket symbolises the CPSLE workforce values as collectively held and mutually reinforcing. The strength of the basket comes from the weaving together of all values, reflecting how they operate in relationship across practice, roles, and systems.



Lived and living experience sits at the centre of this Values Framework as a foundational value for all mahi. It shapes how CPSLE kaimahi build relationships, offer support, work alongside tāngata whai ora and whānau, and challenge and influence systems and services. Grounded in our experiences of mental health challenges, addiction, recovery, and hauora, it brings authenticity, connection, and credibility to CPSLE mahi. It keeps services honest and focussed on the purpose of their existence to support people and whanau who access services to develop their lives with meaning and purpose.

Encircling the foundational value are four core values: **Mana motuhake, Equity, Whanaungatanga, and Hope**. These values guide CPSLE mahi and describe ways we work alongside tāngata whai ora and whānau, and how we engage with colleagues, partners, and communities across diverse settings.

Encompassing those values are two guiding values of **Social justice and Hauora**. Hauora and Social justice provide the wider context in which the CPSLE workforce supports people and whānau to flourish. These guiding values affirm the value of CPSLE kaimahi, while reinforcing a collective commitment to equity, dignity, and ongoing systems change. Everything we do ultimately aims to ensure tāngata whai ora and whānau get the support they need, when they need it.

Together, the **foundational value, core values, and guiding values** reflect the heart of CPSLE mahi and workforce. These values guide our mahi, outline CPSLE workforce identity, and support the collective movement of the CPSLE workforce across Aotearoa.

Foundational value

Value	Definition	What does this value look like in mahi?
Lived and living experience	Firsthand knowledge, insights and understanding gained through personal life circumstances.	› We value our and others' experiences of mental health challenges, addiction, recovery and wellbeing as the heart of our mahi. › We use lived and living experience deliberately and ethically, carefully choosing when, how, and why experience is shared. › Through partnership, leadership and shared decision making, we ensure lived and living experience guide services, and treatment to create the best outcomes for people and whānau. › We use collective lived and living experience to identify inequity, challenge tokenism and discrimination, and drive genuine system change. › We model reflective and accountable mahi and support others, helping build ethical and purposeful use of lived and living experience.

Core values

Value	Definition	What does this value look like in mahi?
Whanaungatanga	Relationships based on connection, mutuality, and shared responsibility. In CPSLE mahi, it means working alongside people, whānau, colleagues, and communities in ways that build trust, respect, and collaboration, that support meaningful partnerships and shared decision making.	› We build relationships grounded in respect, trust, and shared humanity. › We work alongside people and whānau as partners and experts in their own lives. › We value reciprocity, openness, and clear ethical boundaries in all relationships. › We work to offer choices, shared decision making and self-determination. › We respect diverse experiences and different worldviews. › We work collaboratively with whānau, communities, CPSLE kaimahi, and professionals. › We work honestly and respectfully when navigating differences or challenges in relationships. › We value whanaungatanga that honours lived and living experience.
Hope	Is a commitment to possibility, growth, and change, even in the presence of challenge, uncertainty, or systemic barriers. In CPSLE mahi, hope is grounded, realistic, and relational, supporting people to identify meaningful next steps and sustain belief in their own potential.	› We work with hope that is genuine, realistic, and free from judgement. › We support people to identify what matters to them, recognising their strengths and resilience. › We express hope through our words, presence, and actions. › We maintain hope over time, even when change is slow. › We work with information that supports informed choices and clear understanding. › We value people's authority over their own lives, identities, and hauora journeys. › We work with whānau, especially those identified by tāngata whai ora.

Value	Definition	What does this value look like in mahi?
Mana motuhake	The right of people and communities to embrace their self-determination and autonomy while defining their own aspirations, make informed choices, and exercise authority over their lives and wellbeing.	› We work to provide informed choices by clearly explaining options and supporting understanding and decision making. › We work to uphold people's rights to make their own decisions and support their authority over their own lives, identities, and hauora journeys. › We support self-advocacy so people can speak up, make choices, and exercise authority over their lives and wellbeing. › We support whānau involvement. › We work to challenge practices or systems that undermine people's dignity or autonomy.
Equity	Commitment to fairness in access, experience, and outcomes, recognising that different people and communities face different barriers and therefore need different supports to achieve wellbeing.	› We work to identify and remove barriers to access, partnerships, and outcomes. › We support equity so people and communities can access the support they need and participate fully in ways that work for them. › We work to respond to diverse cultural, social, disability, neurodivergent, and lived and living experience needs. › We challenge prejudice, bias, and discrimination when we see it. › We value respectful and supportive language. › We advocate for access and inclusion. › We work to develop awareness of how assumptions shape our interactions and decisions.

Guiding values

Value	Definition	What does this value look like in mahi?
Hauora	Recognises wellbeing as holistic and interconnected, encompassing physical, emotional, social, spiritual, cultural, and relational dimensions across people and whānau.	› We work towards wellbeing that recognises physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs, and the importance of whānau and community, for others and ourselves. › We work to create environments that support the wellbeing of tāngata whai ora and kaimahi. › We respect diverse cultural understandings of wellbeing and healing. › We work on our own hauora and support others to do the same. › We value hauora-informed thinking in our ways of working.
Social justice	Addresses the social, cultural, political, and systemic conditions that shape wellbeing, access, and outcomes. In CPSLE mahi, it involves challenging inequity beyond individual interactions and working towards fairer systems, structures and policies.	› We understand structural factors like poverty, racism, colonisation, stigma, and policy settings affect wellbeing. › We use lived and living experience knowledge to challenge unjust policies, processes, and system design in all our roles. › We value collective action and support system level change where we can. › We work to improve the experiences of people impacted by mental health challenges, addiction, and service use, through ensuring their experiences are seen and learned from. › We understand the difference between individual advocacy and systemic advocacy and their place within the roles we work in. › We value fairness, dignity, and justice in how systems and services operate.

Together, these values anchor this CPSLE Competency Framework, shaping how we uphold the kaupapa in our mahi. They promote consistent, compassionate, and culturally grounded mahi, improving the collective and singular wellbeing of tāngata whai ora, whānau, and communities, and strengthening the CPSLE workforce's commitment to equity, effective choices and transformation across Aotearoa.

Competency levels

As we develop within our workforce, a combination of knowledge, skills, and experience grows with us. These support us, as kaimahi, to do our mahi with a shared understanding of the kaupapa we are connected to, that has a meaningful impact for the tāngata whai ora and whānau we work with. The levels below (Essential, Enhanced and Leadership) guide expertise across each competency.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Kaimahi at this level are developing an essential understanding of CPSLE mahi, its skills, attitudes and values, and place within the sector.	Kaimahi at this level can confidently demonstrate CPSLE workforce essential competencies, values, concepts, strategies, tools, and practices in their day-to-day mahi.	Kaimahi at this level are in roles that lead, guide, support, educate and strengthen the capability of the CPSLE workforce, and the provision of effective wellbeing choices for tāngata whai ora and whānau.

The CPSLE competencies build on Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika,³ which sets the national expectations for safe, ethical, and effective mahi required for working effectively alongside tāngata whai ora and whānau experiencing addiction and/or mental health challenges. The Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika framework shown here outlines the core values, attitudes, and mahi capabilities required of all kaimahi.

The CPSLE competencies build on this foundation by identifying how these expectations are applied within CPSLE roles. Together, the two frameworks provide a coherent guide: Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika establishes the sector-wide principles, and the CPSLE competencies describe their specific expression within CPSLE mahi.

Pairing this framework with Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika strengthens alignment with sector standards and supports consistent, high-quality mahi.



Real Skills

Working alongside tāngata whai ora
Working alongside tāngata whenua
Working alongside whānau
Working within communities
Challenging discrimination
Applying law, policy, and standards
Maintaining learning and kaimahi wellbeing

Values

Respect
Manaaki
Hope
Kotahitanga
Wellbeing
Whanaungatanga

Attitudes

Compassionate
Genuine
Honest
Open-minded
Optimistic



The competencies at a glance

Below are the CPSLE competencies and primary references that guide them.

CPSLE competencies

Apply to all consumer, peer support, lived experience and whānau roles

1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our mahi⁴
2. Applying lived and living experience^{5,6}
3. Resilience, hope and hauora^{3,6}
4. Continuous learning and professional development^{3,5}
5. Communicating effectively^{3,7}
6. Working with family, whānau and the community^{3,6}
7. Working within teams and systems^{3,6,7}
8. Using a human rights approach^{4,7,8}

CPSLE competencies

1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our mahi

CPSLE workers apply Te Tiriti o Waitangi to uphold mana motuhake, equity, and genuine partnership in all mahi identifying Māori authority, leadership, and wellbeing across relationships, services, and systems.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate understanding and skill development related to: › how colonisation has affected Māori in the past and continues to affect wellbeing, trust in services, and equitable outcomes today › understanding self-advocacy as supporting Māori to speak for themselves, express what matters to them, and exercise rangatiratanga over decisions affecting their lives and wellbeing › Te Tiriti o Waitangi, its articles and principles, and how it guides ethical, fair, and responsible mahi › how power and privilege operate in systems and services, and how these often prioritise non Māori ways of working › the role of mana whenua, local tikanga, and the importance of asking, listening, and seeking guidance › the importance of Māori leadership and working in genuine partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi › recognising Te Tiriti-informed mahi is ongoing and requires continuous learning, reflection, and openness to change.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › apply Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a foundation for equity and partnership to guide everyday mahi › uphold mana motuhake and Te Tiriti partnership by supporting Māori self-advocacy in everyday mahi, creating space for Māori voice, choice, partnership, and decision making › notice when Māori voices or leadership are missing, minimised, or treated as a tickbox, and respond effectively › adjust their approach to better support Māori and engage through suitable and relatable approaches and outcomes › know when to seek guidance or support, such as cultural advice, reflective practice or local Māori knowledge › support implementation of Māori authority and leadership, and speaks up when language, practices, or processes are culturally unsafe or unfair.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › support Te Tiriti o Waitangi in their daily work and encourage teammates and their organisation to work in ways that reflect Māori leadership › strengthen Māori self-advocacy by challenging barriers to rangatiratanga, supporting Māori leadership and authority, and influencing services and systems to uphold Te Tiriti commitments › challenge racism when they see it, in everyday conversations or systems, and support others to speak up so changes can be made › use their lived and living experience to support Te Tiriti-focused work and help improve services and systems.

2. Applying lived and living experience

CPSLE workers apply lived and living experience and knowledge in purposeful, ethical, and useful ways to support tāngata whai ora and whānau, and create service and system improvement.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › lived and living experience as expertise that can be used in different ways, including: › relational support › shared collective insight › challenging prejudice › conveying hope and belief › the importance of consent, privacy, boundaries, and judgement when sharing or using lived and living experience › using safe lived and living experience sharing techniques with integrity and whanaungatanga, being clear about why, when, and how experience is shared › the difference between: › their own personal lived and living experience › whānau lived experience › collective lived and living experience › advocacy or advisory roles › how trauma, bias, and past experiences with systems can affect trust and engagement › what to do if they need reflection and guidance, especially if situations feel complex or challenging.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › use lived and living experience in an intentional way, being clear about why, when and how › use lived and living experience as a core value to guide their work and decisions › use collective lived and living experience insights › use lived experience aligned frameworks and tools in their mahi (such as trauma-informed approaches, sensory modulation, motivational interviewing) › take part in reflective practice to support themselves and their mahi.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › use lived and living experiences in a safe and responsible way, and help others build good judgement and confidence when using their experience › set clear expectations for how lived and living experiences are used, and support safe spaces where people can share their experiences with sensitivity and respect › use shared (collective) lived and living experiences to help improve services, influence systems, and support fairness and inclusion › challenge unfair treatment, exploitation, or discrimination of lived and living experience work, and support respectful and ethical practice › create supportive environments where lived and living experiences are genuinely valued and used in decision making, service design and improvement, policy, and evaluation › mentor and support CPSLE colleagues to use lived and living experiences in ways that are effective, safe, sustainable, and aligned with CPSLE values › contribute to and support organisational learning and development, helping embed lived and living experiences in meaningful and practical ways.

3. Resilience, hope, and hauora

CPSLE workers' mahi sustains tāngata whai ora, whānau and themselves, through developing resilience, holding hope, and developing hauora in holistic and culturally responsive ways. They support wellbeing for tāngata whai ora and whānau in ways that are meaningful to them.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › building resilience through supporting people to recognise their strengths and challenges, and how to look after their wellbeing › holding hope by encouraging belief in change and possibility, even when situations feel very hard or overwhelming › supporting hauora through a holistic approach, recognising and responding to people's physical, emotional, social, spiritual, cultural, and relationship needs › developing awareness of personal wellbeing by noticing how mahi and the use of personal lived experience affects them and taking steps to care for themselves › what boundaries mean for them and how to maintain them › how to use reflective practices to reflect on their experiences and to grow and learn from them › recognising trauma, stress, and burnout in themselves and others, and seeking support or guidance when needed › respectfully using cultural frameworks in mahi and applying culturally appropriate practices that support wellbeing.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › use everyday approaches that support hauora in ways that strengthen resilience, hope, and hauora › ask for what they need to work effectively › use reflective practice to improve their mahi and support wellbeing › communicate hope in ways that are realistic, kind, and appropriate to the situation › support others to identify their strengths › use wellbeing-informed approaches that fit the person's needs and preferences › encourage cultural and community supports through connection with cultural practices, whānau, and communities to strengthen hauora.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › model sustainable CPSLE mahi, including healthy boundaries, self-awareness, and making thoughtful decisions through reflection › support resilience and hope over time by walking alongside others, especially when systems are complex or change is slow › include hauora in everyday thinking by embedding wellbeing priorities into team, organisational, and system level mahi › promote hauora at work by making wellbeing accessible › respond skilfully to challenges seeing them as learning opportunities › provide or guide others to reflective practice that improves their mahi and supports them to be effective › contribute to a positive work culture by encouraging ways of working that see wellbeing as essential to effective CPSLE mahi.

4. Continuous learning and professional development

CPSLE workers engage in ongoing learning and development as part of values-led and accountable mahi to strengthen and sustain their wellbeing and grow lived and living experience capability across the workforce. They value reflective practice and community connection.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › what professional development is and what it looks like for them › the importance of reflective practice to support and develop skills and relationships with CPSLE roles › what their own learning needs are, including their strengths and areas for development › different types of learning, including lived and living experience, research, evidence, and sector knowledge › the role of one's own cultural learning, including relationships with mana whenua and understanding the local context › how learning supports effective mahi, including values-based ways of working, respectful and effective practices.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › engage in regular professional development to strengthen equity, lived experience practice, and culturally responsive mahi › develop and keep a professional development plan with the support of a reflective practitioner, mentor, or team leader › seek reflective practice, that guides CPSLE aligned and values-based mahi › stay connected with CPSLE networks and communities to share learning, insights, and mutual support › bring learning into practice by using relevant research, lived and living experience, and sector knowledge in their mahi › build and maintain cultural learning and connections to support respectful, responsive, and culturally informed relationships.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › show the usefulness of ongoing learning through curiosity, reflection on practices, and encouragement of learning and growth in others › support people to learn by supporting them to identify their learning needs and find development opportunities › identify gaps and needs in CPSLE skills and knowledge and contribute ideas or actions that strengthen shared practices › bring new learning into mahi by using research, evidence, and innovation to improve team or organisational practice from lived experience perspectives › contribute to CPSLE workforce development by supporting others through mentoring, facilitation, education, or leadership roles › support learning friendly environments by encouraging spaces where learning, reflection, and support are valued and provided › strengthen cultural responsiveness by sharing cultural learning and insights in ways that support respectful and culturally supportive practices across teams.

5. Communicating effectively

CPSLE workers communicate in ways grounded in whanaungatanga, equity, and strengths-based practice. They adapt how they communicate to support understanding, partnership, and shared decision making across diverse contexts, relationships, and systems.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › communication that is relationship based, shaped by who is involved, the situation, and the purpose of the conversation › the importance of respectful language, using strengths based communication with others › listening by paying attention, being present, and seeking to understand another person's experience › how culture, identity, age, neurodiversity, language, and lived and living experiences all affect communication needs › clearly explaining their role limits and expectations › supporting people to have choices and autonomy to take part in decisions that affect their lives › the role of tikanga and te reo Māori in communication, knowing when to seek cultural guidance and how to communicate respectfully.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › draw on the values of whanaungatanga and equity while communicating, adjusting language and approach appropriately › listen with care and empathy by paying attention, showing curiosity, and seeking to understand another person's experience › explain information, options, and boundaries in ways that support shared and informed decision making › adapt communication to meet different needs, including trauma-informed, cultural, developmental, disability, and lived and living experience needs › manage challenging situations using calm communication, and de-escalation and negotiation skills › notice communication barriers early and offer practical, mana enhancing ways to support understanding and partnership › take part in tikanga aligned mahi by communicating respectfully and seeking cultural guidance when needed › communicate well with colleagues and other services to support teamwork, shared goals, and continuity of support.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › show clear and respectful communication through using values and trauma-informed language › support people to improve their communication skills › communicate confidently in challenging situations while maintaining trust, safety, and compassion › navigate power dynamics in communication by making sure CPSLE and lived and living experience perspectives are heard, respected, and valued › support strengths based and hauora focused communication by encouraging these approaches across teams and organisations › identify communication needs and barriers early and adapt approaches before issues arise › show effective communication in one to one relationships, teams, and across systems › contribute to positive communication cultures by promoting dignity, inclusion, and shared understanding.

6. Working with family, whānau and community

CPSLE workers recognise the importance of whānau, family, and community in supporting belonging and hauora. They work alongside people to strengthen relationships and connections where wanted, in ways that respect choice, privacy, culture, and diverse understandings of whānau.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › how whānau, family, and community come in many forms, including whakapapa whānau, chosen whānau, friends, and wider support networks › how whānau and community support hauora, and strengthen people to feel connected and strong in their identity › mental health challenges, addiction, and system barriers that can put pressure on relationships and affect whānau dynamics › the importance of consent and privacy, and how whānau expectations about sharing information can differ across cultures, ages, and situations › how culture, identity, and lived and living experiences shape how people connect with their whānau and community › the value of including whānau and community in wellbeing approaches › how to avoid assumptions about who is important in a person's life or who should be involved in their support.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › uphold whanaungatanga and mana motuhake by working with people to understand who they see as whānau › support whanaungatanga by enabling involvement of whānau and chosen supports when this is wanted › handle privacy and confidentiality carefully by helping people to make clear choices about what information is shared, with whom, and why › adapt their mahi to reflect different cultural values, identities, and ways of relating › notice and respond to whānau support needs, offering information or linking them to resources or whānau services when needed › connect people and their whānau to helpful community services, groups, and supports › work alongside community organisations and networks to advocate for supporting inclusion and mutual, ongoing support › use whānau inclusive approaches and frameworks where available to support hauora and holistic wellbeing.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › ensure meaningful whānau and community inclusion › support teams and organisations to better understand and respond to different whānau structures, strengths, and needs › identify and address barriers that limit whānau and community engagement within services and systems › show ethical and respectful practice when working through complex situations involving privacy, consent, or different viewpoints › use lived and living experience insights to improve how services work with whānau and communities › build and strengthen partnerships with community organisations, iwi, and cultural groups to support whānau wellbeing › support reflective practice and learning that strengthens whānau centred approaches and collective wellbeing.

7. Working within teams and systems

CPSLE workers navigate and contribute to teams and systems in ways that uphold lived experience values, equity, and whanaungatanga, supporting collaboration, accountability, and meaningful lived and living experience influence within organisational and system contexts.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › the different roles and responsibilities within teams, organisations, and the wider mental health and addiction system › legislation, policies and standards relevant to their work › their role in a multidisciplinary team, and how CPSLE values differ from, and complement other roles › the importance of working in collaboration, shared learning, and respectful communication in team environments › how positive feedback and reflection help build trust, learning, and a healthy team culture.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › work with colleagues in ways that uphold lived experience values and equity, while recognising different roles › use laws, policies, and standards in their mahi by applying them through a lived and living experience and rights-based lens to make decisions › identify when systems or processes create barriers, inequity, or culturally unsafe practice and respond constructively › navigate power within teams by supporting lived and living experience perspectives to be heard and included in decision making › communicate clearly and respectfully in teams to support shared understanding and consistent ways of working › give and receive strengths based feedback that supports learning, safety, and effective teamwork › take part in development and leadership opportunities within teams and organisations.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › encourage collaboration, accountability, and respect in teams › advocate for organisational policies, practices, and structures that actively uphold CPSLE values, equity, and social justice › support the growth and development of lived and living experience leadership within the organisation › contribute to service and system improvement by using lived and living experiential knowledge and perspectives in review, co-design and evaluation of services and processes › mentor and support CPSLE workers to work effectively and confidently within teams, organisations, and systems › challenge unfair or unsafe practice by responding respectfully › strengthen organisational capability by embedding lived and living experience roles and perspectives across the organisation.

8. Using a human rights approach

CPSLE workers protect and promote human rights as an expression of equity, dignity, and social justice.

They support people and whānau to understand, exercise, and uphold their rights, and work to strengthen rights-based mahi within services, organisations, and systems.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
CPSLE workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › what human rights approaches are and why they are important in supporting fairness, safety, and wellbeing › key human rights principles, including treating people as equals, recognising and respecting people's autonomy › the rights of people using health and addiction services › how self-advocacy supports people to understand their rights, express their views, make informed choices, and take part in decisions that affect them › the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights and how these rights apply to everyday decisions and interactions › how to support people to advocate for themselves › the role of CPSLE and whānau advocacy, and how advocacy protects rights and supports people to have their needs met › what stigma, discrimination, prejudice, and human rights breaches are, and how these can harm people, limit choice, and affect wellbeing › how laws, policies, and organisational practices can either protect people's rights or contribute to unfair or harmful treatment › the difference between individual and system responses, identifying when systems or services are failing to uphold rights for groups of people.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate how they actively: › use a human rights approach in all mahi › support people and whānau to exercise mana motuhake through self-advocacy by helping them understand their rights, raise concerns, make complaints, and express what matters to them in ways that feel safe and meaningful › support people and whānau to understand they have rights and the options available to them › use the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights to guide decisions, actions, and advocacy › are aware when rights may be at risk or not upheld and respond in useful and supportive ways › support people to give feedback or make complaints › challenge stigma, discrimination, and coercive practices using CPSLE values and human rights principles › balance advocacy with respect for the person's wishes, safety, and right to self-determination › reflect on power dynamics and how this can affect people's rights, wellbeing and autonomy.	CPSLE workers can demonstrate skills which: › show respect for dignity, choice, and fairness › strengthen self-advocacy by promoting rights-based environments, reducing barriers and improving access to advocacy supports across services and communities › encourage others to work in rights-based, non-discriminatory ways › support organisations to embed human rights into policies, procedures, and mahi › ensure accessible complaints processes that are clear, trustworthy and include responding and reporting back to the complainant › ensure lived and living experience perspectives and expertise guide rights-based service improvement › identify patterns of rights issues and address them at all system levels › contribute to organisational and system change that strengthens rights protection and eliminates coercive practices › develop and maintain equitable access to advocacy and rights-based supports across services and communities.

Peer support workers

In addition to the core CPSLE competencies, the following apply specifically to the role of peer support workers. These competencies reflect the distinctive purpose, values, and practices of peer support, which are grounded in mutuality, shared lived experience, and intentional, relational practice.

1. Peer support – reciprocal relationships

Peer support relationships are grounded in mutuality, shared humanity, and reciprocal learning. Peer support workers recognise that support is not one way, and that meaningful connection is built through respect, authenticity, and shared power rather than professional authority.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Peer support workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › peer support as a relationship based on mutuality and equality, not service delivery or hierarchy › how power can show up in peer relationships, and the responsibility to minimise imbalance › the difference between reciprocity and overinvolvement or loss of boundaries › how shared lived experience can support connection without requiring sameness of stories or outcomes › the role of positive risk-taking in supporting growth, autonomy, and wellbeing.	Peer support workers can demonstrate how they actively: › build authentic, trust-based relationships grounded in shared humanity › use mutuality intentionally, contributing to relationships while maintaining clear and ethical boundaries › treat people as equals, avoiding expert-driven or directive approaches › support positive risk-taking that aligns with people's self-determined goals › create safe and inclusive environments where people can share experiences without pressure or judgement.	Peer support workers can demonstrate skills which: › model mutual, respectful peer relationships within teams and organisations › support others to understand and practise reciprocity without blurring roles or responsibilities › promote organisational approaches that protect the integrity of peer relationships › encourage cultures where shared learning, equality, and trust are valued.

2. Peer support – purposeful approach

Peer support workers intentionally support people to identify hope, meaning, and direction in ways that are led by the person and responsive to their context. Purpose in peer support is defined by the person, not by service goals or external expectations.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Peer support workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › hope, meaning, and aspiration as self-defined and changeable over time › how goals may look different for different people and may shift as circumstances change › the role of reflection and conversation, not fixing or directing in supporting purpose › the importance of documenting and reflecting on people's perspectives collaboratively.	Peer support workers can demonstrate how they actively: › support people to identify what matters to them and what feels meaningful in their lives › walk alongside people as they access resources or opportunities aligned with their aspirations › reflect with people on strengths, learning, and change over time › collaborate on plans and notes in ways that keep people's voices central › hold hope, recognising effort and progress without imposing expectations.	Peer support workers can demonstrate skills which: › model a purposeful, hope-holding approach that honours diverse life paths › support teams to adopt strengths-based and person-centred approaches grounded in hope, capability, and possibility › promote organisational practices that centre on people's aspirations and perspectives › encourage learning from challenge, as well as success.

3. Peer support – peer support in practice

Peer support workers apply peer models, tools, and practices that support hauora, self-advocacy, and autonomy. They uphold the distinct identity of peer support while adapting practice to context.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Peer support workers demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › core values and competencies of peer support › the role and boundaries of peer support workers › peer tools and approaches that support mana motuhake and hauora › how different peer support models and settings shape practice › the importance of supported decision making in peer contexts.	Peer support workers can demonstrate how they actively: › apply peer-led tools and approaches in ways that align with peer values › adapt peer support practice to different contexts while maintaining its integrity › support people to advocate for themselves and make informed choices › work confidently across different peer settings and programmes › use reflective practice to guide ethical, sustainable peer support.	Peer support workers can demonstrate skills which: › model high quality and values-centred peer support practice › support others to understand the distinct purpose of peer support roles › contribute to the development of peer-led tools, resources, or practice guidance › promote organisational understanding of peer support principles and boundaries › strengthen the visibility and credibility of peer support within services and systems › demonstrate a strong relationship with reflective practice.

Lived experience advisory and strategic roles

In addition to the core CPSLE competencies, the following apply specifically to **lived experience advisory and strategic roles**. These roles use lived and living experience knowledge; personal, collective, and community based, to influence systems, services, policy, and decision making. The focus of these roles is not personal support, but **partnership, influence, accountability, and change**.

1. Lived experience advisory and strategic roles – strategic viewpoint

Lived experience advisory and strategic roles contribute to improved equity, quality, and outcomes by ensuring lived experience perspectives meaningfully shape organisational and system decisions.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Lived experience advisory and strategic roles demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › the purpose of lived experience advisory and strategic roles in influencing systems, services, and policy › the distinction between personal lived experience, collective lived experience, and representative or mandated advisory roles › the difference between individual and systemic advocacy › how power, hierarchy, governance structures, and funding settings shape decision making › how lived experience input can be tokenised, sidelined, or misused, and why safeguards matter › the importance of consent, mandate, and ethical representation when holding and sharing collective insights › the role of advisory work in addressing discrimination, stigma, and inequity at the system level.	Lived experience advisory and strategic roles can demonstrate how they actively: › gather, analyse, and communicate collective lived experience insights to inform decisions and recommendations › apply strategic thinking to connect lived experience feedback to service design, policy, and quality improvement › work within governance, advisory, or leadership spaces to influence priorities, agendas, and decisions › use lived experience knowledge to identify inequities and propose practical, values-aligned improvements › navigate differing perspectives respectfully while maintaining the integrity of lived experience input › clarify mandate, consent, and representation when speaking into advisory or strategic spaces › recognise and respond to power dynamics that limit genuine partnership or influence › build constructive relationships with leaders, decision-makers, and partners while remaining independent and values based.	Lived experience advisory and strategic roles can demonstrate skills which: › strengthen organisational and system accountability to lived experience input › influence policy, service design, commissioning, funding priorities, and evaluation in ways that uphold equity and rights › use lived experience evidence to challenge ineffective, harmful, or inequitable practices › support organisations to move beyond consultation toward shared authority and co-decision making › build structures and processes that embed lived experience leadership sustainably › mentor others in advisory and strategic roles to navigate complexity, power, and accountability › model ethical, credible, and strategic lived experience leadership across systems.

2. Lived experience advisory and strategic roles – partnership and leadership

Lived experience advisory roles ensure meaningful participation and leadership at every level of the system effectively influences service planning, implementation and evaluation.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Lived experience advisory and strategic roles demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › partnership as more than involvement, and including influence, decision making, and accountability › principles of co-design, partnership, and shared leadership › the responsibilities that come with lived experience leadership roles › effective methods for gathering, analysing, and feeding back lived experience insights › how governance, quality, and accountability processes operate › the role of the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights and human rights frameworks in our mahi.	Lived experience advisory and strategic roles can demonstrate how they actively: › support co-design, advisory, and consultation processes that are accessible, inclusive, and ethical › use effective methods to collect and synthesise lived experience input › ensure lived experience perspectives are clearly represented and not diluted or reframed without consent › apply rights-based frameworks to partnership and decision making processes › work with organisations to strengthen feedback loops and demonstrate how lived experience input informs outcomes › support leadership development among CPSLE kaimahi and communities.	Lived experience advisory and strategic roles can demonstrate skills which: › embed effective partnership and lived experience leadership across organisational structures › influence governance, planning, and quality processes to centre lived experience authority › support accountability for acting on lived experience input and reporting back on outcomes › build capability across services to engage ethically and meaningfully with lived experience leadership › strengthen lived experience presence and influence at local, regional, and national levels › model leadership that is grounded in values, integrity, and collective accountability.

3. Lived experience advisory and strategic roles – service improvement

Lived experience advisory and strategic roles contribute to continuous improvement by translating lived experience knowledge into practical, measurable change.

Essential	Enhanced	Leadership
Lived experience advisory and strategic roles demonstrate an understanding and skill development related to: › principles of service improvement, evaluation, and organisational change › how lived experience insights can inform quality measures, outcomes, and learning › the role of lived experience educators, evaluators, and advisors in building workforce capability › ethical considerations when using lived experience data and stories › how system constraints can affect change and how to work within and challenge them.	Lived experience advisory and strategic roles can demonstrate how they actively: › participate in service improvement, evaluation, and change initiatives › apply lived experience knowledge to identify gaps, risks, and opportunities › use qualitative and thematic analysis to translate lived experience into clear recommendations › support education and learning that strengthens CPSLE aligned practice › contribute lived experience perspectives to recruitment, mentoring, and performance processes.	Lived experience advisory and strategic roles can demonstrate skills which: › lead or significantly influence service and system improvement initiatives › support organisations to use lived experience measures effectively › promote lived experience-led education, evaluation, and research › strengthen workforce development, sustainability, and leadership pathways › draw on lived experience perspectives to influence governance, planning and quality processes › demonstrate credible and strategic leadership grounded in lived experience values.

Glossary

Advocacy: In the CPSLE context, involves supporting individuals, whānau and communities to understand, uphold, and exercise their rights, and to influence decisions that affect them. In CPSLE mahi, advocacy is grounded in consent, partnership, and shared power, and may occur at individual, service, or system levels.

CPSLE (Consumer, Peer Support, and Lived Experience): An umbrella term describing roles grounded in lived and living experience of mental health challenges, addiction, recovery, and wellbeing, including peer support, advocacy, advisory, education, research, and leadership roles.

Collective lived and living experience: Knowledge and insight drawn from shared experiences across groups or communities, rather than from a single individual's story. Collective lived and living experience is used to identify patterns, inform service improvement, and support system level change.

Consent: An informed, voluntary, and ongoing agreement about partnership, involvement, or information sharing. In CPSLE mahi, consent includes clarity of purpose, respect for boundaries, and the right to change or withdraw consent.

Equity: Fairness in access, experience, and outcomes, recognising that different people and communities face different barriers and may require different supports to achieve wellbeing.

Hauora: A holistic understanding of wellbeing that includes physical, emotional, social, spiritual, cultural, and relational dimensions, for individuals and whānau.

Lived experience: Knowledge and understanding gained through direct personal experience of mental health, addiction, recovery, and wellbeing. Lived experience may include, but does not require, interaction with services or systems.

Lived and living experience: A term recognising lived experience as both historical and ongoing, acknowledging that people continue to learn, hold knowledge, and develop insight through current experiences over time.

Mana motuhake: The right of people and communities to embrace their self-determination and autonomy while defining their own aspirations, make informed choices, and exercise authority over their lives and wellbeing. It includes the right to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from experience with dignity and support.

Peer support: A values-based approach grounded in mutuality, shared humanity, and lived and living experience. Peer support is relational rather than clinical and emphasises equality, hope, self-determination, and reciprocal learning.

Peer support worker: A CPSLE role that draws on lived and living experience to work alongside others through reciprocal, peer-based relationships that support connection, hope, autonomy, and wellbeing.

Power: The ability to influence decisions, access resources, and shape outcomes. In CPSLE mahi, power is recognised as operating at interpersonal, organisational, cultural, and system levels, and is actively reflected on and addressed.

Reciprocity: A relational mahi where learning, respect, and contribution flow both ways.

In CPSLE contexts, reciprocity supports mutual connection without removing boundaries or creating obligation.

Reflective practice: Intentional processes of reflection and learning that support self-awareness, ethical decision making, accountability, and continuous improvement in CPSLE interactions and day-to-day mahi.

Social justice: An approach that addresses the broader social, cultural, political, and systemic conditions that contribute to inequity, discrimination, and exclusion. In CPSLE mahi, social justice focuses on structural change beyond individual situations.

System level change: Changes to policies, governance, funding, structures, or service design that affect how systems operate, rather than changes limited to individual mahi or interactions.

Tāngata whai ora: A Māori term commonly used to refer to people seeking wellbeing and recovery, emphasising strength, agency, and aspiration.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The founding agreement between Māori and the Crown. In CPSLE mahi, Te Tiriti o Waitangi guides partnership, participation, active protection, and accountability in all ways of working.

Tokenised: Apparent inclusion or consultation without meaningful influence, authority, or resourcing. Tokenism occurs when input is sought but not acted upon.

Whānau: Family and kinship networks, including whakapapa whānau, chosen whānau, and other significant relationships as defined by the person.

Whanaungatanga: Relationships grounded in mutual respect, shared humanity, and reciprocity. In CPSLE mahi, whanaungatanga supports trust, collaboration, partnership, and shared power.

Appendix: Mapping competencies to key reference frameworks

This section identifies the primary reference frameworks that inform each CPSLE competency. These references provide alignment and context and are not intended to be prescriptive.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our mahi

Primary references

- › Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Aotearoa New Zealand founding agreement)
- › United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Applying lived and living experience

Primary references

- › He Ara Oranga — Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2018)
- › Mā Te Rongo Ake — Initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (2021)

Resilience, hope, and hauora

Primary references

- › Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika — Te Pou
- › He Ara Oranga — Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2018)

Continuous learning and professional development

Primary references

- › Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika — Te Pou
- › Mā Te Rongo Ake — Initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (2021)

Communicating effectively

Primary references

- › Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights
- › Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika — Te Pou

Working with whānau and community

Primary references

- › He Ara Oranga — Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2018)
- › Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- › Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika — Te Pou

Working within teams and systems

Primary references

- › Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights
- › He Ara Oranga — Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2018)
- › Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika — Te Pou

Using a human rights approach

Primary references

- › United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- › Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights
- › United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

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