

Towards *Mental Health...*

2.0 TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH *And Wellbeing*

The following section outlines the vision, values, principles, goals and priority actions of *Building on Strengths*. It describes the desired outcomes of mental health promotion. Later sections describe the means by which the vision and goals will be achieved.

2.1 VISION

The vision of *Building on Strengths* is to ‘achieve maximum levels of positive mental health and wellbeing’.

2.2 VALUES

Openness and Even-handedness

- People are accorded respect, dignity and the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and discrimination.

Community Participation

- Every community and its members, regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender, age, economic and social status or sexual orientation, have the right to fully participate in society generally and in their own particular society.

Passion

- The combination of wisdom and scientific knowledge are valuable in promoting resilience and supportive environments.

Understanding

- Diversity and differences are celebrated and it should be acknowledged that people with mental illness can recover and live healthy productive lives.

Innovation

- People can expect to have access to high-quality, community-based, culturally appropriate, integrated systems of mental health promotion programmes.

Empowerment

- People are able to exercise more control over and take responsibility for, making a positive difference to their mental health and wellbeing.

Co-operation and Trust

- Alliances across the health and other sectors are essential to the achievement of mental health for all.

2.3 PRINCIPLES

The work to develop and implement a mental health promotion strategy is underpinned by a set of principles. The principles of *Building on Strengths* necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Health Strategy. These are:

- Acknowledging the special relationship between Māori and the Crown under the Treaty of Waitangi.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing for all New Zealanders throughout their lives.

- An improvement in health status of those currently disadvantaged.
- Collaborative health promotion by all sectors.
- Timely and equitable access for all New Zealanders to a comprehensive range of health and disability services regardless of ability to pay.
- A high-performing system in which people can have confidence.
- Active involvement of consumers and communities at all levels.

In addition to these principles, work in mental health promotion is based on the additional principles listed below.

Collaboration:

- It is important that the sector works in ways that build on the strengths of individually focus and, identified community and current population-based mental health promotion work.
- It is important that all national strategy activity, across sectors, contributes to improved mental health and wellbeing.

Strengthen Communities:

- All action will be consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi.
- All action will contribute to a social climate that values the contributions of a culturally diverse society.
- Building communities is beneficial to enhancing community mental health and wellbeing.
- All action will promote human potential and social justice.

Integration:

- Mental health is a component of all health-advancing systems and activities.
- It is important to share knowledge about ways to reduce inequalities in mental health.

People-centred:

- It is important, when reducing mental health problems, to put people first.
- People have a right to be involved in determining their future.

2.4 GOALS

The three goals of *Building on Strengths* aim to:

1. Reduce the inequalities in mental health that are experienced by some groups.
2. Create environments that are supportive of positive mental health.
3. Improve individual and community resiliency skills.

2.5 PRIORITY *Actions*

The goals will be achieved by implementing the following five action streams. These actions are detailed on page 28.

1. **Reorient health services** to reduce inequalities between socioeconomic groups.
2. **Strengthen community action** in mental health promotion activity and create opportunities for improved access to mental health promotion services.
3. **Create safe and supportive environments** through alliances that foster health promoting, supportive environments in cities, communities, workplaces, schools and homes.
4. **Develop personal skills** by emphasising mental health protective factors (Appendix 3) such as resiliency, social support and life skills development.
5. **Build healthy public policy** through improved research and evaluation to identify and address mental health promotion needs.

2.6 OUTCOMES

Individual

Increased resiliency and life skills development (e.g. self-esteem, mastery, sense of coherence).

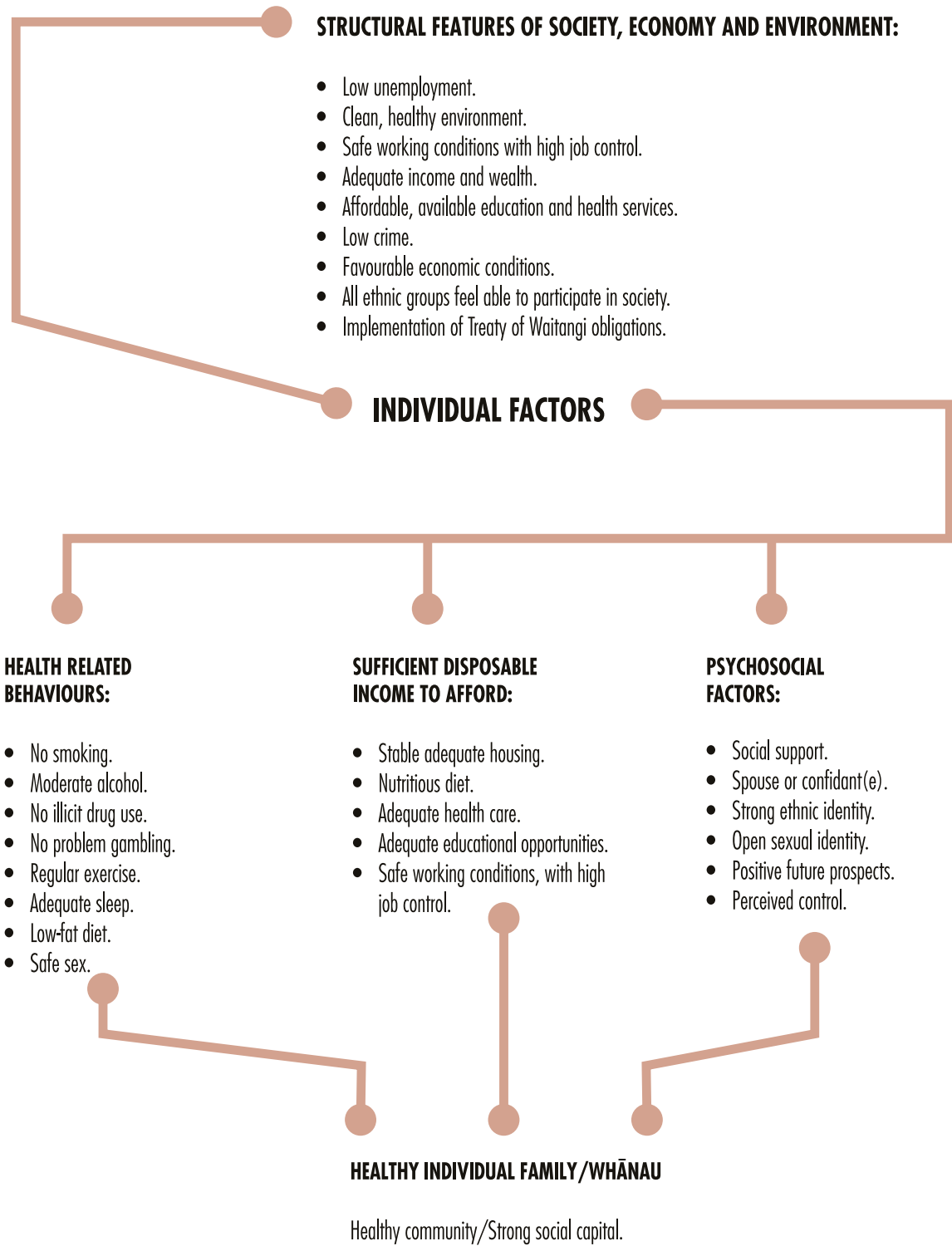
Community

Improved access to mental health promotion services, safe environments, increased social networks, social support and cohesive communities.

Sectoral

Mental health-promoting policies, partnerships and programmes to reduce structural barriers to mental health.

Figure 3: **MODEL OF THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC *determinants of health***
 Reproduced from: Howden-Chapman P, Tobias M. 2000. *Social Inequalities in Health: New Zealand 1999*.
 Wellington: Ministry of Health.



Note: Points indicate probable causality.