

# Moving Forward

## 6.0 MOVING Forward

*Building on Strengths* actions will build on existing work and give a strategic focus to the further development of mental health promotion activity in New Zealand over the next five years.

The new approach to mental health promotion builds a case for investment in mental health promotion and a place of higher priority on the public health and health promotion agenda. The approach aims to:

- Focus on the links between positive mental health and the determinants of health.
- Provide information and data on factors that influence the mental health status of New Zealanders.
- Emphasise the need for intersectoral and multidisciplinary approaches to planning, implementation and evaluation of mental health promotion initiatives.
- Identify the structures and resources needed at a national and district level to support and sustain mental health promotion development.

Public health and mental health together have increasingly important roles to play in promoting mental health. Because mental health is the result of so many interacting factors and because there is no single way to promote mental health, a number of options are needed to reflect the diversity of mental health needs, the settings that apply and the population health gains expected.

In order to achieve long-term improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of New Zealanders it is clear that increased investment of resources will be essential to repeat and build on successes like the 'Like Minds Like Mine' programme. This can occur only when other sectors, and not just health, recognise the social, economic and health benefits of promoting improved mental health. Growing awareness of the links between the determinants of health and mental wellbeing certainly strengthen the case for greater collaboration and co-operation across sectors.

The Ministry of Health has already committed funding to a very wide range of mental health promotion initiatives and individual projects. A major task of this strategy is to demonstrate that mental health promotion can contribute to a wide variety of health promoting government sector agendas.

Priorities for further development of mental health promotion will take into account the need to improve mental health and make social gains for people who are disadvantaged or who are from lower socioeconomic groups. *Building on Strengths* lays the foundation for mental health programmes, that can be monitored, evaluated and developed over the long term to meet the needs of these people. Specifically, programmes will:

- Develop coping skills (e.g. relationship, communication).
- Promote social support and networks (e.g. supporting positive and healthy role models, increasing access to information, providing opportunities to participate in promotional activities, addressing intentional injury and domestic violence).

- Address structural barriers to mental health in all sectors, including health, education, housing and employment.

Mental health promotion has made some notable gains over the past few years. Upon this platform *Building on Strengths* will assist to inform the future directions of, and serve as a resource and guide to action for, the Ministry of Health, District Health Boards, providers and their organisations for the next five years.