

An EARLY MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE for New Zealanders

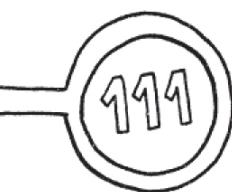
A dedicated new phone service is being implemented to get faster and more appropriate help to people in psychological distress who call 111 and ask for Police.

Homecare Medical, provider of the National Telehealth Service has been commissioned by the Ministry of Health to operate the service, known as Early Mental Health Response.

Using clear guidelines, 111 Police call handlers identify calls that would be best managed by the new mental health response line instead of having a Police response. The line is staffed by experienced mental health nurses who can ensure callers get the right help at the right time, either directly on the phone or through referral to local support agencies.

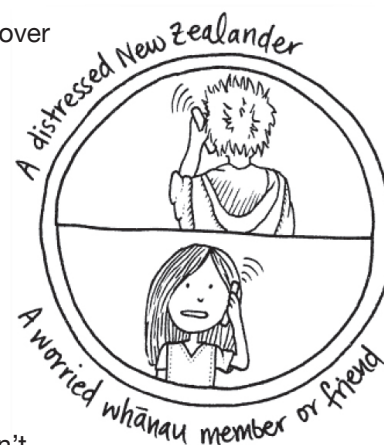
Designed with input from people who have contacted 111 in times of mental health distress, implementation of the service begins in the Counties Manukau DHB area in April 2017, with rollout across New Zealand scheduled by the end of the year.

When fully operational it is estimated that the service will provide support to over 30,000 people a year.



Who is it for?

A large number of calls are made to 111 from, or on behalf of, people in mental distress – often people at risk of suicide. These callers often don't need an emergency response but they do need fast and appropriate care and support.



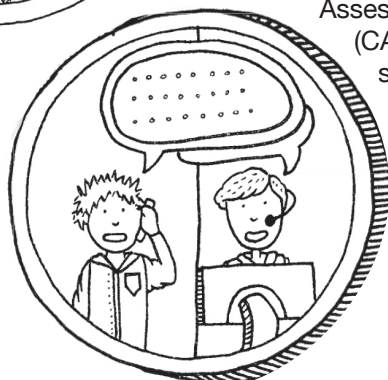
Why?

People experiencing mental health distress or their families/whānau often don't need a Police response but are not sure where else they can turn for help. The new service will ensure people who call 111 in these situations get faster and more appropriate access to the care and support they need. It will also free up demand on Police and other emergency services.



How?

The mental health nurse will listen to the caller and then ensure they are triaged to receive the right support according to their needs. This could include a referral to community or secondary mental health services, including DHB Crisis, Assessment and Treatment (CAT) teams or local NGO support agencies. In some instances it may involve creating a support plan directly with the caller and/or family.



Benefits of the service

- ✓ People in mental distress get faster and more direct access to culturally appropriate clinical support 24/7 through one phone call
- ✓ Through targeted intervention and referral to local support, issues are less likely to escalate
- ✓ People with mental health problems, families and carers have consistent and equitable access to triage and referral

The Early Mental Health Response Service

A distressed New Zealander



111



Free



24/7

New Zealanders experiencing mental health distress – or their concerned family, whānau or friends – call 111.

If the police operator determines there is no immediate emergency, they will connect a mental health nurse to the call.



The mental health nurse will work with the caller to create a support plan for them.

Options in the support plan could include:



Referral to local mental health services



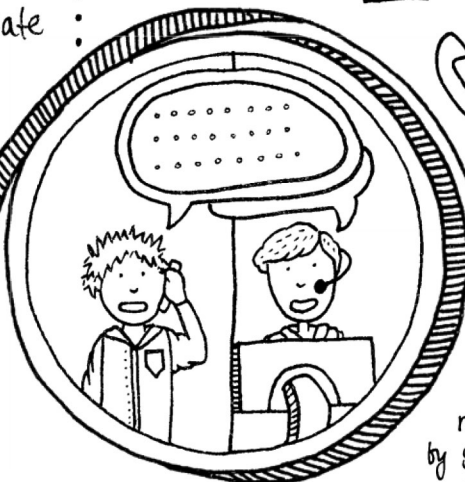
Plans and coping strategies



Phone counselling and peer support



Online tools and resources



At the end of the call, the caller can receive their support plan by SMS. The mental health nurse may arrange a follow-up.