

Position Paper

Let's get real and the Health and Disability Services Standards

Introduction

The position paper¹ is for managers and leaders in the mental health and addiction sector. It discusses how *Let's get real* supports the intent of the Health and Disability Services Standards (the Standards), and how the use of *Let's get real* assists services in demonstrating a number of the Standards in practice.

The Standards outline the requirements for all organisations that are subject to the Health and Disability Services Act (2001). *Let's get real* is a systemic approach that provides tools and learning modules to build both individual knowledge and skills and improve organisational performance. When a service implements *Let's get real* across all organisational systems and processes, it will be greatly assisted to meet the Core Standards. *Let's get real* can therefore support a service to achieve the Ministry of Health audit requirements.

Whilst not discussed in this paper, the Nationwide Service Specification Framework states the type of contracted services and the lines of accountability for service delivery. Tier one outlines the mandatory component of service contracts for mental health and addiction services. It includes the objective 'Develop workforce' and identifies *Let's get real* as a framework to achieve this. *Let's get real* can therefore assist a service to meet this contractual requirement.

Let's get real supports the intent of the Standards

Figure 1 provides an overview of *Let's get real* for those unfamiliar with the framework. *Let's get real* supports the key philosophies and intent of the Standards as outlined in the General and Core Standards: Consumer Rights, Māori Health, Community Inclusion, Recovery. This is described below in Table 1.

1 – This position paper presents Te Pou's view on the relationship between the Disability Services Standards and *Let's get real*

Overview of *Let's get real*

Let's get real is a framework for the mental health and addiction workforce. It describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes required to deliver effective mental health and addiction services.

Let's get real is made up of seven Real Skills:

1. Working with service users
2. Working with Māori
3. Working with families/whānau
4. Working within communities
5. Challenging stigma and discrimination
6. Law, policy and practice
7. Professional and personal development

Each of the seven Real Skills has a broad definition and three levels of performance indicators for the following three levels:

- essential - for everyone working in mental health and addiction services
- practitioner - for clinicians who have worked in a service for at least two years
- leader - for people who are in management and/or clinical leadership positions

Values and Attitudes:

Let's get real is underpinned by essential values and attitudes that run throughout the Real Skills.

- Values - Respect, Human Rights, Service, Recovery, Communities, Relationships
- Attitudes - Compassionate and caring, Genuine, Honest, Non-judgemental, Open-minded, Optimistic, Patient, Professional, Resilient, Supportive, Understanding

Enablers:

A number of enablers (tools and learning modules) have been developed to support services in implementing *Let's get real*

1. **A Guide for Managers and Leaders** - a tool that supports managers and leaders to utilise *Let's get real* and the enablers.
2. **Team Planning Tool** - for services to use when developing a workforce plan to upskill teams in the Real Skills.
3. **Human Resources Tool** - a tool for services to integrate *Let's get real* into existing human resource systems and processes.
4. **Learning modules for the seven Real Skills** - 23 self-directed learning modules freely available for the workforce in each of the Real Skills, and the values and attitudes. These can also be used in group or team training.
5. **Education Tool** - for education and training providers to integrate *Let's get real* into education and training programmes.

Figure 1. An overview of *Let's get real* for those unfamiliar with the framework

<i>Let's get real</i> supports the intent of the Standards			
Key Philosophy in the Standards	Focus in <i>Let's get real</i>	Relevant Real Skills	Relevant <i>Let's get real</i> enablers
Consumer Rights - <i>The Code of Health and Disabilities Services Consumers Rights (1996)</i> (the Code) is central to the Standards.	<i>Let's get real</i> is a service user centred approach to deliver effective services. It is underpinned by a set of values and attitudes that include human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities Challenging stigma and discrimination Law, policy and practice 	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values and attitudes Working with service users Law, policy and practice
Māori health - The Standards focus on improving accessibility, providing appropriate services for Māori and whānau involvement in health decisions	<i>Let's get real</i> requires that every person working in mental health and addiction contributes to whānau ora for Māori.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities Challenging stigma and discrimination Law, policy and practice Professional and personal development 	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities Challenging stigma and discrimination Law, policy and practice Professional and personal development
Community Inclusion - The Standards support the NZ Disability Strategy (2001), which presents a long-term plan for changing New Zealand from a disabling society to an inclusive society.	<i>Let's get real</i> recognises the role of stakeholder engagement in the planning and delivery of services with a particular emphasis on service users, Māori, families/whānau and local communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities Challenging stigma and discrimination 	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities Challenging stigma and discrimination
Recovery - The Standards incorporate, where possible, the principles and practices of recovery.	'Recovery' is one of the values underpinning the <i>Let's get real</i> framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau 	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values and attitudes Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau

Table 1. How *Let's get real* supports the intent of the Standards

Let's get real can support a service to meet the Core Standards

Let's get real can provide practical assistance to a service in meeting many of the Core Standards. A number of examples are discussed below, followed by a summary chart (Table 2).

Standard 1.4 - Recognition of Māori Values and Beliefs: This Standard requires that Māori have their health and disability needs met in a manner that respects and acknowledges their individual and cultural values and beliefs. The Real Skills 'Working with Māori', 'Working with families/whānau' and 'Working within communities' assist a service to meet this Standard. For example, The Real Skill 'Working with Māori' describes how all people working in a service need to have a knowledge of Te reo Māori, to acknowledge the role of traditional healing processes and understand the significance of whānau relationships to tangata whaiora on their journey to recovery.

Standard 1.5 - Recognition of Pacific Values and Beliefs: This Standard recognises the importance of relationships at all levels to Pacific service users. *Real Skills plus Seitapu: Engaging Pasifika* is a Pacific cultural competency framework and an applied training package aimed at the mainstream health workforce to support better engagement with Pacific service users and their families. Evidence suggests that initial engagement with Pacific people is crucial to their ongoing participation in a service, and *Real Skills plus Seitapu* outlines the steps required to assist this engagement. Building knowledge and skills in the areas identified in this document, such as family, language and tapu, will assist services to reflect this Standard.

Standard 1.6 - Recognition of Culture, Values and Beliefs: This Standard requires that consumers receive culturally safe services which recognise and respect their ethnic, cultural, spiritual values, and beliefs. Evidence suggests that when staff reflect on their own personal values and attitudes, they are more able to recognise and respect the values and attitudes held by service users (Fulford and Woodbridge, 2008). The values and attitudes included in *Let's get real* underpin the performance indicators in the Real Skills. This promotes staff reflection on their values and attitudes and an understanding of how these may impact on their work.

Standard 1.7 - Discrimination: This Standard requires that service users are free from any discrimination, coercion, harassment, sexual, financial or other exploitation. Performance indicators for the Real Skill 'Challenging stigma and discrimination' require staff to learn to recognise and actively challenge stigma and discrimination in their everyday practice. Leaders are required to support this process by ensuring they and their staff engage in non-discriminatory practices, and provide education and support on this to other services and communities.

Standard 1.8 - Good Practice: This Standard requires that consumers receive services of an 'appropriate standard'. *Let's get real* describes the minimum requirements for an effective service. It describes the values, attitudes and skills required by the mental health and addiction workforce, and the ways these might be built into service systems and processes to promote effective organisational performance. In other words, *Let's get real* supports a service to implement good practice.

Standard 2.5 - Consumer Participation: *Let's get real* is consistently focused on engaging with service users across all of the Real Skills. For example, the Real Skill 'Working with service users' requires all staff to engage in effective communication with service users, include all service users in decisions about their service and treatment, and seek feedback. At a service level, this can be demonstrated through the implementation of evaluation processes, as well as making sure service user feedback is used in planning and quality improvement. Leaders can influence the implementation of either service user-inclusive or service user-led evaluation processes, and ensure that service user feedback informs and guides planning and quality improvement.

Standard 2.6 - Family/Whānau Participation: The Real Skill 'Working with families/whānau' prompts services to reflect on how families/whānau might be involved in support and recovery at all levels. Staff are required to establish connection and rapport with relevant families/whānau, as well as support their input into service users' recovery plans, if appropriate. Services need to consider what mechanisms exist to ensure that family/whānau participation processes take place. A service user's family/whānau may extend beyond traditional family concepts. Services are encouraged to foster relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and communities to support service users' health and wellbeing.

Standard 2.7 - Human Resource Management: This Standard requires that human resource management processes are conducted in accordance with good employment practice and meet the requirements of legislation. This includes adequate job descriptions, recruitment and orientation processes, and training and development. The *Let's get real* Human Resources Tool provides many templates relevant to these processes which reflect the Real Skills, which an organisation can use and adapt to their specific needs. Integrating *Let's get real* into human resource processes highlights the expectation that all staff will be required to incorporate the Real Skills into their everyday practice.

Standard 2.7.5 - Planning for Education and Training: One of the criteria for Standard 2.7 relates to workforce development. *Let's get real* should be regarded as a workforce development instrument.

The *Let's get real* Team Planning Tool provides a mechanism for an organisation to develop a workforce profile and a workforce development plan, highlighting service strengths and priority areas for service development against the Real Skills. Given the many ways that *Let's get real* supports the Standards, this profile and plan will inevitably reflect service strengths in relation to the Standards as well as areas that need development to meet audit requirements. Once a team has identified priority areas of development in this way, they can put specific energy into these areas and set suitable timelines to achieve these. *Let's get real* offers a range of tools and resources to assist in this process, including learning modules for the Real Skills.

Standard 3.4 - Assessment: This Standard promotes effective assessment processes that are consumer focused, safe and inclusive. *Let's get real* recognises that a successful assessment process is a crucial component to the ongoing engagement of the service user in the service. The starting point, when working with all service users and their family/whānau, is to establish a connection and rapport as part of a thorough assessment process and recovery planning. Services need to network and collaborate with other health and social service providers and community agencies to ensure that, together, services can meet the assessed needs of service users.

Standard 3.5 - Planning: This Standard relates to consumers' service delivery plans and requires that they be consumer focused and integrated and that they promote continuity in service delivery. *Let's get real* takes a service user-centred approach that promotes partnership and engagement with service users and focuses on service user strengths to support recovery. Individual planning processes must therefore ensure the full participation of service users and, where relevant, family/whānau. A service needs to gain feedback from service users about their service and treatment. This feedback can help leaders to ensure that future service planning reflects the needs of service users, families/whānau and local communities.

The following chart provides a summary of how *Let's get real* can help support a service to meet the Core Standards:

Examples of how <i>Let's get real</i> can support a service to meet the Core Standards		
The Standard	Relevant Real Skills	Relevant <i>Let's get real</i> enablers
Standard 1.4 – Māori Health	Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Māori Working with families/whānau Working within communities
Standard 1.5 – Recognition of Pacific Values and Beliefs	<i>Real Skills plus Seitapu: Engaging Pasifika</i>	<i>Real Skills plus Seitapu</i> and applied training package
Standard 1.6 Recognition of Culture, Values and Beliefs	Many of the performance indicators in <i>Let's get real</i> offer staff the opportunity to reflect on their own values and attitudes and understand how these may impact on the way they engage with service users.	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Values and attitudes learning module
Standard 1.7 Discrimination	Challenging stigma and discrimination	Team Planning Tool Challenging stigma and discrimination Learning modules
Standard 1.8 Good Practice	Together the seven Real Skills describe the minimum requirements for an effective service	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Human Resource Tool Learning modules for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> values and attitudes each of the seven Real Skills
Standard 2.5 Consumer Participation	Working with service users Working with families/whānau Working within communities	Managers and Leaders Guide Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with families/whānau Working within communities
Standard 2.6 Family/Whānau Participation:	Working with families/whānau	Guide for Managers and Leaders Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Māori Working with families/whānau
Standard 2.7 Human Resource Management	Professional and personal development	Human Resources Tool
Standard 2.7.5 Planning for Education* and Training	Professional and personal development	Team Planning Tool Education Tool

Examples of how <i>Let's get real</i> can support a service to meet the Core Standards		
The Standard	Relevant Real Skills	Relevant <i>Let's get real</i> enablers
Standard 3.4 Assessment	Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau	Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau
Standard 3.5 Planning	Working with service users Working with families/whānau	Team Planning Tool Learning modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with service users Working with Māori Working with families/whānau
* While this table includes Core Standards in general, 2.7.5 under Standard 2.7 has been included because it relates to workforce development, which is a key function of <i>Let's get real</i> .		

Table 2. Examples of how *Let's get real* can help a service to meet many of the Core Standards

Let's get real can support a service to meet the Restraint Minimisation Standards

Let's get real supports practice that enhances engagement, rapport building and the involvement of service users and families/whānau in service planning. Research indicates that where these factors are taken into account there is reduced need for restraint (O'Hagan, Divis, & Long, 2008). The right values and attitudes support good engagement. Without them, practice is likely to be perceived as inauthentic, and rapport and connection with service users could be compromised. The values and attitudes of *Let's get real* and the emphasis on engagement in working with service users and families/whānau provides an opportunity to build and enhance these skills as part of the restraint minimisation activities in an organisation.

Conclusion

Let's get real is a systemic approach that provides tools and learning modules a service might need to implement the framework across all organisational systems and processes. This includes supporting effective leadership, team planning, training and development, and human resource processes. Over time, the seven Real Skills will therefore become part of everyday service practice. This paper has highlighted the ways in which *Let's get real* both supports the intent of the Standards and provides a quality improvement framework, describing what the Standards might look like in practice. Implementing *Let's get real* will greatly assist a service to not only meet the Standards, but also integrate the Standards into everyday practice at all levels of service delivery. As a result, *Let's get real* will support a service to meet Ministry of Health audit requirements.

For more information

- *Let's get real: Real Skills for people working in mental health and addiction*. This document is available on the Ministry of Health's website, www.moh.govt.nz.
- *Let's get real: Real Skills plus Seitapu: Engaging Pasifika*. This document is available on the Le Va website, www.leva.co.nz.
- *Real Skills plus CAMHS: A competency framework for the infant, child and youth mental health and alcohol and other drug workforce*. This document is available on The Werry Centre website, www.werrycentre.org.nz.
- *Takarangi Competency Framework: Nga Pukenga Ahurea*. Information is available on the Matua Raki website, www.matuaraki.org.nz.
- To access the *Let's get real* enablers and other resources visit Te Pou's *Let's get real* website, www.tepou.co.nz/letsgetreal.
- Contact the *Let's get real* team at Te Pou 09 373 2125.

References

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