







Lead Psychologist

The Lead Psychologist supports New Zealand Rugby's (NZR) objective to maintain and enhance the mental health and wellbeing of rugby environments for contracted players and staff. Working as part of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Team the role provides best practice clinical guidance, advice and support on wellbeing, mental health, risk, and psychological safety across rugby environments.

This role focuses on systems, processes, triage, crisis management, and coordination of appropriate resources and support, rather than establishing therapeutic relationships. The role focuses on the key pillars of strengthening hauora, early identification and treatment, and response and rejuvenation. It also provides systems-level support to the network of mental skills and performance psychologists across professional rugby.

					
Location	Team	Leader	Employment Type	Direct Reports	Span of Control
Wellington or Auckland	People, Safety & Wellbeing	Head of Mental Health & Wellbeing	Permanent	Nil	Nil
Key Stakeholder Groups Internal: NZR Employees, Contracted Players, Medical Teams, Mental Skills Trainers/Psychologists External: Super Rugby Clubs, Provincial Unions, Other Sporting Organisations, Regulatory and peak bodies, e.g. Te Aho, Mental Health Foundation, NZRPA, Other Mental Health & Wellbeing organisations or NGOs					

What You Do

Clinical Psychological Support

- Provide strategic direction to improve and ensure the mental health & wellbeing of the rugby community, with a focus on professional contracted players, environments, coaches and support staff as well as the community game where required.
- Work as part of the NZR Mental Health & Wellbeing team (MHWT) to build, socialise and implement Mental Health & Wellbeing systems, processes and projects. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework, Mental Health Curriculum, Mental Health Screening, EAP preferred providers, Mental Health Audits, mental health training sessions/workshops, and coach support.
- Provide best practice guidance to manage critical incidents and support decision making regarding triage and appropriate referral pathways, including risk assessments as needed.
- Provide case management, peer supervision and MDT support across National and Super Rugby (including Provincial Unions where applicable) welfare and wellbeing roles where appropriate.
- Provide input into the development and delivery of evidence-based mental health & wellbeing programmes.

- Provide input to ensure quality assessment processes are conducted relating to individual and group wellbeing and make recommendations with sound clinical reasoning.
- Provide a psychological perspective around wider NZR initiatives where this input can help to positively shape these projects.

Stakeholder Relationships

- Build strong relationships with National teams, Super Rugby and Provincial Unions as a trusted source of psychological advice and support for staff and players.
- Work with NZR's Employee Assistance Programme referral network.
- Develop strong relationships within NZR and across rugby to ensure accessibility to advice and support when required, including coaches, management and playing roles.
- Work with key stakeholders across clubs/teams to uphold and upskill those within rugby in areas such as risk management, disclosures, and wellbeing plans.

Education & Resources

- As required, work alongside the Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Lead to support mental health and wellbeing education in our rugby environments, including coaches, players, medical and support staff.
- Support the delivery and facilitation of the Mind Set Engage workshop content where required.
- Support the development of engaging, best practice and culturally relevant resources for rugby environments that promote key mental health and wellbeing messages.

Mental Skills/Mental Performance Network

- Regular connection and peer supervision support (where required) for the national network of mental skills providers to grow capability and enhance opportunities for collaboration, best practice and consistency across environments.
- Support the recruitment of performance psychology/mental skills/wellbeing support across NZR's National teams and providers in regions.
- Consult with providers in the regions on behalf of NZR to support their service delivery to teams and individuals to ensure a best practice approach for both their environments and situations where there is support needed for an individual.

What You Bring

Key experience and skills include:

- Minimum five years' experience as a registered clinical or counselling psychologist, including work in multi-disciplinary environments.
- Proven expertise in managing complex care needs, risk assessment, and coordinating support across multiple professionals.
- Post-internship experience in areas such as anxiety, depression, concussion, trauma, suicide prevention, and broader mental health.
- Strong communication and relationship management skills, able to engage effectively across diverse audiences and levels.
- Approachable, flexible, and solutions-focused; skilled at listening, identifying patterns, and providing insights.
- Experienced in group facilitation, including debriefs and educational sessions.
- Understanding of sport psychology/mental skills to support performance.

- Familiarity with the professional sporting environment and athlete wellbeing needs.
 - Experience and knowledge of cultural models of mental health and wellbeing and demonstrated practical applications of these, in particular Te Ao Māori and Pasifika.
 - Experience working with diverse communities, including young people.
 - Registered psychologist with the New Zealand Psychologists' Board, holding a current APC.
 - Member of NZCCP or NZ Psychological Society.
 - Committed to ongoing professional development, supervision, and maintaining competency in line with NZPB regulations.
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