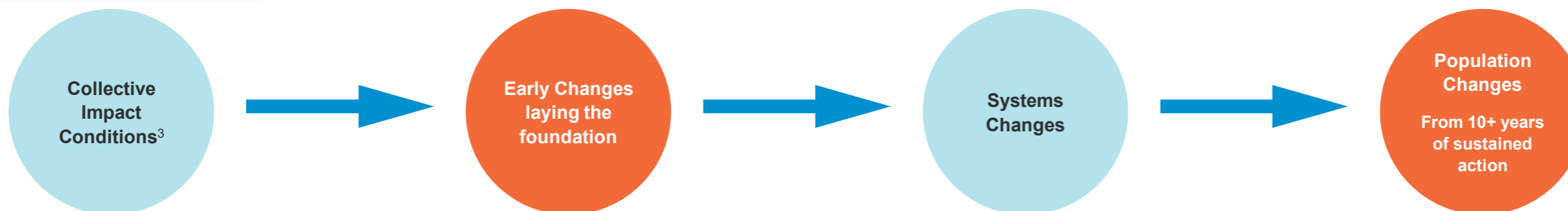


Evaluating the Equally Well Aotearoa collaborative: ^{1,2}

What we have achieved, what helps bring change, and what we need to keep doing.



Stages of impact⁴



What we have achieved

Equally Well is well-established and operates under the five conditions of Collective Impact

The backbone team is crucial to support national connection, coordination, and motivation

Equally Well champions take responsibility and advocate for change where and how they can

People with lived experience are central to the collaborative and its effectiveness

People involved come from a range of organisations and sectors

Diversity of champions provides credibility and legitimacy to the work in the community

Equally Well actions:

Are across the whole healthcare system

Can be seen in research, workforce training and education, health advocacy and health delivery

Influence health policy changes

Lead to practice changes which optimise personal health

Equally Well shared goal:

Achieving physical health equity for people with mental health and addiction issues

What we need to keep doing

Continue

- People with lived experience leading and driving change
- Ngā Waka o Matariki (Māori Equally Well strategy)
- Cross-sector engagement
- Investment in a diverse backbone team

Strengthen

- Strategic leadership
- Te Ao Māori and Pasifika world views across

Collaborative actions

- Intentional workforce development
- Forums and opportunities to collaborate
- Evaluating the impact we are having

Things that help us bring about change

People with lived experience

- Guide and inform actions and mental models that challenge and change policy and practices
- Shape champions work by bringing meaning to statistics and research, and provide connections
- Initiate change in their own roles and integrate equity thinking and action into everything they do

Champions

- Keep challenging the status quo and driving forward actions
- Are visible and vocal at forums, conferences, working groups, and writing thought pieces and journal articles
- Develop and implement intentional workforce development strategies

Backbone Team

- Supports and motivates champions to keep going
- Creates momentum by making connections within and across all the different parts of the health system and champions
- Seeks out and utilising opportunities to influence change and maximise opportunities
- Makes the Aotearoa and International evidence visible and easy to understand

Things that prevent us bringing change

- Organisational support and time for champions to focus on actions
- Champions changing roles
- Capacity and time to engage allies in the wider health sector and respond quickly and effectively to opportunities to influence
- Champions unsure about the impact of their actions on physical health equity
- Variable level of knowledge, skills and confidence in the mental health and addiction workforce to deliver and advise on physical health
- Limited integration of Māori and Pasifika peoples perspectives in the actions of the collaborative

Equally Well Evaluation - notes that will help to understand the diagram



About Equally Well¹

Equally Well Aotearoa New Zealand is a group of people and organisations with the goal of achieving physical health equity for people who experience mental health and addiction issues.

Equally Well started with a meeting of leaders from the non-government mental health and addiction sectors, who were discussing the untimely, unexpected tragic deaths of people in contact with services.

The Equally Well collaborative formally launched in 2014, and is now made up of over 120 organisations signed up to the consensus paper, with diverse champions and partners driving actions.

We have been working together for seven years, taking action and effecting practice and policy change.

Research from other collective impact approaches has found that once the collaboratives have been operating for more than 10 years it is then that the real changes start to be seen by the communities most affected.

Evaluation scope²

An evaluation to understand more about the work of the Equally Well collaborative was carried out between October 2020- May 2021. It provides insight into how Equally Well Champions have taken action to shift practice and policy and what may help continue to do so.

Data collection methods included workshops/interviews, document review and case study interviews. The evaluation was conducted by Alicia Crocket, Kyle Hefferon, and Louise Were.

It is now time to reflect on how we strengthen these connections to achieve physical health equity for people with lived experience of addiction and mental health issues.

The evaluation at this stage in the life of Equally Well will help us to know what works, give us direction for the future for growth, and to develop new thinking.

Collective Impact conditions³

The Equally Well collaborative works to the five collective impact conditions that have been proven to create community change:

1. Working to a common agenda
2. Mutually reinforcing activities
3. Continuous communication
4. Backbone support
5. Shared measurement

Stages of impact⁴

The 'stages of impact' model is used to understand the results of the evaluation.

It shows the relationship between collective impact conditions and the activities undertaken, the resultant early changes that lay the foundation for system changes, then eventually leading on to population changes over time.

Feedback

"It does feel like you're a bit of a lone voice sometimes, so having a network to link in with, to hear other people's passion and interest in the area, you know it gives you ongoing motivation."

(Equally Well Champion)

"No change ever happens without people at the centre of the issue demanding change."

(Equally Well Champion)

"You have to be a real self-starter with Equally Well, you have to get it going yourself, make your own groups, get yourself in front of people. You have to be relentless... and that's when it's great to have like-minded people around you that share your persistence."

(Equally Well Champion)

"We were scanning, connecting, looking differently at wider sectors, not just the mental health and addiction sector. Particularly if we didn't have any existing champions in that space."

(Backbone team member)