

GP AND MENTAL HEALTH FUND THROUGH GP PRACTICES IN THE WAKATIPU REPORT RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTRATOR - QUEENSTOWN MEDICAL CENTRE

Testimonials from Recipients

Female 22 year old long term qtown local " having come out of a violent relationship after covid and being able to access help and support from a group of super friendly and helpful professionals that didn't judge me has helped me hugely. I would never have gone to see a doctor as I normally cannot afford this with paying rent and surviving in Queenstown post covid. It has also allowed me to work through the situation I was in which I am grateful for as well as working through some long term health issues that I had never really addressed. Having the support have been huge and able to see a counsellor was amazing"



Male 24 - "I lost my job, we lost our house and I wasn't sure where to turn to for help. The lady I saw at the medical centre seemed to know what I needed and helped me get access to HH and continued to support me while I worked through things, I am still seeing the counsellor who is really helping me work through my mental health problems. I think it was the lady at the medical centre who organised for food to come to our house, I couldn't believe someone would care that much to do that. I didn't know there was funding to help people like me so when they said I could get some help I was really thankful".

43 year old mother of three primary school aged children " I came out of isolation and moved back to Queenstown after living in Oz for years, left my violent partner to make a fresh start. I was ashamed and didn't want to get help, the people at the medical centre have helped me get the right counselling along with also making sure my children have been able to access help and support. They have let me know about what other services I could get help with in the community, and have helped me able to get on top of my anxiety so I could get out of the house and do my shopping, I used to get paralysed with fear just going to the supermarket but they have supported me through this. Thank you for all your help."

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Testimonials from Therapists

"The WGNF is essential for the mental health of our community.

Many people, who prior to covid-19 could afford mental health care, now cannot afford care in spite of experiencing severe mental health symptoms. The local community has been greatly impacted as a result of covid-19 and its ongoing effects. Negative impacts have included an increase in severity of anxiety and depression, increase in suicidal thoughts and actions, increase in substance and/or alcohol use, overall inability to cope, increase in risky and dangerous behaviours, and relationship distress. Without this funding many people in the community would have continued to deteriorate emotionally and psychologically, which would have led to increased risk to these individuals and others. Additionally, many of those already impacted by mental health issues prior to covid-19 have experienced an increase in their symptoms both in terms of number of symptoms and severity. The Queenstown population includes many people with family and loved ones overseas. As the pandemic continues across the globe many local people continue to

experience significant mental health issues. Further support continues to be necessary. The patients I work with who received funding demonstrate motivation for psychotherapy and express high levels of gratitude for the funding. Our community continues to be vulnerable to mental health issues and withdrawal of funding will prove detrimental to some individuals, their families, and the community overall. As already mentioned, WGNF funding is essential for the health, wellbeing, and functioning of our community".



"The greatest needs fund has allowed people that had a difficult pathway to therapeutic services to receive help at some of the most challenging moments of their lives. It is not an exaggeration to say that this programme saved lives, as I have heard this directly from clients and their family members."

"I have 2 clients/children that have experienced complex trauma. Key adults in both families are currently diagnosed mental health difficulties and require government benefits to help them live. Both children are experiencing difficulties with emotional regulation, in particular with feelings of anxiety and anger which, at the time of referral, was leading to incidents of physical and verbal aggression in the home. I have another 3 clients/children who live in long-term, stressful family situations. Key adults across these families are struggling with their wellbeing and one has a diagnosed mental health disorder. These children are also experiencing difficulties with emotional regulation, which at the time of referral, was leading to incidents of physical and verbal aggression in the home. All of the families are struggling financially. COVID has affected them all in the same and different ways. Many of them are still trying to get routines 'back to normal' and/or establish their new normal. Without GNT these families wouldn't have gained immediate access to a child psychologist, with whom they can collaboratively develop a behaviour plan targeting key environmental adaptations and skill development (in both the primary caregiver and child), and be supported over the case work cycle to make some meaningful, targeted change.

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Testimonials from Therapists - continued



"The Wakatipu Greatest Needs Fund is an amazing support to members of our community who otherwise may not be able to access support. Queenstown has been hard hit as our population is so diverse. The main areas I have been helping clients with are anxiety, depression, stress, grief and the effects of isolation from family & friends overseas. As 2021 is looking as though we may be facing many of the same stressors as 2020 in relation to living with Covid-19 and the restrictions it enforces on our lives the continuation of funded counselling sessions being available to our community would be invaluable."

" I'm seeing an increase in anxiety particularly from people who are separated from their families. People need strong attachment figures and access to them. For some of my clients, they are clinging to relationships that are unhappy, I believe unconsciously, because they can't get home. The other issue is those who have lost their livelihood - it is the loss of a secure future which is unsettling. I have clients having babies who are unable to be with their mothers. There is a downside to travel - it can become a nightmare of insecurity and isolation."

"The past 12 months have brought a lot of issues to the surface for so many people. I have seen a significant increase in people seeking help for severe anxiety, depression and support to deal with trauma. The fund has allowed people to quickly access professional support who would likely have been otherwise sitting on long waiting lists or not eligible for any sort of financial support (and thus any sort of intervention) at all. This truly could be the difference between life and death for some. Thanks for all your work- fingers crossed the fund continues to grow. It's such an amazing resource for the community and those in need."

Testimonial from CLFS

"Patients on low incomes will often put off an appointment due to the high cost - especially unregistered and non-residents. These are often STD checks, ongoing pain and mental health assessments. Family harm related incidents involving strangulation checks and assessments have been accessed on a few occasions. Cost and shame is often a barrier for urgent assessment. Prompt access through this process makes it easier and less stressful for the patient. I would like to commend you on your quick response, effortless process and communication with both myself the referrer and the patient."



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Testimonials from Clinicians

"I have seen a large number of patients through this funding stream and appreciate being able to have the time and ability to follow-up and work through all the issues with the assistance of the funding. Patients will often not come back because of they either do not have the funds at the end of the week or don't see their health as a priority. Watching my patients go from completely lost, anxious or with depression to people who can function on a day to day basis and get back on their feet post covid has been hugely empowering and reinforces the work that we do. Also being able to access counsellors who can see them within a couple of weeks compared to weeks/months in the public system is also hugely beneficial. Often these people do not need a huge amount of support once they are got through the initial crisis and a quick phone call or follow-up is all some need."



"WGNF has been invaluable. I don't use it often but when I do it is people who are suffering mentally and financially. When you tell them their appt is funded by WGNF you can see it is a huge relief, and welcome good news. I'm very appreciative of the ability for us to provide this and there is definitely an ongoing need in the community so hope there are the resources for it to continue."

"WGNF has been a huge asset since Covid hit. There are many people in Queenstown who just manage to survive and are completely unable to have anything spare to spend on their health. Being able to support these patients and fund some of their essential treatments has been hugely beneficial both for immediate health problems and more long term. The help with counselling has also been invaluable through this time of uncertainty and much stress."



"I would like to thank you for providing much needed WGNF support for our community at this time. This has been a challenging year for so many. There has been huge emotional stress, uncertainty and often financial hardship. We are very aware of how these factors negatively impact and health wellbeing, and have witnessed this over and over. The ability to offer funded appointments and funded psychological support has been a huge help to us. It has also allowed us to get people to talk therapy that previously maybe would not have felt able to do that. The more we can normalise talking about emotional health in our community the more we can bring mental health out into the open and help the many suffering quietly alone. Covid has unmasked this and put extra pressure on and the provision of support has been invaluable."