

How to Make a Referral to Higher Ground

Higher Ground welcomes self-referrals.

Health, social and legal professionals wishing to make a referral to Higher Ground should note that our admission criteria require residents to be over 18 years and over, have a primary diagnosis of alcohol or other drug dependence, an interest in 12 Step recovery and a drug-free status on admission.

Referrals or self referrals can be made by telephoning 09-834 0042 for a pre-admission assessment appointment on weekdays between 8.30am and 4.00pm.

Assessments in detox facilities or hospital can be arranged. Applicants who have outstanding legal charges are considered on a case by case basis. If required, Higher Ground can organise a medical detox through referral to the Auckland Regional Alcohol and Drug Services.

Making a Donation

Higher Ground is a registered Charitable Trust. Donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible and may be sent direct to Higher Ground. Higher Ground is dependent on charitable donations for the continuation of its programme.

Higher Ground Trustees

Janet Colby	• Counsellor & Chairperson of the Trust
Antonia Fisher QC	• Barrister
Fiona Howard	• Psychologist
Karl Robinson	• Consultant & Hon. Trustee
Marino Te Moana	• Minister
Paula Parsonage	• Consultant
Paul O'Sullivan	• Company Director
Shane Hussey	• Chartered Accountant
William Rainger	• Public Health Physician

Contact Details

Address	• 118 Beach Road, Te Atatu Peninsula Waitakere Auckland 0610
Mail to	• PO Box 45 192 Te Atatu Peninsula Waitakere Auckland 0651
Telephone	• office 09-834 0017 • after care 09-834 0076 • admissions 09-834 0042 • residents 09-834 3700
Office fax	• 09-834 0018

During my pregnancy I was in hospital twice after over-dosing to commit suicide, and I ended up in respite care on suicide watch the second time. When I was about six months pregnant my ex-partner tried to kill me, then wouldn't let me leave the house. Now I was a prisoner in more ways than one.

My mum was worried and asked the police to go around. When we heard the knock on the door my boyfriend warned me to hide, but I had to get out so I opened the door and told the police everything.

This wasn't the first time I had gone to the police and this time he didn't get out on bail. When I had my baby I was completely alone. All my friends and family had walked away. I had to take a cab to the hospital when I was in labour.

I went into a residential treatment facility but was discharged when my son was six months old as I was very aggressive and couldn't control my anger. I ended up sitting in a police station with my baby and nowhere to go, and I watched as my child was taken away from me.

I felt helpless, homeless and alone. All I had was my car to sleep in so I went to get wasted and had a three-month bender doing whatever I had to do to get drugs.

I was going to give my son up for adoption. This was my rock bottom. I thought if I gave him to a family who could look after him then I could live my life using drugs and that still being a prostitute I would be okay.

But thankfully I waited and knew I couldn't live with myself if I went through with it. And so I began the process of going into Higher Ground.

I have always been a shy, standoffish person, which is why I used drugs, and entering Higher Ground drug-free I was a nervous wreck. Despite wanting to run I stayed and I grew. I learned so much at Higher Ground, and I truly mean it when I say I owe that place my life.

I had some of my toughest times in Family Group. My mum never came to the group, she had given up on me: 'Just another rehab,' she would say. My brother supported me. He read me an impact letter in Family Group and I read out a letter to my ex-partner to try and deal with the resentment and pain of what he put me through.

My son was brought in to visit once a week then when I was half way through he could stay on weekends.

My mum did come to one-on-one counseling sessions and it was hard to hear how my using affected her and my daughter's life. I graduated after four and a half months and went to live at the support house, where I made good friends I am still close with.

I attended 90 meetings of Narcotics Anonymous in 90 days and started volunteer driving for Higher Ground.

I went flatting with people I did treatment with and tried to get my son back. Just when I thought all hope was lost my brother and his partner offered to get a place with me so I could transition my son back and CYF agreed. I have had my son back in my care now for over a year and my case has been closed. That is a wonderful thing for us.

Today when I look back to the girl who crawled her way into recovery, and the woman I am now I can't believe it's the same person. I have a job, my son, I can manage a house and pay off debts, I do service and go to regular N.A. meetings as well as working the 12-Steps with my sponsor.

I have days when I struggle but today I don't need to use drugs because of it. I do my best to balance recovery, work and family. My mum still has custody of my daughter and I am not sure if that will change but I have learnt to accept this and I see her when I can.

The relationship between my mother and me is better and the trust is slowly coming back. I am now a recovering addict and this is my story of where I was and where I am today. ”

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the Higher Ground News. If you do not wish to remain on our mailing list, or are incorrectly listed, please write to HGDRT, PO Box 45 192, Te Atatu Peninsula, Waitakere, 0610.

For further information about the Higher Ground rehabilitation programme phone Programme Director, Johnny Dow 09-834 0017 or fax 09-834 0018 email admin@higherground.org.nz www.higherground.org.nz

HIGHER GROUND

DRUG REHABILITATION TRUST

2015 • ISSUE # 56

NEWS

WAIRUA FOCUSED WHĀNAU DRIVEN



Two of the changes happening within Higher Ground's Māori programme are visible in the faces of programme leaders Rawiri Pene and Kohe Pene, who at the end of last year received Ta moko kanohi and moko kauwae.

Their Ta moko represent tradition and recovery for both Rawiri and Kohe.

"A significant part of that decision for me was reaching 24 years clean," says Rawiri. "It is a celebration of my recovery and when I say celebration I mean not just for me personally but also for my whānau, Hapu and Iwi.

Kohe, 22 years into her recovery, had always said when she became a grandmother she would like to wear a moko kauwae. Her first grandson was born in 2011, so she knew it was just a matter of time. "I wanted to normalise it in my whānau so my mokopuna can say ever since they can remember their kui (grandmother) has always had a moko kauwae."

Kohe returned to her tribal region at Marae nui on the East Coast

to a Ta Moko Wananga in July 2014 to receive hers.

Rawiri too, went to his tribal regions in Nga Puhi and Tainui to let his elders know of his desire to carry the Ta moko kanohi. "In simple terms it is a new day, He Ra Hou a visual expression and commitment to my life in recovery and honouring whakapapa."

With his elders' agreement a date was set at West Auckland's Hoani Waititi Marae. "I wanted to open it up to Māori and non-Māori who would otherwise not have the experience of traditional Ta moko wananga on a Marae."

His moko was designed and applied by Henare Brookings – brother of Kohe's Ta moko artist Joni Brookings. "What attracted us to them is they work as whānau," he says, "That's how we also work."

Kohe wanted her moko kauwae to project a Māori face that was gentle, kind and embracing. "I wanted to be a face that someone will remember and think, 'that's what Māori are like'.

"I am loving it. I've had more positive responses than negative,

continued on page three

A RELATIONSHIP OF COLLEGIABILITY

Higher Ground's specialised service delivering treatment for alcohol and other drugs is supported by the health boards of greater Auckland.

Two senior leaders from Waitemata District Health Board recently toured Higher Ground as major extensions including new group rooms, accommodation and office wing were nearing completion.

"We were really impressed with the focus on quality and the opportunity that the new building would provide for both Higher Ground and for the community at large," says Waitemata Mental Health and Addictions Service general manager Ian McKenzie.

Also visiting was the Mental Health and Addictions Service clinical director Murray Patton.

Waitemata District Health Board holds the contract with Higher Ground, on behalf of the metro Auckland DHBs.

Higher Ground believes that all New Zealanders have a right to life free of alcohol and other drug dependency. An integral part of being able to provide residential treatment is Higher Ground's contract with Waitemata District Health Board. Says Higher Ground's financial manager Bill Jordan: "We provide a valuable service for the district health boards of wider Auckland, and in turn we are grateful for the support Waitemata DHB gives us."

Ian McKenzie described Higher Ground's relationship with the provider arm as one of collegiality.

"I recognise Higher Ground as a champion of drug and alcohol work in the sector and the leadership that Higher Ground asserts, in particular in activities such as Profile," (a working group of Alcohol and Other Drugs Services providers).

"We recognise that commitment to sector collaboration improves services to people who use them," he says. "Our referral services are more successful if we have good relationships."

He says that to design a system of care with fewer gaps for patients moving through it meant making sure there was consistency of data collection and definitions between service providers and funders. It also required good communication and information feedback. "Higher Ground has always been consistent with that, which means we can get a real handle on who we are serving.

"Our experience has been a positive one with making referrals," he says. "There is a shared understanding of how prioritising will occur."

Jean-Marie Bush and Cate Wallace are Mental Health and

Addictions Programme Managers, Funding and Planning Team, Auckland and Waitemata DHBs.

"Higher Ground management and particularly Johnny Dow as director ensure that there is really clear, close communication with us about the programme, any developments, changes or proposed changes," Jean-Marie says.

"We're very confident about the model that Higher Ground maintains and their decision-making process. From our point of view, Higher Ground provides an excellent residential programme, Continuing Care services and Continuing Care residence which were Higher Ground initiatives." Good residential after care has really positive benefits for people as they transition out of the programme, she says.

"There has also been a lot of work done and important developments to the programme to become more kaupapapa Māori responsive."

Higher Ground closely monitors what is happening in the community and in demand for services, she says, and gathers information constantly through the Pre-Admissions team and community networks.

"I think Higher Ground is really good at predicting patterns of drug and alcohol issues and being able to deliver the service in a way that can respond to those changes," says Jean-Marie.

Director Johnny Dow has a strong profile, Cate Wallace says, and attends provider executive forums. "Higher Ground is a key sector player but

in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation. It's very nice to see, and shows how the sector can work together. There is certainly enough work to go around."

Higher Ground actively feeds back to Waitemata DHB and the Ministry of Health, and gets alcohol and other drug issues into the spotlight, she says.

Ian McKenzie says that Higher Ground's shared role in AOD work with the new Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Courts was a success to note.

Collaboration with other treatment providers to the courts was a good example of how Higher Ground works, says Cate Wallace, and of the positive relationships Higher Ground maintains in the sector in the Auckland region.

"The Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Courts is a national pilot programme so there are a lot of eyes on that and interest in a positive initiative with national impact," she says.

"Higher Ground is a key sector player but in the spirit of collaboration and co-operation"

continued from front page

and the negative ones have been really important to remind me that there is a process of acceptance. Time has gone by and I've not changed and those people seem to be comfortable with me now."

As well as being a time of personal change, it is also a time of growth for the Māori programme at Higher Ground, the development of which Rawiri and Kohe have been central to for the past 12 years.

Rawiri continues as the tumuaki (head of the Māori programme) and will continue to be based at Higher Ground but now divides his time with Te Whare Whakapiki Wairua, the Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court.

His appointment as the Pou Oranga (Māori cultural advisor) across both Waitakere and Auckland courts is seen by the Court as pivotal in adopting a more effective approach to working with Māori.

He will still work one day a week within the therapeutic community of Higher Ground, mentoring staff and developing training.

Kohe will take on more of a leadership role in the whānau programme. She has just finished a two-year Diploma in Applied Addictions Counseling at Te Taketake in Rotorua, a course taught in a bicultural wananga format.

"A lot of Māori women need more women they can identify and feel comfortable with. It's so good to see that I can make more of a

difference working here in another capacity."

Rawiri and Kohe are busy people, with Higher Ground being part of life for their whānau since 2003 when Rawiri was approached to lead a weekly kapa haka group. From there they have grown Higher Ground's Kaupapa Whānau Oranga program, which is a wairua focused (spiritual) and whānau driven (recovery family in action) approach to wellbeing.

Says Kohe: "Right from the word go, Rawiri has always worked as whānau. The power is in family not 'me' as an individual. So we come as a whānau."

Says Rawiri: "A significant amount of my recovery time has been with Higher Ground. My children have been raised with the influence of Higher Ground, and as Higher Ground has grown so too have our children. So it has been dual growth in terms of my own family and my recovery family."

Kohe has been closely involved with the Māori programme over the years. "We saw how well it worked, residents love seeing the kids here, love seeing a couple, seeing the family unit." They have also established a weekly parenting group open to Higher Ground's former and current residents.

THE ADDICT IN ME

In March I was two years drug-free. I have come so far and have grown so much from the person I once was. A Higher Ground graduate tells of her experiences.

"My addiction story starts when I was a young teenager, though my first taste of alcohol was when I was about 10 years old. It was a sip from my father's beer - he was and still is a heavy drinker. Dad was never home and when he was, he always had a drink in his hand.

As soon as I had that taste of alcohol I loved it and slowly alcohol started to consume my life. As a teenager I started taking alcohol to school, wagging, stealing and doing whatever I could to get more and I thought this was normal. After all I was just a teenager rebelling and acting out as teenagers do. Except for me I never grew out of it.

I left school at 17 and did different training courses but by 18 I was working in prostitution. My first glimpse of having a problem with substances was when I was almost 21. It was my mother who first mentioned that I drank too much. I used to call her up at all hours of the night when I was either stuck in town drunk or had no money and she would always come to my rescue.

After another night of me throwing up all over her car, she said I needed to go to rehab. So for my 21st birthday I was in rehab - to please my mother. I met a guy there and formed a relationship, which is another side to my addiction.

Throughout my twenties I was in and out of Alcoholics Anonymous, trying to get sober. Much of my life centred around getting high and then getting sober again, and on the man of my life. He didn't like to stick around much, so it was no surprise that he wasn't with me when I had our daughter. I had my first child when I was 26.

I developed post-natal depression and was closet drinking again, a solo mum for the most part. Once my daughter turned two, I was drinking heavily. I met a guy from my past and very quickly formed a relationship.

He introduced me to drugs and I was in love. I don't know if I loved him or his drugs more but whatever it was I couldn't get enough. I quickly moved in with him and the abuse started. He wanted me thin, so I wasn't allowed to eat or do what I wanted, and he would make me do things I didn't want to do for drugs. And I would do them.

He was my drug dealer-boyfriend and even though he became very violent I always went back to him. I was so dependent on what he supplied, mainly Ritalin, ecstasy and methamphetamine. I moved out a few times, went into women's refuge, but he enticed me back with the drugs and I couldn't say no.

My mum saw what was going on, intervened and took my daughter who she now has full custody of and I let her so I was free to use as much as I wanted. I knew my daughter would be safe away from me and all the abuse she witnessed.

I found out I was pregnant again and even this didn't make me stop or force me to leave my boyfriend.

Things went from bad to worse. I tried to get help through community addiction services, and Child, Youth and Family got involved while I was pregnant not only because of my drug use but also because I was in a dangerous relationship. I would do anything for a fix, thief, lie or steal cars with my partner.

continued overleaf