

A passion for learning

Kim Merrett, Registered Health Professional, Hauraki

A clinical placement during her nursing training was all it took to convince Kim Merrett she wanted to work in mental health. "I discovered a passion for it," says Kim. But it was two years of general nursing before a registered health professional position came up with Pathways – an opportunity she jumped at!

Now, Kim spends her days working with people using Pathways' services in Thames. Her role involves providing input into care plans and reviews, carrying out health assessments, and responding to requests for information about specific health issues, such as medications, diabetes, diet and exercise. "It's diverse. In any given day I can be called upon to do anything from standing in as a team leader, to hands on support work, to carrying out research as part of an assessment. Things can change so quickly that you need the flexibility to be able to respond to that."

Kim enjoys the strong holistic wellbeing approach that Pathways takes. "We look at all aspects of people's wellbeing, and explore alternative approaches and therapies that may help in their recovery." She also believes Pathways is a truly dynamic and innovative organisation - always exploring new and potentially better ways of doing things. "It keeps you on your toes, but actually I love it. The constant challenge and the opportunities that affords to improve your practice."

And the most satisfying part of her job? Kim says it has to be witnessing the recovery process. "To see people who have been quite unwell regaining their self-esteem and their ability to cope. It's wonderful to be part of that and to share people's journey."

Since joining Pathways Kim has completed her post-graduate Diploma in Health Sciences, as well as a host of in-house training. She is currently considering taking the next step, and turning her diploma into a Masters!

And it seems Kim isn't just thinking about her own study. She's also acting as a preceptor for third year nursing students from Wintec. "It's a great opportunity for those students to gain insight into mental health, and experience the variety of nursing-based roles that are out there." After all – it was Kim's student placement that sparked her passion for mental health.