

Looking after your mental wellbeing



The Mental Health Foundation recommends the Five Ways to Wellbeing:
Connect, me whakawhanaunga; Give, tukua; Take notice, me aro tonu;
Keep learning, me ako tonu; Be active, me kori tonu.



Connect, me whakawhanaunga

Social connection, interacting with your neighbourhood, community and loved ones brings happiness and a sense of belonging. Getting involved with shaping your community, volunteering, helping at events, being involved with your place of worship, your cultural group, and joining like-minded groups who share your hobbies are great examples of how you can find connection in your community.

Getting involved with a [Neighbours Aotearoa](#) event, which is running throughout March, could be a good place to start. It's a great time to get together with your neighbours and to share in some kai, kōrero and activities and get to know one another.

If you're 65 and over and live alone, did you know that Age Concern has a [visiting service](#)? The service matches volunteers with older people to make friendships and connection together.



Give, tukua

[Volunteering](#) and being involved with your community are strongly linked with feeling good and functioning well. Even small gestures can have a big impact on your sense of contribution and can make someone's day. Invite your neighbour for a cup of tea, donate your time, give a stranger a compliment. Giving provides adults with a sense of purpose and boosts self-esteem.



Take notice, me aro tonu

Practise mindfulness. Keeping busy (or distracted) may feel 'productive'; however, taking a moment to be aware of your surroundings, your body and your thoughts can help you feel more grounded and improve mental clarity. Finding joy in the present, enjoying the view and noticing the good things that are here and now can help us find perspective when we're feeling overwhelmed.

Try a few deep breaths (for example, [box breathing](#) is a great breathing method), journalling, meditation, yoga, mindful eating (which includes reducing your distractions and avoiding multitasking during mealtimes), reducing screen time, walking more. One of the key aspects of practising mindfulness is being [kinder to ourselves](#).

Keep learning, me ako tonu



Embrace new experiences – awhitia te wheako hou, see opportunities – kimihiā ngā ara hou, surprise yourself – me ohorere koe i a koe anō. A healthy curiosity no matter what your life stage is good for mental wellbeing, and learning helps achieve goals and give a sense of achievement. Sharing what you've learned also helps build stronger connections to your peers and loved ones. Ways that you can increase your learning are: learn a different language, or reconnect with the language of your whakapapa/roots, teach yourself an instrument (there are tons of free tutorials on YouTube), learn local myths and legends in your area, visit a museum, sign up to a community class or group (eg, watercolour painting, crafts, or gardening).



Be active, me kori tonu

Incorporate movement into your day – whether it be by chance (taking the stairs or the long way), play, gardening, walking, cycling, running, weightlifting, martial arts or sports. However you choose to exercise is great for your body as well as your mental wellbeing. Exercising with a friend or family member can also help your motivation and give you social connection as a bonus (see Connect, me whakawhanaunga).

mentalhealth.org.nz/five-ways-to-wellbeing

Sleep, pikaru



In addition to these tips from the Mental Health Foundation, good quality sleep can help with better memory, reduce stress, improve your physical health and boosts your mood. But getting eight hours of quality sleep is often easier said than done! Practise good sleep habits by going to bed at the same time every night and minimising screen time before bed. If you need a wind-down, allow yourself 20 minutes or so to relax. Try relaxing yoga or meditation, journalling, an old-fashioned puzzle or reading a relaxing book (avoid heart-racing thrillers!). It's best to sleep in a cool, dark environment, so make sure your curtains are closed tightly or wear a sleep mask.

Some podcasts that support mental wellbeing that we love are:

[The Happiness Lab](#)

[A slight change of plans](#)

[Hidden Brain](#)

10% Happier  

Radio Headspace  

Feeling like you need additional help?

Want help quitting?

[Smoking and vaping, drugs and alcohol, problem gambling](#)

Wellbeing resources

info.health.nz/mental-health/where-to-get-help

Need to talk?

[Free call or text 1737](#)