

Looking after your wellbeing during COVID-19

26 AUGUST 2020

Looking after our wellbeing during COVID-19 is one thing we can all do.

In Aotearoa New Zealand the 'te whare tapa whā' model is a great way to understand health and wellbeing.

Te whare tapa whā is based on the four areas of Māori health. It looks at physical health (taha tinana), spiritual health (taha wairua), the role of family (taha whānau), and mental health (taha hinengaro).

To build these four areas of health into your day you might try going to sleep and waking up at the same time, eating regularly, writing a journal, getting some fresh air, making time for talking with friends and doing things that you enjoy.

Even though life feels different at the moment, it's good to remember that we will get back to our normal lives eventually. Until this happens there are lots of things you can do to help you stay positive.

Taha tinana (physical health)

It's a good idea to do some exercise every day. Exercise helps your mind and body to release stress, gives you energy, and can help you feel positive or happy. Make sure you maintain physical distance from people you don't know and wash your hands with soap and water before and after exercising. This is especially important if you are using exercise equipment others may also be using.

Taha wairua (spiritual health)

Even though not everyone is spiritual, there are things you can do to look after your inner spirit (wairua). Finding ways to relax and unwind helps your wairua.

Many faith-based communities like churches and other religious groups are meeting either in person or virtually. This is a good way to stay in touch and keep connected to your community.

Some people find activities such as yoga and meditation help them stay calm and relaxed. Free videos can be found online, which help guide you through these practices.

You could keep a journal. Documenting your experiences and feelings can be a good way to process the highs and lows that we are all experiencing due to COVID-19.

Taha whānau (family health)

Family health is about belonging, caring and sharing with individuals who are part of your wider social system.

It is important to stay socially connected and there are lots of ways you can keep in contact.

- call people on the phone, or through VIS <https://nzvis.co.nz/> or NZ Relay <https://www.nzrelay.co.nz/>
- text or send messages to people
- use social media like Facebook or Instagram
- make video calls on your phone or computer
- meet with whānau and friends.

Taha hinengaro (mental health)

Uncertainty about COVID-19 can make some people feel upset and worried. If you are feeling upset or anxious there are things you can do to help you feel better, calmer, or positive. These might be simple things, like:

- taking some deep breaths
- taking a few minutes and focus on what is around you. Name a few things you can see, hear, smell, taste or feel right now
- doing something fun that makes you feel good
- choosing your news and information carefully.

COVID-19 is a big event happening all over the world. There is lots of information and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. If the news about COVID-19 is making you feel bad, you should take a break from it for a while or only check it once a day.

For the official and most up-to-date information go to: health.govt.nz/covid-19 or covid19.govt.nz

Ask for help if you need it

If you need more help, or someone to talk to:

- Call or text **1737** to have a chat with a trained counsellor. They're available day and night, and texts and calls are free.

Useful online resources for wellbeing

Check out tips and messages designed to help Kiwis cope better and get through COVID-19 at: <https://www.allright.org.nz/campaigns/getting-through-together>

Go to the Mental Health Foundation Website for information and downloads on the Five Ways to Wellbeing: Etahi ara e rima ki ti ngākau ora – Help people stay mentally well.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/>

Go to MelonHealth for self-care and support resources during COVID-19 at:

<https://www.melonhealth.com/covid-19/>

Redseed are offering a free, online course for managing stress and anxiety during COVID at:

<http://www.redseed.com/solutions/managing-stress-anxiety/>

Go to the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) for an Easy Read Resource on looking after your mental health during coronavirus (COVID-19).

<https://cid.org.au/our-stories/look-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus/>

To learn more about the Māori health model Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 2017), go to:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/maori-health-models/maori-health-models-te-whare-tapa-wha>