

ISSUE 5 • NOV 2022

WELLBEING

Newsletter



This newsletter has been created by Te Whatu Ora- Health New Zealand, South Canterbury on behalf of the Psychosocial Committee. It is a resource for distribution around South Canterbury, to support mental and emotional wellbeing, especially during COVID and for those dealing with the consequences of COVID (taha hinengaro).

DISCLAIMER:

The information provided in this newsletter has come from a variety of sources with sometimes diverging views of what is effective and safe for recovery and wellbeing. Whilst we endeavor to ensure the reliability and accuracy of all information, this cannot be guaranteed. Any treatment or therapy decisions you may take should include your GP. It is especially important before making any changes, including additions, to any prescription medications, programme or treatment you are using that you discuss your intentions with your GP or whichever health professional you have used.



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Participants at the Temuka Mental Health Awareness Day enjoyed socialising and trying different handcrafts and stone carving

Hosted by Arowhenua Whānau Services the event was held at the Temuka Rugby Clubrooms on 27 September.



Thank You Arowhenua Whānau Services' Community for Your Support

Among the many highlights and challenges of 2022 for Arowhenua Whānau Services has been its Mental Health Awareness Day that proved to be something the community wants more of, the health provider's Kaiwhakahaere (leader) says.

Maria Parish said the event held at the Temuka Rugby Clubrooms in September attracted more than 100 participants who tried their hand at a variety of creative activities including harakeke (flax weaving), rock painting, rock wrapping, stone carving, diamond art, journaling and bookmark making.

“It was fantastic to see our clients and members of the public take the opportunity to learn new skills, socialise and create items that made them feel good. We are really grateful to local businesses for their very generous sponsorships and prizes.”

Much of the feedback from participants included calls for there to be regular such days, Parish said.

“As a health provider for Māori and non Māori we think it is important to break down barriers to accessing support and this was one way of doing that and raising awareness of the many services we offer everyone in the Arowhenua rohe (area).”



She said Arowhenua Whānau Services held harakeke workshops recently for rangatahi (teenagers) and Kaumātua (elders) to learn and practice culturally appropriate harvesting and weaving.

The Whānau Ora arm of the health provider attracts many tamariki (children) and their whānau for its fun days during the school holidays.

The Whānau Day allows whānau to spend time with their tamariki doing organised activities, sports, games and sharing kai (food) with other families,” Parish said. This year Arowhenua Whānau Services started a weekly Temuka Drop In Centre on Mondays from 12pm to 4pm at the hall, 6 Domain Avenue, to help combat the isolation many people experienced during the COVID lockdowns.

“It was designed to ease people comfortably back into interacting with the community again. People can come for a cuppa and a chat, play cards or make handcrafts.”

Throughout the year the occasional pop up Covid clinics were held in addition to the standard clinics in Temuka, Waimate and Twizel. There is still a large uptake of boosters particularly among the elderly, Parish said.

The attendance advisors have had their work cut out for them. According to government data (July 2022) more than 8,500 children were not attending primary or high school (to age 16) regularly.

“South Canterbury is no different to the rest of the country. Our attendance advisors work with the students and their whānau and help break down the barriers to regular attendance, putting in place a plan to re-integrate the student back into education keeping in mind their aspirations,” Parish said.

Funding is always a challenge but as Arowhenua Whānau Services continues to meet the needs of the community, it is being recognised nationally.

“We were recently notified that we are having a visit from the Right Honourable Dame Cindy Kiro in November because she has heard good things about our organisation,” Parish said.

Parish’s wish list for 2023 is to carry on with the work they do.



Wanting to rehome your pre-loved tools?

Mackenzie Menzshed welcomes all donations



MenzshedNZ have been steadily growing in popularity throughout the country and they all have a similar theme of “support for one another”; “contribution” and a growing awareness of “personal health and wellbeing”, particularly of men. They support the concept of mentoring across all ages.

It is with genuine enthusiasm that a group of local men have stepped forward to make the **Mackenzie Menzshed** possible in Fairlie.

Two initial meetings have been held, the first at the Community Lounge in Fairlie to gauge interest, record attendees and make a plan. The second meeting was held at David Taylor’s house in Burkes Pass where the Incorporated Rules were established (as all MenzshedNZ are required to do). The Committee Chairman is Mouse Gallagher, Secretary Bruce Andrews, and Treasurer Austin Green.

The aims of Mackenzie Menzshed are: socializing and having access to a workshop and other facilities that enable men to share their knowledge, skills and talents. Also, providing a safe environment with the opportunity to help one another and engage in the community.

Anyone wishing to participate or become involved in the MenzShed, or anyone wishing to donate tools of any type or description can contact:

Mouse (Paul) Gallagher email: mouseg1968@gmail.com or phone 027 685 4809, or
Simon Abbott email: simon.n.abbott@gmail.com or phone 021 113 7998.

All donations will be very gratefully received.

The Mackenzie Menzshed is situated at the Fairlie Museum shed and was gifted by the late Bryan Beattie.



Mackenzie Menzshed (L – R) David Talyor, Ron Joll, Ernie Gabsa, Garry Kerr, Simon Abbott, Pete Albertyn, Brian Knight, Bruce Andrews, Austin Green, Sergio Perez, Michael Midgley, Mouse Gallagher, Will Murdoch, John Hendry.



EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND SUPPORT POSTER IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

Stories of migrants to South Canterbury not knowing what to do in an emergency, or being scared to call 111, have prompted the production of a new information sheet in 10 languages.

The migrant emergency information and support sheets have been a concerted effort among social service groups in South Canterbury, including Fire and Emergency, Police, and St John.

The poster was officially launched in English on Wednesday, and will be translated into nine other languages. Translations will be done by local community groups to ensure translations are accurate.

A poster will be given to every new migrant family upon arrival into the community. It has a fridge magnet on it, so it can be attached to the fridge, for people to see and become familiar with.

People can write their neighbours' names and contact details on the poster, which is a way for them to make contact with neighbours and to connect in the community.

The migrant emergency information and support posters also show a list of all social services migrants can reach out to for support when they move to South Canterbury.



The emergency service personal involved in the project, from left, Sergeant Dave Hinde, of Timaru, Fire and Emergency New Zealand senior advisor community readiness Mid and South Canterbury Donna Lindsay and Darryn Grigsby of Timaru St John.

Turning Words into Smiles



“Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.” A life can be changed forever with as little as a single phrase, an uplifting word or an act of kindness.

Julie McDonald put this to the test as she tackled an exciting project for the Lake Tekapo Community, “Turning Words into Smiles”. This was her idea to bring some smiles to people visiting and living in Lake Tekapo.

“Traditionally toilet doors have always had signs telling people,

‘Do not stand on the toilet seat’

‘Do not flush sanitary items down the toilets’

‘Wash your hands this way’

‘Report any sexual harassment to The Management’

‘Get vaccinated against COVID-19.....!’

I felt that these signs, although being well - intended are somewhat dictatorial and some are quite negative. I felt the need to have happy signs on toilet doors to make people smile and perhaps alter their outlook after reading them - resulting in a lift in their wellbeing.

The signs are on the toilet doors of all the public toilets in Lake Tekapo as well as most restaurant, cafe and petrol station rest rooms.

I have had lots of great feedback about the signs and many people are inspired and like them so much that they take a photo of them,” Julie said.



Keep an eye out for these and remember, share a smile!

New Wellbeing Books

If you are looking for a Christmas gift or if you get a book token to redeem, you might like to consider these two new wellbeing books published just last week.

AUTHOR OF THE MILLION-COPY BESTSELLING FAST 800 SERIES

**DR MICHAEL
MOSLEY**

**JUST
ONE
THING**

How simple changes
can transform your life

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND EDITION

Based on the BBC Programme 

Just One thing - Dr Michael Mosley SIMPLE CHANGES CAN TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

Just One Thing talks about small simple things you can introduce into your routine which will have a big impact on your mental and physical health.

Did you know that eating chocolate can help your heart, that singing can give you a natural 'high' and that your obsession with houseplants can boost your productivity and brain power? In Just One Thing, Dr Mosley shares these and many more scientifically proven facts that could really make a difference to how you feel every day.

Dr. Michael Mosley is a medical journalist and the author of several best-selling books including The FastDiet, The 8-Week Blood Sugar Diet, and The Clever Gut Diet.

Tranquility by Tuesday Laura Vanderkam

Life has become busier for many people, time seems scarce, weeks fly by and more people report feeling stressed and burned out. Laura Vanderkam understands the frustration and exhaustion so many of us are feeling, and she has found a way to feel better, every day. Her book offers essential strategies for making the most of every day, no matter how busy you are, and finding meaning in daily routines and relationships. This book guides you to making simple changes about how you plan and spend your time which will make you feel you have more control over your life and are spending your time each day to make the best use of your most precious resource - time.

Laura Vanderkam is the author of several very practical time management and productivity books, including The New Corner Office, What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast, and 168 Hours.

Laura Vanderkam

Bestselling author of
WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO BEFORE BREAKFAST

**Tranquility
by
Tuesday**



9 WAYS TO CALM THE CHAOS
AND MAKE TIME FOR
WHAT MATTERS

Welcome to the integrated Primary Mental Health & Addictions Service (IPMHA)

It's common to sometimes feel like life is getting on top of you and that perhaps your thoughts, feelings or actions are having an impact on your health and wellbeing.

Reaching out for help doesn't need to be scary. Our IPMHA team can help you work things through and make a plan to get on track.

What is IPMHA?

IPMHA is a team of Health Improvement Practitioners and Health Coaches / Support Workers, who work alongside Primary Care providers to provide free, same day support for people of all ages.

It is a free service funded by the Ministry of Health Access and Choice initiative with the aim to:

- reduce barriers and increase access to healthcare
- increase choice in addressing peoples' holistic concerns
- reduce wait times
- improve population health
- improve equity outcomes.

How many appointments can I have and how long do they last?

Most people get the help they need in a single visit. You may return to learn new skills.

The appointment is up to 30 minutes.

Clinic hours

Practice:

Hours:

Your GP:

Phone #:

Te Whatu Ora South Canterbury IPMHA

Physical address: 18 Woollcombe Street, Timaru, 7910

Postal address: Private Bag 911, Timaru, 7910

Email: ipmha@scdhb.health.nz

Patient Advocate

If you have any questions relating to your consumer rights, please contact:

Cynthia McCaughan, Patient Advocate

Phone: 03 687 2291

Need to talk? 1737

In an emergency call 111

For crisis help phone 0800 277 977

(24 hour access and support from Te Whatu Ora South Canterbury Mental Health Service)

Te Whatu Ora

Health New Zealand

For more information about Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand, South Canterbury services, please visit www.scdhb.health.nz

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

Integrated Primary Mental Health & Addictions Service



A service designed to help people whose thoughts, feelings or actions are impacting their health and wellbeing.

WHO



Individuals



Couples



Whānau



Group education sessions

WHERE



Face to face in primary care



Via telephone or text



Via video call



Community visits (by arrangement)

HOW



Warm handovers: your GP, NP or nurse may introduce you to a HIP or Health Coach at your next consult.



GP/Nurse/NP referral: A member of your primary care team may send a referral for a HIP or Health Coach to contact you to invite you for an appointment.



Self-referral: You may call reception via phone or ask in person at your next consult.

What do health Improvement Practitioners and health coaches do? Who is the best person for me to see?

Health Improvement Practitioners (HIPs)

HIPs utilise a variety of talking therapies to support people to reconnect with their values and help them to commit to actions reflective of their health and wellbeing goals.

HIPs teach a wide range of strategies that help people to manage and overcome stress and distress in their lives.

Each session is treated as a stand-alone intervention, though you are welcome to return for follow up.

Consider visiting your HIP for help with:

- sleep
- anxiety
- depression
- stress
- fatigue
- grief
- headache
- pain
- socio-economic problems (domestic violence, bereavement, marital problems, etc)
- family violence
- children with behavioural challenges
- problems with substance abuse.

Health Coaches / Support Workers

Health Coaches / Support Workers help people to achieve their health and wellbeing goals.

Health Coaches / Support Workers have a wealth of information about community services and organisations and help connect people and navigate their health and wellbeing needs.

Consider visiting your Health Coach / Support Worker for help with:

- developing collaborative action plans that support health and wellbeing goals
- better understanding of new and existing health conditions
- support and empowerment to self-manage health and achieve health goals
- graded exposure to certain activities / environments
- advocacy while navigating services eg Work and Income, Kainga Ora etc.
- budgeting / money matters
- paid or voluntary work
- setting an agenda before a GP consult.

Te Whare Tapa Wha

While IPMHA is predominantly a mental health and wellbeing service, we acknowledge and appreciate that health and wellbeing includes Taha Tinana (physical wellbeing), Taha Whanau (family and community health), Taha Wairau (spiritual health and a sense of identity) as well as Taha Hinengaro (mental and emotional health).

Therefore IPMHA utilises the Te Whare Tapa Wha model of care which enables HIPs and Health Coaches / Support Workers to ensure collaborative plans are culturally appropriate for any problems of health and wellbeing.

Upcoming Events

Paint and Wine Night
Through the Stained-Glass Window
Street Food Kitchen, 2 George Street.
Wednesday 23 November, 7:00-9:00pm



PRIDE
South Canterbury

LAST FRIDAY OF
EACH MONTH

FIND US AT
STREETFOOD
KITCHEN
6PM TILL 8PM
MINIMUM

FRIGAY SOCIAL

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO
"COME OUT" AND MEET SOME
OF YOUR OTHER LOCAL
LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY AND
ALLIES, AT A FRIENDLY
VENUE.



Rose Festival

SUNDAY DECEMBER 6 | CAROLINE BAY

Market Day Sun 10am-4pm



**Harcourts Christmas on
the Bay**

Saturday 10 December 2022

Caroline Bay - 3:00-5:00pm



Seaside Festival

Caroline Bay

Wednesday 1 Feb 2023 - Monday 6 Feb 2023

9:00-3:00pm

Free webinar series

What's Going on for My Child or Teen?

Do you want to help your child or teen who may be exhibiting challenging behaviours or experiencing distress?

Join us for this series of free webinars, presented by expert facilitators to learn strategies to support your child or teen. Parents, caregivers, teachers, and those working with children can gain the confidence and tools to address a range of issues that may affect children and teens.

Attend the entire series or choose which webinars you'd like to attend.

Note: Please connect and register your interest with MHERC- the same webinars will take place in 2023- they can keep you informed.

The Importance of Self-Care and Self-Regulation

Wednesday 19 October, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Gain an understanding of the importance of looking after yourself first, and learn tips and tools for self-care. Facilitated by Mel Johns.

Strategies for Challenging Behaviour

Tuesday 25 October, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Explore what might drive challenging behaviour, and develop strategies that can be used when this behaviour arises. Facilitated by Catherine Gallagher.

Anxiety in Children and Teens

Tuesday 1 November, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Develop your knowledge and understanding of anxiety in children and learn ways you can support them. Facilitated by Catherine Gallagher.



Register at mherc.org.nz

School Avoidance

Tuesday 8 November, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Explore the issue of children avoiding school, discover how this is often linked to anxiety, and gain tools to address school avoidance. Facilitated by Catherine Gallagher. (It is highly recommended that you also attend the session on anxiety as this is often a key driver of school avoidance).

Supporting Children and Teens Through Big Emotions

Wednesday 16 November, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Gain an understanding of how you can support your child or teen who may be experiencing intense feelings. Facilitated by Sarah Drummond.

The Importance of Healthy Sleep Habits

Wednesday 23 November, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Explore the importance of sleep habits and learn ways to establish healthy routines. Facilitated by Ruth Troughton.



Supporting Children and Teens in a Digital World

Consider the effects on children and teens living in a digital world and explore tools and strategies which can be used to have discussions about wellbeing and safety online. Facilitated by NetSafe.

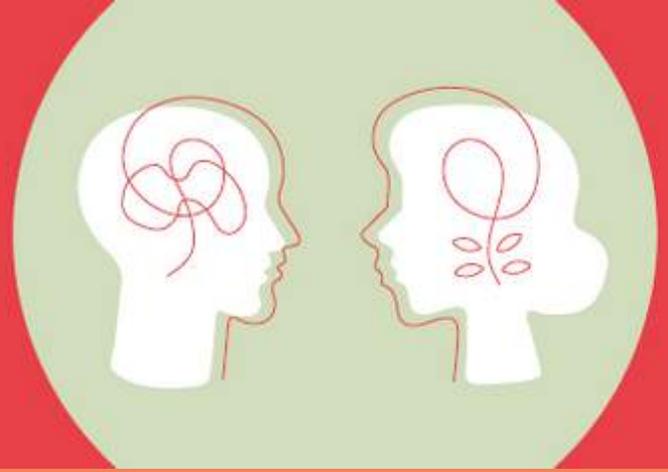
Register at mherc.org.nz

For more information contact education@mherc.org.nz or 0800 424 399



Register at mherc.org.nz

Habits and Hints for Wellbeing Self-Care Matters



Join our free, weekly one-hour sessions to learn and gain skills around mental health.

What's Going On? Stress to Distress - My (De)stressed Self

Monday 31 October 2022, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

This week's discussion will provide you with some ideas around how to manage the common stressors in our lives.

All of Me: Thinking Holistically – My Holistic Self

Monday 7 November 2022, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

This week's discussion explores the notion of whole self, looking at how each aspect of our lives is important to good emotional health.

The Mind Does Matter: The Impact of Thoughts – My Thinking Self

Monday 14 November 2022, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

This week's discussion will help you understand how our thoughts impact our emotions and how you can respond.

Speaking up: An Assertive Self – My Assertive Self

Monday 21 November 2022, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

This week's discussion provides you with some ideas around how to be assertive to ensure you can meet your own needs.

Action Planning: Wellness Recovery – My Caring Self

Monday 28 November 2022, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

This week's discussion looks at a model of self care that focuses on strategies for seeking and maintaining wellness.

What If? Future Focussed – My Prepared Self

Monday 5 December 2022, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

This week's discussion considers the possibility of relapse or setbacks with a focus on preparation for same to minimise the impacts.

Register at mherc.org.nz

For more information contact **0800 424 399**
or education@mherc.org.nz



Mental Health Education & Resource Centre

WORKSHOP

SUICIDE RISKMANAGEMENT UPDATE

FRIDAY 25TH NOVEMBER

8.30AM - 4.00PM

VENUE: AORAKIROOM (OLD LIBRARY),TIMARU HOSPITAL

The workshop is facilitated by Dr Annette Beautrais, Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator, Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand, South Canterbury. Resources and a certificate of attendance will be provided. This workshop covers current evidence-based best practice including:

- Current information and scope of the problem of suicide in New Zealand
- Screening
 - Depression screening
 - Suicide risk screening
- Risk and protective factors for suicide
- Risk mitigation and brief interventions
 - Safety plans
 - Counselling about access to lethal means
 - Caring contacts
- Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)
- Resources and pathways to care
- Self-care for providers

The workshop is being organised for new Health Improvement Practitioners and Coaches. There are places for anyone else who wants to join us. It is suitable for teachers/educators, counsellors, primary care nurses, allied health staff, midwives, LMCs, and those working in support services. Morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Please bring your own lunch.

How to Register

Please email Annette to register: abeautrais@scdhb.health.nz Ph: 03 687 2192

If you are registering several people, please provide the full name and email address for each person (in case we need to contact them directly, but also so we can provide a certificate of attendance for professional development portfolios).

The workshop is offered by Te Whatu Ora South Canterbury. There is no cost to attend.

FREE ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES ACROSS NEW ZEALAND

The South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce is working with the Auckland Business Chamber to support the Government's extension of their **First Steps Programme**.



First Steps is a mental health and wellbeing package – online and designed to support businesses and their owners, managers and employees.

First Steps was successfully implemented in Auckland last year, driven by the Auckland Business Chamber. It is now extended to small businesses across New Zealand until June 2024. The **First Steps** platform has had over 70,000 Auckland-based users reporting positive results.

The last couple of years have been extremely difficult for small businesses in New Zealand, and the impact has been far reaching. Business owners and their teams have had increased feelings of isolation and stress, and this has negatively impacted wellbeing.

First Steps offers preventative support for business owners, managers, and employees that aims to reduce the number of those in crisis by providing a variety of tools, resources, and perspectives. With an estimated 546,000 small businesses in New Zealand there are up to 1.2 million individuals who are owners or employees who can use these free resources.

First Steps focusses on moving from under pressure to under control and assists people to be healthy, resilient and better equipped to navigate challenges and uncertainty.

The resources include videos, articles and news and podcasts and allows users to assess where they are now by answering a few simple questions. There are also training resources and access to a wide range of professional supports. Wendy Smith, Chief Executive of the South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, says "The message is clear: you are not alone and there is support and help available. So don't delay. Go to <https://wellbeing.firststeps.nz/> and see what resources may be available for you and your teams."

Please share this link in your own workplace, and with teams and businesses you work with:
<https://wellbeing.firststeps.nz/>



WHAT SERVICES ARE OPEN?

STH CANTERBURY AND NORTH OTAGO WHANAU AWHINA PLUNKET HOURS

LOCAL WHANAU AWHINA PLUNKET WILL BE CLOSED FROM THURSDAY DEC 22ND UNTIL SUNDAY 8TH JAN 2023

PLUNKETLINE SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE 24HRS PER DAY 7 DAYS PER WEEK OVER THIS PERIOD. THIS SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE INCLUDING TO MOBILE PHONES 0800 933 922.

ADDRESS: 14 WOOLLCOMBE ST TIMARU

FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICE

FAMHS WILL SHUT DOWN FROM 23RD OF DECEMBER AND WILL RE-OPEN ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY 2023

ADDRESS: 77 GREY RD TIMARU .



ADDICTION MENTAL HEALTH PEER SUPPORT SERVICES 101

AMPSS101 DROP-IN-CENTRE IS OPEN OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PERIOD ON NON-STATUTORY DAYS ONLY. THE CENTRE WILL CLOSE FOR ANNUAL LEAVE FROM JANUARY 7 2023 AND REOPENING MONDAY 23RD JANUARY 2023.

ADDRESS: 24A CHURCH ST TIMARU

CAROLINE HOUSE

CAROLINE HOUSE WILL BE OPEN OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PERIOD ON NON-STATUTORY DAYS ONLY. NO STAFF WILL BE ONSITE ON STATUTORY HOLIDAYS.

ADDRESS: 55 CAIN ST TIMARU

MULTICULTURAL AORAKI

MULTICULTURAL AORAKI WILL BE OPEN OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PERIOD ON NON-STATUTORY DAYS ONLY.

ADDRESS: 27 SOPHIA ST TIMARU

VICTIM SUPPORT MID/SOUTH CANTERBURY

8AM – 4PM - MON-FRI - OFFICE – 027 54 000 74

24/7 – 0800 842 846 – CONTACT SERVICE

9AM TO 6PM – WEEKLY ROSTERED SUPPORT WORKERS – 0800 842 846 - OUT OF THESE HOURS - 0800 842 846

ADDRESS: TIMARU POLICE STATION 20 NORTH STREET TIMARU

WHAT SERVICES ARE OPEN?



Christmas and New Year Closing

Temuka Clinic will be closed from Thursday, 22 December, and reopening on Wednesday, 4 January 2023

Timaru Clinic at Te Aitarakihi will be closed from Saturday, 17 December and reopening on Monday, 9 January 2023

Waimate Clinic will be closed from Friday, 16 December, and reopening on Thursday, January 5 2023

Twizel Clinic will be closed from Thursday, 8 December and reopening on Wednesday, 11 January 2023

Opening Hours for 2023

(for mental distress support with a counsellor anytime phone or text Need to Talk on 1737, for crisis assessment phone TACT on 0800 277 997, or for emergencies phone 111)

Temuka - Arowhenua Whānau Services

Mondays, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Tuesdays, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Wednesdays, 10.30am – 4.00pm

Thursdays, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Fridays, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Last Friday of the month closed at 12.30pm

Temuka—Arowhenua Marae

Clinic closed until further notice

Timaru – Te Aitarakihi, Bridge Street

Monday, 9.00am – 4.00pm – Nurse

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – Closed

Friday, 9.00am – 4.00pm – Tamariki Ora Nurses

Twizel – Community Care Trust, Mt Cook Street

1st Wednesday of every Month, 11am - 2.30pm - Nurse and Whānau Ora Twizel

Waimate - 8A Timaru Road

Thursday, 10.00am - 4.00pm - Nurse



COPING WITH EXAM STRESS



TIPS TO HELP YOU COPE WITH EXAM STRESS

A little stress can be a good thing: it can be the motivational push that we need to get things done.

1. Eat, sleep and exercise well

Pulling all-nighters, surviving on a poor diet, and getting minimal amounts of movement into your day can increase symptoms of anxiety. For your body's best performance, make sure you're getting 8/9 hours of sleep, enough slow-release carbs, less caffeine and more water, and at least half an hour of exercise per day.

2. Pace yourself through panic

Panicking before, during or even after an exam is common among university students. If you experience it at any point, take six deep breaths, hydrate yourself, and then go back the problem at hand, being sure to break it down into several, manageable chunks. Remember that there is usually a rational solution to every problem, even if you can't see it at first glance.

3. Believe in yourself

When being constantly faced with new challenges, we often forget to look back at how far we have come and how much we have already achieved. Given that you have prepared well, there should be no reason for you to worry. Therefore, when experiencing a negative thought, try to replace it with a positive one. For example, instead of thinking 'If I don't get at least a 2:1, I am a failure', think 'Whatever I get, I will be proud of myself and value how much I have already achieved'. You can do this!



4. Use Distract Strategies

Use some distract strategies that can help you manage your stressful or anxious feelings such as using a stress ball, chewing some gum, sipping on ice water, using fidget toys such as an elastic band on your wrist or molding putties such as Play-Doh.

5. Don't compare yourself

We know it's easier said than done, but comparing yourself to others usually doesn't get you far. Everyone has their own backgrounds, strengths, and resources.

Similarly, don't compare yourself to your ideal image or try to be perfect. You're great as you are. It's great to aspire to improve, but remember that no human beings are perfect.

4. If you feel like you are struggling, talk to someone

Asking for help is never shameful. In the most extreme cases, it can help save a life. When struggling, talk to friends, family, or your personal tutor about how you are feeling. Alternatively, don't be afraid to seek professional help and support.

Helping Your Teen Deal with Anger

Anger is a normal, healthy emotion – it can even be beneficial and motivating when managed well – but it can be tricky for rangatahi to understand and express. Feeling angry isn't really the problem for most teens. Although anger can produce significant physical and emotional discomfort, it is an appropriate response to being hurt or feeling frustrated or powerless.

Anger is a real and important emotion to experience and be aware of; it's the expression of this emotion that can become a struggle for many teens. Anger can start to become a problem when it's expressed through unhelpful or destructive behaviour – either towards oneself or other people. It can also contribute to developing mental health problems, like depression and anxiety, or make existing problems worse.

Understand Your Teen's Anger

Underneath anger are often difficult emotions, such as hurt, frustration or sadness that a teen tries to avoid or isn't aware they are feeling. When a young person is acting out their anger in problematic ways, it can often be helpful for them to get in touch with what is driving this emotion and how to express and discharge it in healthier ways.

They may experience anger in situations where they feel powerless, or frustrated. This could be because of problems at home or school, or if they've fallen out with a friend, or had a break-up with a partner. They might start to feel angry if they feel misunderstood by people around them (like their parents) or if they are confused about their sexuality.

But sometimes, they can feel angry and not know why. This could be the result of lots of stress and different pressures building up around them. Or it could be because of something that happened to them in the past, like neglect or abuse. Recognising the types of situations which trigger their anger is the first step to figuring out what is causing it, and finding a way to make things better.



STRATEGIES TO HELP RANGATAHI SAFELY EXPRESS ANGER

HERE ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO HELP RANGATAHI STAY SAFE WHILE THEY LEARN WAYS TO RECOGNISE ANGER AND DEAL WITH IT MORE CONSTRUCTIVELY:

1

Participate in physical activities

Many people feel impulse to do something physical when feeling angry, so involvement in sports and other exercise helps in expressing anger on a regular basis.

2

Hit a punching bag

Teens need safe ways to get their anger out – a punching bag works well, so does hitting a pillow repeatedly, or using a foam padded bat.

3

Take a time-out or time-in

When anger escalates teens may need time alone to calm down and yell, cry or whatever is needed, so they stay safe and others are not negatively affected.



4

Get into music

Music works well to help teens identify and express feelings of anger, whether through singing, dancing, or playing along with songs filled with rage.



5

Identify triggers to anger

The better your teen can make the connection between what leads to angry outbursts, the more control they'll have in expressing this emotion.

6

Creatively express angry feelings

Both writing and drawing can be used effectively by teens to express and understand anger.

Sparklers

Helping tamariki live brighter



Sparklers provides modular, flexible and ready to go activities; including fun wellbeing activities to support whanau to look after their wellbeing and feel good. Go to <https://sparklers.org.nz> for simple ideas on getting wellbeing into your weekly planning.

Canterbury
District Health Board
Te Pōari Hauora o Waitaha

healthy
Christchurch

Mental Health Foundation
mauri tū, mauri ora
www.mentalhealth.org.nz

Sparklers consists of over 50 activities that can be used to help children feel calmer, happier, and more ready to learn. The activities take between 10 minutes and 1 hour, are aligned with the school curriculum, and cover a wide range of wellbeing topics including managing emotions, living in the moment, being grateful and showing kindness.



Sparklers
Helping tamariki live brighter

Sparklers helps kids to live brighter by teaching them things they can do to stay calm, manage worries and feel good.

To help your child to 'sparkle' and gain access to a huge range of parenting tools, tips and tricks, visit:

sparklers.org.nz

I'd love to support my tamariki with....

Feeling Good
Kia Piki te Ora

Managing Emotions
Kia Tau te Hinengaro

Kindness and Gratitude
Te Atawhai me te
Whakawhetai

Embracing Identity
Kaupapa Maori

Free for everyone, just visit sparklers.org.nz

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING



DO WHAT YOU CAN,
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,
MOVE YOUR HOOD



REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS
THAT GIVE YOU JOY



TALK & LISTEN,
BE THERE, FEEL CONNECTED



YOUR TIME, YOUR WORDS, YOUR PRESENCE



EMBRACE NEW EXPERIENCES,
SEE OPPORTUNITIES, SURPRISE YOURSELF

• **CONNECT, ME WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA**
CONNECT WITH PEOPLE WHO MAKE YOU FEEL VALUED. THIS MIGHT INCLUDE YOUR WHANAU/FAMILY, FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES AND NEIGHBOURS.

• **GIVE, TUKUA**
VOLUNTEERING AND BEING INVOLVED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY IS STRONGLY LINKED WITH FEELING GOOD AND FUNCTIONING WELL.

• **KEEP LEARNING, ME AKO TONU**
LEARNING, REMAINING CURIOUS AND SETTING GOALS ARE IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE. IT HELPS CHILDREN'S BRAINS TO GROW HEALTHY AND STRONG, HELPS THEM TO LEARN SOCIAL SKILLS AND COMMUNITY VALUES.

• **BE ACTIVE, ME KORI TONU**
BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IS PROVEN TO BOOST OUR WELLBEING AND DECREASE STRESS, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY.

• **TAKE NOTICE, ME ARO TONU**
PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO THE PRESENT MOMENT, TO OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS AND TO THE WORLD AROUND US BOOSTS OUR WELLBEING



Managing Anxiety Over Holidays

Christmas is traditionally a time of celebration, eating, drinking, spending time with whānau and friends, and generally enjoying the festive spirit. However, for many, this festive season can be an especially difficult time with the added pressure to create a magical day for our tamariki.

Feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation are common at this time of year, especially for those who are living alone, are away from their families or are experiencing hardship.



Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression:

1. Acknowledge your feelings and reach out if you need to.
2. Be realistic and set achievable goals.
3. Have realistic expectations about family gatherings- set aside differences and accept family and friends as they are.
4. Stick to a budget and plan ahead.
5. Don't abandon healthy habits; remember, everything in moderation- overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.
6. Look after yourself. Take a break; take a breather.
7. Avoid unhelpful social comparisons.
8. Don't look back on the past year- focus on what's yet to come.
9. Take control of the holidays.

Try to keep in mind that the true gift of the season is our presence, not our presents.



WHEN YOUR FEELINGS ARE OVERWHELMING, 'NAME IT TO TAME IT'



In the brain, naming an emotion can help calm it.

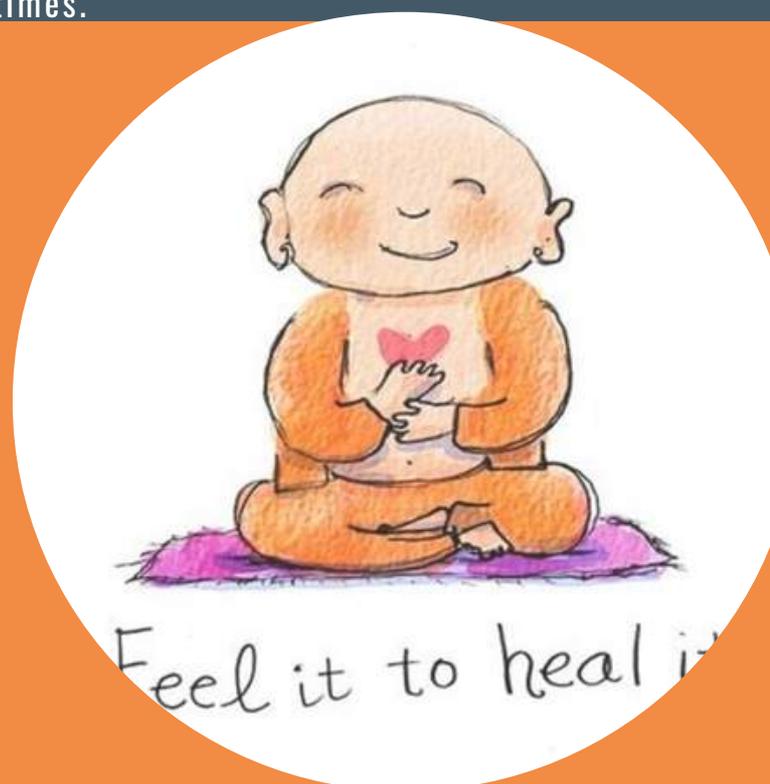
- DR. DAN SIEGEL



It's easy to blame ourselves for how we feel or even tell ourselves we should be feeling a different way, but shaming or squashing our feelings makes us feel worse. This is because when we're feeling lots of emotions, especially anger, fear, tension or anxiety, our brains start pumping out stress hormones and that becomes overwhelming and hard to ignore. What can we do about this? Dr Daniel Siegel says, 'Name it to tame it'. Just name what you're feeling - out loud, by writing it down, or just in your head. This really works! It tells your brain to switch off those stress signals and helps you to start feeling calmer and either a bit more able to focus on solving the problems you can solve, or just able to find other sources of joy.

'Name it to tame it' isn't always easy at first, especially if you're not used to thinking about your emotions. But it's a simple trick you can try any time to help you feel a bit better in difficult times.

Try to have some compassion and talk to yourself as you would talk to a loved friend. Life might be difficult right now, and we've been living with a lot of anxiety and uncertainty for a long time. However, your feeling is normal and human. Remember: if you're not feeling great right now, you won't feel like this forever. Our brains are very good at making us think that what we're feeling right now is how we will feel in the future, but these challenges will pass. Talking to trusted friends and whānau about how you're feeling can really help, too.



10 TIPS TO COPE WITH ANXIETY ABOUT GETTING "BACK TO NORMAL"



Easing of restrictions has allowed us to get back to the people and things we love, but it's OK if adjusting has brought challenges too. You might be worried about the pace of the changes or what the future may bring.

It's important to be patient with yourself and with your feelings. The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has been hard for us all, and we have all experienced the effects differently, including those of us who have been shielding.

Even positive change can lead to anxiety, and it can take time to readjust to things we have not done for a while.

Feelings of anxiety are likely to pass with time as we get used to the "new normal" but it's important to do what we can to take care of our mental health.

There are lots of things that can help you to manage these feelings and make it easier to adjust.

Here are our top tips for taking care of your mental health now that things have changed.

1. GO AT YOUR OWN PACE



Lots of conflicting and confusing information about COVID-19 can make it harder to know what to do or believe.

If you are finding news and information about COVID-19 overwhelming or worrying, try to limit how much you consume. Stick to trusted sources like Unite Against COVID-19 or Ministry of Health.

Being able to see more of our friends and family and visit places is exciting. But it can also be a lot to take in all at once, so it's important to find regular time for yourself to relax too.

Many people find it helpful to spend time outside. Whether it's gardening or taking a walk in a local park, being in green space can help to lift your mood and relieve stress.



5. CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

It might be tempting to make lots of plans and say yes to everything now that restrictions have lifted, but there's no need to rush.

Take it step by step, and only do what is comfortable and safe for you to ease back into socialising – then you can build your time back up as your confidence returns.

2. DO NOT AVOID THINGS ENTIRELY

Avoiding the things that make us anxious can sometimes feel like the easier option in the short term, but this can make it harder to start facing our fears in the longer term.

Instead, try to set yourself small but manageable targets. Start with activities that are important to you and feel achievable – like meeting close friends and family for a coffee or snack outside – and gradually build up from there.

3. GET YOUR INFORMATION FROM THE RIGHT SOURCES

4. MAKE TIME TO RELAX



It's natural to feel worried every now and again, but our anxious thoughts can sometimes be unhelpful.

If you can learn to identify and separate unhelpful thoughts from helpful ones, you can find a different way to look at the situation.

Watch our video to find out more

6. TELL SOMEONE HOW YOU FEEL

It's natural to feel worried every now and again, but our chances are that someone we know feels exactly how we do too. Opening up to a person we trust can be really helpful, whether it's a friend or family member, a GP or an organisation's helpline or online forum.

7. PLAN SOCIAL OCCASIONS

Uncertainty can be hard to manage but making plans can help you avoid this. Preparing for any challenges ahead of time can help us to feel more comfortable and confident in what we're doing. That "plan" can be as simple as knowing what time an event will start and finish, and how many people are likely to be there.



During the periods of lockdown and greater restrictions, life changed for us all and we developed new routines. Even if your normal weekday or weekend habits have now changed again, some things can stay the same.

Are there areas in your life where it's easier to stick to a routine? Something as simple as going to bed and waking up at the same time each day or making sure to stick to your set lunch break can make a big difference.

8. FIND ROUTINE WHERE YOU CAN

9. WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS

If you're feeling worried or upset it can be helpful to explore your feelings by keeping a diary or journal. This can also be a great way to track your mood over time and remind yourself of the progress you have made. As your confidence begins to grow, you can look back over your entries to see how far you have come.



When there is lots of change happening, we can get caught up in worrying about the future and the past. Instead, try to shift your focus to the present – make plans but try not to dwell on "what ifs" or what was "supposed" to happen. Relaxation, mindfulness or getting outside and enjoying nature are all good ways to help you focus on the present.

10. FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

Stressed? Relax your tongue!

When I was researching my book *7 Ways to Reduce Anxiety in 7 Minutes or Less* I collected a large number of simple, effective, and quick to apply techniques that can help reduce the level of stress we experience. One super easy technique that didn't make it into the book is one I use many times a day because it's so effective at quietening the mind. The technique involves taking conscious control of your tongue.



When we think, we have a tendency to talk to ourselves. Even if we are not consciously aware of this sub-vocalisation, our body, and more specifically, our tongue is. The continuous 'running commentary' in the conscious mind corresponds to tiny movements in the tongue, in which the tongue is 'saying' the words of our internal monologue. When we relax the tongue or stop it from moving, the inner monologue ceases. Our tongue is part of the involuntary (autonomic) nervous system. We often hold tension in the tongue without being aware of it and when stressed, many of us manifest this tension by pressing our tongue against the roof of our mouth. Interestingly, our tongue is also part of our voluntary nervous system. This makes our tongue a "bridge" between our voluntary and involuntary nervous systems, and opens the way for us to trigger our involuntary nervous system—the "deeper" part of our nervous system—to begin to relax.

On the next page, there are two simple exercises you can use anytime to take conscious control of your tongue and quieten the anxious running commentary in your mind.



RELAX YOUR TONGUE



Relaxing the tongue is such an effective practice that, in her book *Awakening the Mind: A Guide to Harnessing the Power of Your Brainwaves*, Anna Wise, says "If you take nothing else away with you from reading this book, you will have gained enormously from this one practice.

Anna offers the following exercise:

1

Close your eyes

2

Briefly press your tongue against the roof of your mouth to make it tense, then stop doing that and allow your tongue to relax.

3

It's OK to let your mouth hang open slightly.

4

Just simply let your tongue go, especially the back of your tongue.

5

As you exhale, feel it let go even more.

6

Exaggerate the relaxation.

7

If you need to swallow, that's okay.

8

If your tongue gets tense again, don't get annoyed. Just give it permission to relax again.

9

Exaggerate the relaxation again.

10

By now you can almost feel your tongue floating in the cavity of your mouth.

11

You may feel it shorten some – or thicken.

12

Exaggerate the relaxation even more.

13

Focus on only relaxing your tongue – nothing else.

Relax





STOP YOUR TONGUE FROM MOVING

In addition to relaxing your tongue you can reduce the tiny movements in the tongue by holding your tongue still.

This can be achieved by either physically holding the tongue with the thumb and forefinger or by placing the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth.

The latter option is the one I recommend you use.

So go ahead and give it a go:

1

Just imagine that there is a little droplet of olive oil balancing on the tip of your tongue.

2

Now place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth, behind your front teeth.

3

Imagine that you are balancing the droplet of oil, holding it in that position.

4

Notice that your tongue becomes still as you continue to hold your tongue in this way.

5

Now notice how quiet your mind becomes as you do that.

You can hold your tongue in this position for as long as you like. I use this technique when working with clients as it stops my internal chatter and allows me to focus 100% on what the person is saying. I also use it to stop a negative thought in its tracks.

I encourage you use one or both of these simple techniques. You'll be amazed at the difference they make.



What Next?

Helping people to reduce stress and gain control over their stress level is my passion. If you'd like to explore how I can help you or your employees to become calmer, more productive and healthier, let's have a chat. Contact me now on 021 056 8389 or email me at tony@tycoaching.nz

Go well
Tony

Tony helps individuals to harness the power of their mind to achieve success and well-being in life, work and business. Tony's particular area of expertise is in helping people perform under pressure and gain freedom from worry, anxiety and stress. Tony's solution focused approach to coaching uses a range of techniques drawn from the fields of co-active coaching, hypnosis, positive psychology and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Contact Tony today to discuss how he can help you, or if you think Tony could help someone you know, you might like to encourage them to get in touch with him.

The Spoon Theory

Are you feeling overwhelmed and/or fatigued, like you just don't have the energy to do the things you used to do? Take a look at "The Spoon Theory" which is an interesting visual representation of how much energy daily tasks of living require, without the addition of the things you do for fun and/or relaxation.

Try adding up how many theoretical spoons you may have used today. How much energy do you have remaining? The take home message from the spoon theory is that doing too much in one day can leave you short on spoons the next day. Are there any particular activities that you could substitute with a different activity that could help reduce feelings of overwhelm and fatigue?

E.g instead of surfing the internet on social media and watching TV (3 spoons) could you make plans to socialise with a close friend, or try mindfulness or meditation?

The Spoon Theory

DYSAUTONOMIA INTERNATIONAL



AWARENESS



ADVOCACY



ADVANCEMENT

The Spoon Theory is a creative way to explain to healthy friends and family what it's like living with a chronic illness. Dysautonomia patients often have limited energy, represented by spoons. Doing too much in one day can leave you short on spoons the next day.

If you only had 12 spoons per day, how would you use them? Take away 1 spoon if you didn't sleep well last night, forgot to take your meds, or skipped a meal. Take away 4 spoons if you have a cold.



get out of bed



bathe



make & eat a meal



go to work/school



get dressed



style hair



make plans & socialize



go shopping



take pills



surf the internet



light housework



go to the doctor



watch TV



read/study



drive somewhere



exercise

The Spoon Theory was written by Christine Miserando, which you can check out on her website www.butyoudontlook sick.com.



Are you experiencing thoughts or worries that are contributing to or compounding negative feelings? Many people develop unhelpful thinking styles (called thinking traps) which are irrational beliefs that contribute to uncomfortable emotions and unwanted behaviour.

Below are some of the most common thinking traps.

All-or-Nothing Thinking: Sometimes called 'black and white thinking,' this kind of thinking operates in extremes and doesn't leave room for anything in the middle.

Example: I have to get all A's this semester; What's the point of trying out for the play, I'll never get the lead; Either I do it right or not at all.

Jumping to Conclusions: Forming an opinion without enough evidence. Sometimes called "assuming the worst," there are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- Mind reading (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- Fortune telling (predicting the future)

Example: I'm going to fail the test; No one wants to talk to me; I'm going to say something stupid; She didn't call because she doesn't even like me.

Emotional Reasoning: Assuming that because we feel a certain way, what we think must be true.

Example: I feel embarrassed, so I must be an idiot; I feel awkward, so other people must think I'm awkward; I feel nervous, so that means something bad is going to happen; I feel lonely, that means I don't have any friends.

Over-generalizing: Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw, often using words like "never," "always," "nobody," and "everybody."

Example: Nothing ever goes my way; I always mess things up; I can't do anything right.

Ignoring the good: Discounting or ignoring the good things that have happened or that you have done and thinking that good things "don't count." Paying attention to only certain types of evidence by noticing our failures but not our successes.

Example: It doesn't matter that they like me if the popular kids don't like me; I'm a terrible student (even though I have an A in one class); Nothing went right today; I mess up everything.

Magnification (Catastrophizing): Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), sometimes called "making mountains out of mole hills."

Example: This is going to be a disaster; This is the worst day of my life; I'm never going to get over this.

Should Statements: Focusing on the past, attempting to redo history with our thoughts, thinking that we could have known things we couldn't have known. Using critical words like 'should', 'must,' or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed. If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration.

Example: I should have studied more before that test; I shouldn't have said something so stupid; I should have worn a different outfit.



Judging Yourself Unfairly: These statements are harsh and critical. When we talk to ourselves this way, we are treating ourselves unkindly and without love and aren't recognizing that everyone makes mistakes and nobody is perfect!

Example: I'm such a loser, I can't do anything right; I'm so stupid; I'm the only one who can't do this; I'm ugly.

Accepting Helplessness: Deciding there is nothing you can do when maybe we haven't tried everything, or deciding to give up instead of keep trying.

Example: It doesn't matter what I say, they won't believe me; I can't do anything about it; I'll never get better; My opinion doesn't matter; What's the point of even trying?

Perfectionism: Perfectionism is holding yourself to an unreasonable standard and being unable to tolerate mistakes. It often leads to beating yourself up over even small errors, and can lead to other thinking traps like "should" statements and judging yourself unfairly. Example: I need to re-do the whole thing; I can't believe I made that mistake.

These inaccurate thoughts are usually used to reinforce negative thinking patterns — telling ourselves things that sound rational and truthful in the moment, but in reality only serve to trigger feelings of negativity and pessimism.

The good news is that with practice, we can challenge our negative thoughts and worries.

Next time you notice a negative thought or irrational worry, try these steps.

1. Identify the negative thought and/or worry and name it for what it is.
e.g I am going to fail my test.

2. What are some clues that your thought is untrue, or that your worry is unlikely to come true?
e.g I have talked to my lecturer/teacher/tutor about the test content and I have studied these areas.

3. If your worry does not come true, what will probably happen instead?
e.g I will pass my test.

4. If your worry does come true, how will you handle it? Will you eventually be okay?
e.g I will be upset if I don't pass my test, but my lecturer/teacher/tutor will allow for test resits. I will ask for my test results to see where I went wrong and use this as my focus for the resit.

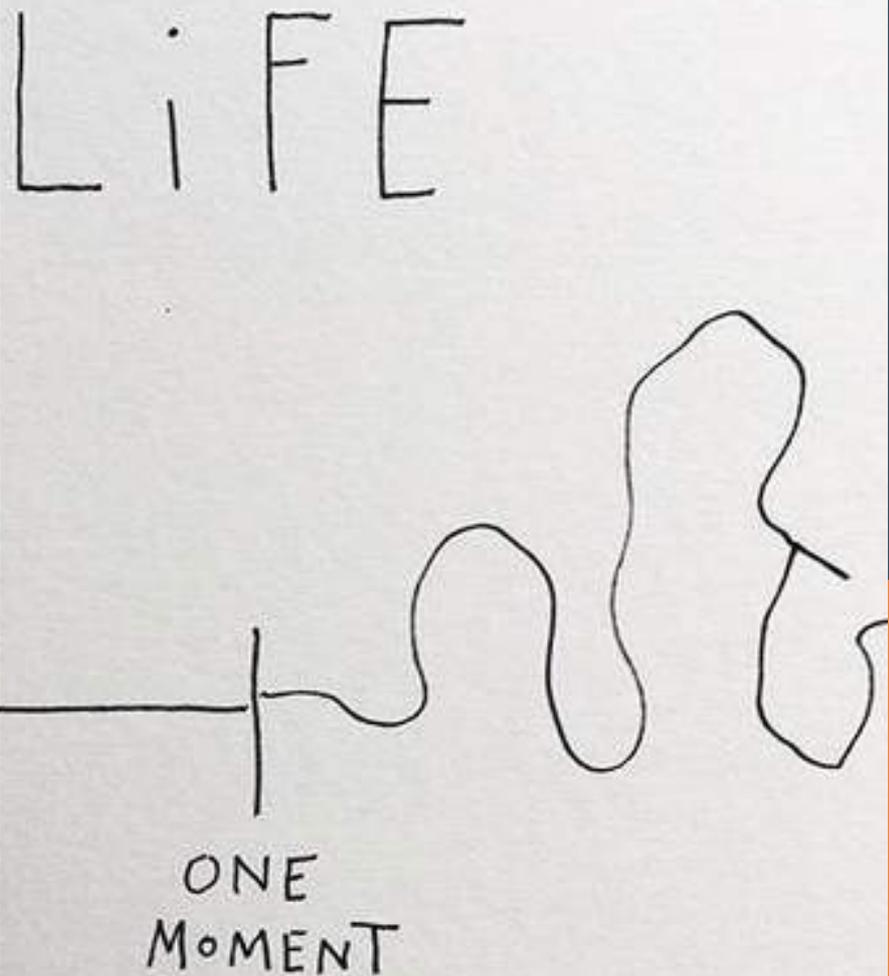
5. After answering these questions, how has your worry changed?
e.g My worry has reduced as I feel confident that I have done my best to prepare for the test, and if I do fail then there will be another chance to pass.

How to Get Comfortable with Uncertainty and Change

I recently moved to a new apartment, an occasion that calls for celebration preferably outdoors in my brand-new backyard. But I didn't expect how much being in a different space would disrupt my sense of safety. So I worried-about my cat escaping out the front door, how to protect my family from COVID, raccoon transmitted diseases, and more.

After reading Elaine Fox's new book *Switch Craft: The Hidden Power of Mental Agility*, I have a better idea of what's going on. I fall into the category of someone who's uncomfortable with uncertainty. I love a good routine, and moving disrupted all of mine. I have a need to feel in control of my circumstances, but just about everything in my immediate surroundings changed.

Maybe you fit this description, too, and you have trouble coping when life is full of unknowns or when things don't turn out as you expected. According to Fox, what we need to cultivate is mental agility—a nimbleness in how we think, feel, and act that will allow us to adapt to changing circumstances.



"When life is uncertain, our usual responses and coping strategies might not always work. The practice of mental agility can help us be resilient."

BY KIRA M. NEWMAN

October 4, 2022

Feeling uncomfortable with uncertainty

Uncertainty arises when we're in new situations, like a move or a new job, or when we're in unpredictable situations-like when we have a job interview, a medical test, an injury, or the possibility of layoffs at work.

Because our brains are future-predicting machines, it's natural to want to avoid ambiguity. "As human beings, we crave security, and that is why all of us are intolerant of uncertainty to some extent," writes Fox.

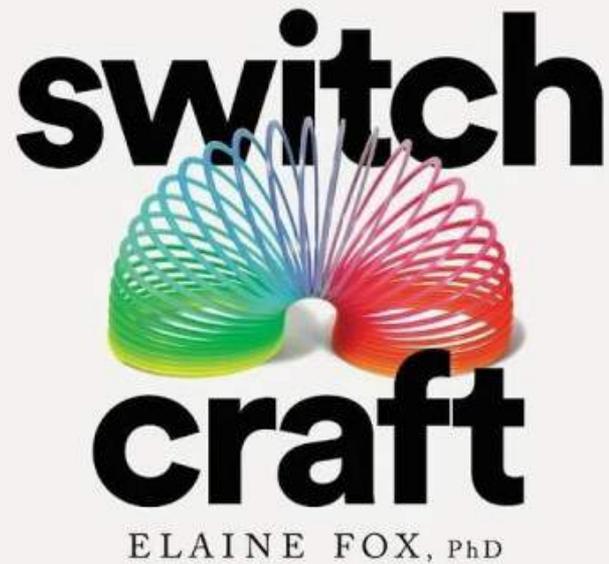
But some have this tendency more than others. For example, you might be intolerant of uncertainty if you love planning, hate surprises, and get frustrated when unexpected things mess up your day. Someone who has trouble with uncertainty might find it hard to make decisions in ambiguous circumstances, because they feel like they don't have enough information and don't want to make the wrong choice.

To avoid the discomfort of uncertainty, some of us engage in what Fox calls "safety behaviors"-things like making lots of lists, constantly double checking, overpreparing, or seeking reassurance from others. For example, you might read a restaurant menu in advance, or repeatedly check in on your kid to make sure they're doing OK.

If you dislike uncertainty, you might also be a worrier, because worrying actually gives us a sense of control in a difficult situation-at least we're doing something! You might also shy away from challenges that you could fail at, and lean on tried-and-true pathways in life.

"Switch Craft is a fascinating book, packed full of practical advice... it offers vital insights in how to cope with the stresses and strains of a post-COVID world."
—MICHAEL MOSLEY, *New York Times* bestselling author and science journalist

THE HIDDEN POWER OF MENTAL AGILITY



The Power of Mental Agility

To get more comfortable with uncertainty, we need to practice what Fox calls mental agility, or what psychologists call psychological flexibility. Research suggests that people who are more psychologically flexible have higher well-being and tend to be less anxious and worried.

Someone who is psychologically flexible is open to change, or may even find change exciting. When they're working on a problem, they try lots of different solutions.

They don't see the world in black and white, they like to learn from others, and they often have some unusual ideas of their own.

Mental agility shines when we're facing change, when things don't go as expected, or when the future is particularly unpredictable-like, say, when travel plans fall through, going through a divorce, or in a pandemic. At that moment, some people dig their heels in and keep doing what they've always done. But mentally agile people are able to recognize when what they're doing isn't working, and change things up.

"There is no one-size-fits-all solution to any of life's problems," writes Fox.

She likes the metaphor of using different clubs on a golf course, depending on whether you're hitting a long shot, swinging from a bunker, or putting. "Life is exactly like that-we're going to be faced with quite different types of problems and different types of obstacles to get around, and we need different approaches for all of those."

It comes down to the choice of stick or switch: Should I keep pursuing the same thoughts, feelings, and actions, or do I need to switch to something new?

For example, she says, parents need a veritable smorgasbord of strategies to raise their children, everything from tough discipline and strict boundaries to treating kids to ice cream and a day off. Knowing when to use which one is a sign of healthy flexibility. The same goes for leaders at work, who might want to change the way they manage their employees when the company is going through a season of stress.

Coping strategies are another good example. Psychologists like to group them into two main types: emotion-focused and problem-focused. Emotion-focused strategies change the way we feel, like distracting ourselves, getting support from friends, or looking at the situation from a different perspective. Problem-focused strategies, on the other hand, involve taking action to solve the problem directly.

No one strategy works all the time, and you'll often see people get stuck in their favorite way of coping. If you tend toward distraction and denial, you might avoid dealing with a problem that you actually could have solved; if you're an inveterate problem-solver, you might feel helpless and angry when confronting a problem—or a loved one's—that has no solution, when all that's really needed is support and connection.

How to Cultivate Mental Agility

Fox's book is full of tips to cultivate mental agility, as well as other related skills that can help you roll with the punches in life. Here are a few that felt most practical and new to me.

1

Surrender to transitions

When something changes in your life—you leave a job, end a relationship, or lose someone you love—recognize that you're now in a transition. Transitions take time to move through, and they can't be rushed. Your identity (as an employee, partner, or friend, perhaps) will have to shift and change, as well. Be kind and accepting, and don't expect too much of yourself as you struggle through this time.

2

Prepare for change in advance

Sometimes change is unexpected, and other times you see it coming. When you anticipate a big change in life, spend some time exploring your feelings around it. You can list all the ways your life will change and identify the ones that are causing you anxiety. Give yourself the opportunity to mourn what you will leave behind, but also devote some of your attention to new opportunities that you're excited about.

3

Seek out small uncertainties

You can build up your tolerance for uncertainty, Fox explains, by gradually exposing yourself to it on purpose. For example, you could reach out to an acquaintance you haven't seen in a while, try bargaining for an item you want to buy, or check social media less frequently.

4

Change up your perspective

One way to do this is to find something small that annoys you and try to see the silver lining to it. For example, maybe your commute got longer, but that means you have extra time to listen to podcasts.

When you're facing a problem, you could change your perspective by brainstorming a handful of solutions, rather than trying to figure out the perfect correct one. Or make list of people you admire, and ask yourself: What would they do in your place?

5

Ask a different question

When life is hard, we often find ourselves harping on "why" questions: "Why is this happening to me?" In those moments, Fox suggests letting go of the "why" and asking "how" instead: "How can I change this situation?" Or perhaps you're already asking a "how" question, but the wrong one: Instead of "How do I stop working so much?," she explains, try an easier question: "How can I find time to go to the gym?"



Kira M. Newman is the managing editor of Greater Good. Her work has been published in outlets including the Washington Post, Mindful magazine, social media Monthly, and Tech.co, and she is the co-editor of The Gratitude Project. Follow her on Twitter!

6

Move past worry

Repetitive worrying is one of the most common rigid thought patterns we get stuck in. To break free from it, identify whether the problem you're worrying about is solvable or not-and take action if you can. If there's nothing you can do, Fox suggests recording yourself talking in detail about your worries, and then listening to the recording repeatedly until your worries don't have as much of a hold on you.

It's been about two months since my move, and my brain has calmed down about all the changes. (Surrender to transitions-got it.) I definitely see the appeal of being someone who moves through life agilely and with curiosity, letting things happen as they may and feeling confident, I'll figure out how to deal with them. Lists gripped tightly in hand; I have trouble ever imagining myself that way.

But Fox's book helped put a name and an explanation on something I struggle with, so at least I have a goal to aspire to. Since reading it, I have noticed my knee-jerk resistance to plans changing or doing things someone else's way, and I have been able to let go. I doubt anyone will ever call me spontaneous and easygoing, but at least I can make a point to expect the unexpected in life.

How to Make Sure You Keep Growing and Learning



Leaders who are widely viewed as effective and highly successful in their organizations will tell you that 70% of the learning that got them there was through their experiences, 20% was through other people, and 10% was through courses, books, and other types of education.

Adam Bryant, who interviewed CEOs weekly for a New York Times column, also observed the importance of learning from experiences among the CEOs he interviewed. In a talk he gave, he concluded that there is no one path to the top—but that successful CEOs make the most out of the experiences they have. Whatever they are doing, they wring meaning and learn from it.

But most of us are not good at “wringing meaning.” We often don’t learn from experiences because we’re not even truly in our experiences. We’re thinking about where we’re going or where we’ve been; we’re multitasking; we’re conversing with others by rote, without paying much attention.

In my book *The Power of Flexing: How to Use Small Daily Experiments to Create Big Life-Changing Growth*, I aim to help readers extract all the learning they can from the experiences they have—to wring meaning, particularly meaning about themselves, their effectiveness, and their impact on others. Here are four practices from the book to help you turn your experiences into generators for growth.



1. Manage your mindset

The psychologist Carol Dweck pointed out long ago that many people approach experiences, particularly challenging ones, with a mindset that doesn’t serve them well. They hold a performance-prove mindset and the goal to prove to everybody that they are fabulous at the task that they’re setting out to do.

This mindset, though, prevents them from learning much in that experience. They’re so caught up in proving how great they are that they don’t ask questions, because that might make them look stupid. They avoid the challenging aspects of the task, because they’re not sure they can prove that they can do them well.

If you have more of a learning mindset, you still want to perform well, but you are also attuned to learning. You are open to challenge and your focus is on getting better than you were in the past (rather than being preoccupied with whether you are better than others). People exhibiting this mindset tend to show heightened learning, reduced anxiety, and also greater resilience in the face of setbacks or challenges. You can manage your mindset as you approach a challenging experience by self-reminders and talking with friends who are similarly oriented toward learning.

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2. Set a learning goal

When you have a challenging experience upcoming—running a retreat for your company or church, having a difficult conversation with a family member or roommate, heading a new team—the second step in growing your personal effectiveness is to identify a learning goal, something that is personal to you and important to have in mind as you go through that experience. Based on interviews for my book, we found three different sources of learning goals.

The pain of the present.

When there's something in your present situation that's causing pain for you or others, it creates a motive to grow, change, or try something different. That might be a class that goes badly, a team meeting where everybody's unhappy, or an interaction that's awkward when all of a sudden you know something is off.

Mark was an MBA student who wanted to lead a team at McKinsey. While serving as president of a student club, he came to understand that he was a micromanager. Mark liked to have control, and people were avoiding him, and becoming disengaged from the work as a result. He knew this style of leadership wasn't going to work at McKinsey, and so he set a goal for his growth: to work on stepping back so that other people could step up.

The fantasies of the future.

We all have fantasies of our future selves. These might come from our imagination or our observation of various role models. These fantasies can create a learning goal for us. Lucy, another person I interviewed for my book, ran a small business in the wine country in California that she wanted to sell. She had fantasies about future Lucy: Future Lucy was proactive, set up her tasks, and knocked them down one by one. But she didn't know how to navigate complex issues around taxes, bank loans, and family estate planning. Every time she didn't know how to do something, she just put it on the next day's to-do list. Based on the fantasy of who she could be, she set a goal to improve at sticking with a task, even if she didn't know how to do it initially.

"Small, everyday experiments can help us reach our goals and get better at the skills that are important to us."

BY SUSAN J. ASHFORD |
SEPTEMBER 28, 2022





3. Conduct experiments

To grow, you need to do more than just set an intention; you need to also design and conduct small experiments—you need to try new things. The goal here is to try to do something differently to see if you can get different results. Once you set a focus for your growth, you need to identify a small experiment you could try and learn from, and then a second thing to try if the first doesn't work so well.

In my case, I tried two things when asking for help. First I pushed myself to make requests in person so that it was harder for me to minimize and not convey appreciation to the other person. Second, when I had to do it by email because life is busy, I audited my email to see if I was minimizing. One thing I looked for was the word “just”—“I just need you to do this, I just want you to do that”—because it conveys that it's a small, unimportant thing, and therefore not that appreciated.

Micromanaging Mark gave people very clear, deliverable specs, so he was able to let go of the process more and let people try different ways to get things done. He could do that knowing that he had been clear on the desired end result. He also physically removed himself from where the work was being done. If his club members were doing prep in a classroom for a big event, he just left and let them be.

Undone-by-unknowing Lucy committed to spending the first hour of her day on challenging activities. She also included “learn more about” on her to-do list: learn more about the tax code, learn more about the estate. This small intervention made the things she needed to do feel smaller and more doable.

Phantoms of the past.

We bring with us into the world all sorts of phantoms from our childhood, lessons we learned when we didn't even know we were learning lessons. Scholars recently have called these “family ghosts in the executive suite.” These ghosts or phantoms are beneath our direct consciousness but affect our behavior with others in important ways. Here is one example. Growing up with five brothers and sisters, I believed there was a strong rule in our household called “Don't bother Mom and Dad; don't add to their burden.” Flash forward a few decades, I'm the senior associate dean, and I have to ask people for help.

One time I thought I was being nice when asking a professor for help, by saying, “Don't worry about it, it's not very important, just skim it, don't take any time on it.” His blistering email in response—stating that it was very demotivating to have someone ask for help and then tell you it's not important—helped me to understand how lessons learned in my past were not serving me well in my current role. I wanted the people I asked for help to feel valued and appreciated, so I put this goal on my agenda: to become better at asking for help straight out without minimizing.

Notice that these goals are to work on, to improve, to get better at. As soon as you state your goals as to be great at or to be the best at, it's very difficult to stay in a learning mindset. You want to identify goals that help nudge you to get better without becoming preoccupied with proving your greatness to others.

Your goals might be to be a better listener, be more influential, be more approachable, be more resilient, or keep your strong emotions in check. The flexing approach is just that, flexible—you can pick up a goal, pursue it, learn, drop that goal, and pick up another one. Ten years down the line, you might come back to the same goal and work on it a little bit more.

4. Seek feedback to adjust

To be personally and interpersonally effective, you can't decide on your effectiveness on your own—you need other people's feedback. Given this, feedback and feedback seeking are integral to the growth process.

There are a couple different ways you can seek feedback. First, you can engage in direct inquiry; you can ask someone, "How am I doing on X or Y? I'd like feedback on Z." "Do you hate this idea, boss? I want to know." You also can monitor the subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) cues people are giving off around you and infer a feedback message. Both strategies require some thoughtfulness and care. When monitoring, it's possible to misinterpret these feedback cues, so look for patterns. If I'm teaching a class and one student is falling asleep, it's probably about that student; if everybody's falling asleep, it's probably about me, or some part of my lecture that I might want to attend to.

You might think inquiry will get you much more directly to the feedback you need, but it has a problem, as well: People often are reluctant to tell you directly that you aren't doing well and often feel they need to tell you what you seem to want to hear.

A lot of people are afraid to ask for feedback directly; they think they might look weak, insecure, or uncertain. But according to research, it's the opposite. It actually makes people—your boss, peers, or subordinates—see you as more effective and caring.

In my case, I directly asked for feedback. At the end of my conversation with the person I was asking to help, I would say, "It's really important to me that the people I'm asking to help really feel like that help is valued. I'd love feedback on how you felt about that today and as we go forward, because that matters to me."

Mark asked a friend in his club: "Do people seem engaged? I really want people to feel engaged." He never even mentioned what he was working on, but his friend's answers gave him the feedback he needed to adjust his behavior.

There's nothing automatic that guarantees that you'll gain useful insights from any particular experience. To learn and grow, it matters what you do with what happens to you. That means approaching your most important experiences with a learning mindset, bringing a specific focus on your personal growth in that experience, trying experiments, and seeking feedback.

The ability to continue to grow is a real asset both for careers these days and for a vital life. The context is changing around us so rapidly: We work in different ways, we often move around to different companies, and companies themselves are changing. Growth is needed.

Our personal lives can be equally dynamic: Life stages change—you might have been a great parent for young kids but suddenly they become teenagers, and new behaviors are required to be effective. People move around, start new jobs, retire from longstanding careers, or hope to be influential within their increasingly diverse and dynamic communities, churches, synagogues, and mosques.

If you're not growing, it's hard to continue to be your best self and achieve all that you want to achieve in life. The power of flexing offers a set of simple things you can do to enhance your effectiveness and to continue to grow from your everyday experiences.



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PHYSICAL WELLBEING



Physical well-being is much more than good health. It is the direct result of lifestyle choices and our behaviors around sleep, diet, physical activity, hygiene, and relaxation that achieve or derail optimal functioning.



10 Ways to improve your physical wellness

1. Starting moving more
2. Get enough sleep
3. Hydrate
4. Maintain a well-balanced, nutritious diet
5. Reduce your sugar intake
6. Step out into the sunshine
7. Engage in mentally stimulating activities
8. Go for regular preventive exams
9. Wash your hands
10. Keep stress in check



How do you achieve physical well-being?

Since physical well-being has many components there are limitless ways to improve it.

For example:

- Eating well
- Exercising
- Getting enough sleep
- Staying hydrated
- Drinking in moderation

The challenge is getting real about where you are physically and setting realistic goals to get you where you want to be.



THINGS TO DO IN SOUTH CANTERBURY TO BOOST YOUR WELLBEING



Just the adults

- Jet boat through the Rakaia Gorge
- Rangitata Rafts- Geraldine
- Glacier explorers- Mount Cook
- Go canyoning in the Kaumira Canyon (Geraldine)
- Do a Culinary Tour of South Canterbury (Geraldine Butchery, Humdinger Gin Distillery, Ship Hop Brewing, Geraldine Cheese Company, Al's Laboratory, Barker's Foodstore and Eatery, Burkes Brewing Co, Fairlie Bakehouse and more)

Family Fun

- Stargaze at Lake Tekapo or at the Geraldine Observatory
- Go to the High Country Salmon farm in Twizel
- Hot Pools and Day Spa at Tekapo Springs
- Mackenzie Alpine Horse Trekking- Tekapo
- Visit the Geraldine Vintage Car and Machinery Museum
- Meet the Woolly Alpacas (Geraldine)
- Bike Pentland Traverse, Meyers Pass, Kinbrace Trail and the Whitehorse trail (Waimate)
- See Wild and Tame Wallabies (Waimate)
- Visit the Maori Rock Art Centre

Walks

- Mt Cook Guided Day Walks
- Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve (Geraldine)
- Orari Gorge Track (Geraldine)
- Opihi Walkway (Temuka)
- Waimate Whitehorse Walkway
- Lake Wainono Wetland Conversation Area- Victoria Park and Knottingley Park.
- Caroline Bay
- Jack's Point
- Dashing Rocks



Looking after your mental wellbeing

You need to look after your mental wellbeing throughout life, just as you look after your physical health. Help is available.

Pick up a copy of the [Traffic Light Guide](#) or download from scdhb.health.org

Keeping Well

- Talk to friends, family and whānau
- Five Ways to Wellbeing, apps and online learning (mentalhealth.org.nz)
- Connect with local community support groups



Extra Support

- Contact your Medical Centre
- Or phone/text **1737** for free 24/7 counselling support

NEED TO TALK?

1737

free call or text
any time

Immediate Crisis

- Concerned for your or someone's immediate safety? Call 111
- Need help from Mental Health Crisis Team? Call 0800 277 997

Call **111**

