

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing Resource Suite Phase 2

*Mai i te Korowaitanga, ka tauke te ora.
When one is fully supported and guided, there is hope.*

For any queries or comments on these resources please contact

Mauriora@huttvalleydhb.org.nz or ItsAboutOurPlace@ccdhb.org.nz

Version 1.0 6th May 2020

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing Self-care resources

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The individual resources contained in this suite can be found on the COVID-19 staff site under the [Staff Welfare and Wellbeing](#) section.

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3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing

Self care - quick calm exercises

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Try some of these quick activities to ground yourself and help your thinking brain to get back to work.

Hand press

- Press the palms of your hands together firmly
- Hold for a slow count of 5
- Release and relax.

Repeat x 1



Forward slide

- Standing or sitting, stretch your arms out in front of you
- Cross them over just above your wrists
- Clasp your hands
- Slide your hands slowly down your legs to the floor
- Relax and let the natural stretch happen
- Slowly return to an upright position.

Repeat x 2



Neck roll

- Looking straight ahead to start with...
- Drop your head forward with chin down
- Slowly roll your head until your chin is over your left shoulder
- Drop it back down to the centre and up to the right shoulder
- Take it back to the centre.

Repeat x 3



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Arm press

- Stand facing the wall with arms outstretched, palms flat against the wall
- Keep your arms straight, and lift the heels of your hands up and down, gently 'bouncing' x 10.

You can also do a static version of the stretch:

- Hands on the wall, arms above your head, drop your head between your arms, feet together, and press against the wall.



Butterfly hug

- Take a deep breath in, and out
- Cross your arms around your upper body
- Place hands on your upper arms (or collar bones with thumbs linked)
- Slowly tap left and right with alternate hands.

Repeat x 8

Or try a static hug:

- Wrap your arms around yourself in a firm hug, hold for a count of 10, release and repeat.



A huge thanks to the staff in the Emergency Department at Wellington Regional Hospital for demonstrating the exercises and agreeing to star in the photos. Acknowledgement also goes to Kitty Marshall, MHAIDS for providing the exercises.

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing Mindfulness

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About Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the process of bringing your attention to the things occurring in the present moment. It involves becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings and body sensations as you experience them.

If we think of the mind as a garden, mindfulness is like observing the garden without judgement. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them as good or bad.

The good thing is that mindfulness is a quality we already possess, we just have to learn how to access it.

Becoming more mindful helps reduce tension, stress and anxiety and boosts happiness!. It also helps you notice what supports your wellbeing.

Because there are so many different ways to practise mindfulness, take the time to find something that works for you. It may be mindful eating, yoga, breathing exercises, writing in a journal or even mindful walks.



Benefits of mindfulness

Mindfulness improves wellbeing

Increasing your capacity for mindfulness helps shift your thoughts away from your usual preoccupations, towards an appreciation of the moment and a larger perspective on life. By focusing on the here and now, you are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past, are better able to cope with life's up's and down's and are able to form deeper connections with others.

Mindfulness improves physical health

Research also shows that mindfulness techniques help improve physical health in a number of ways: it can help relieve stress, treat heart disease, lower blood pressure, reduce chronic pain, , improve sleep, and alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties.

Mindfulness improves mental health

Mindfulness meditation can be used as an element in the treatment of a number of problems, including: depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, couples' conflicts, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Getting started

What is mindfulness: video (2.18 mins)



Mindfulness exercise (being in the here and now): audio (6.39 mins)



3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing Mindfulness

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Ten tips for mindfulness on the run

Mindfulness reduces stress and boosts happiness, and it doesn't have to be difficult or time consuming - practicing mindfulness can be simple and practical. Here are our top 10 mindfulness on-the-run tips.

#1 BREATH

Take 3 deep breaths, the belly kind and drop your shoulders as you breathe out. Go on, give it a try, you know it will make you feel better.

#2 SMILE

A smile (even a fake one) reduces stress. If you smile looking at a mirror the effect will be even stronger.

#3 STAND TALL

The more space your body takes up the more confident you will feel. So unwrap your legs and your arms, look up, broaden your chest and shoulders and give yourself a confidence boost.

#4 HAVE A MANTRA

Write down a short and sweet mantra and put it in a place where you see it a few times per day.

#5 GIVE YOUR BRAIN A BREAK

When you are working on something, remind yourself that if you 'take 5' you 'win 50'. Giving your brain a break makes you so much more effective and efficient, it'll be worth it.

#6 ON THE ROAD

Put your commute time to good use by spending a few minutes focusing on your senses on your way to work. It reduces stress even when you're in a traffic jam believe it or not!

#7 GET TOUCHY FEELY

Create micro-moments of mindful connection with your loved ones by making a conscious effort to make real eye contact and touch them. It will help you be present and make you and them feel more connected.

#8 MOVE THAT BODY

Even a short walk lifts your mood. Park away from your destination, use the stairs and have walking meetings. These are simple ways to improve both your health and your mood.

#9 PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Think of one thing you are grateful for, to increase the happiness effect write it down. To increase it even more, share it with someone.

#10 LIKE YOURSELF MORE

For a quick boost in self-compassion, place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Your brain will respond by activating the social engagement system in your brain which increases self-compassion and kindness.

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5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding technique

Our physical body is how we interface with the rest of reality. The 54321 grounding technique is simple, yet powerful.

Like gradually attaching anchors to the boat, this method slowly pulls you back to earth.

First, take a moment to become mindful of your breath. Just a few deep breaths invite your body back into the moment, slowing everything down. Then, become aware of your environment.

Look For 5 Things You Can See: Notice the wood grain on the desk in front of you. Or the precise shape of your fingernails. Become aware of the glossy green of the plant in the corner. Take your time to really look and acknowledge what you see.

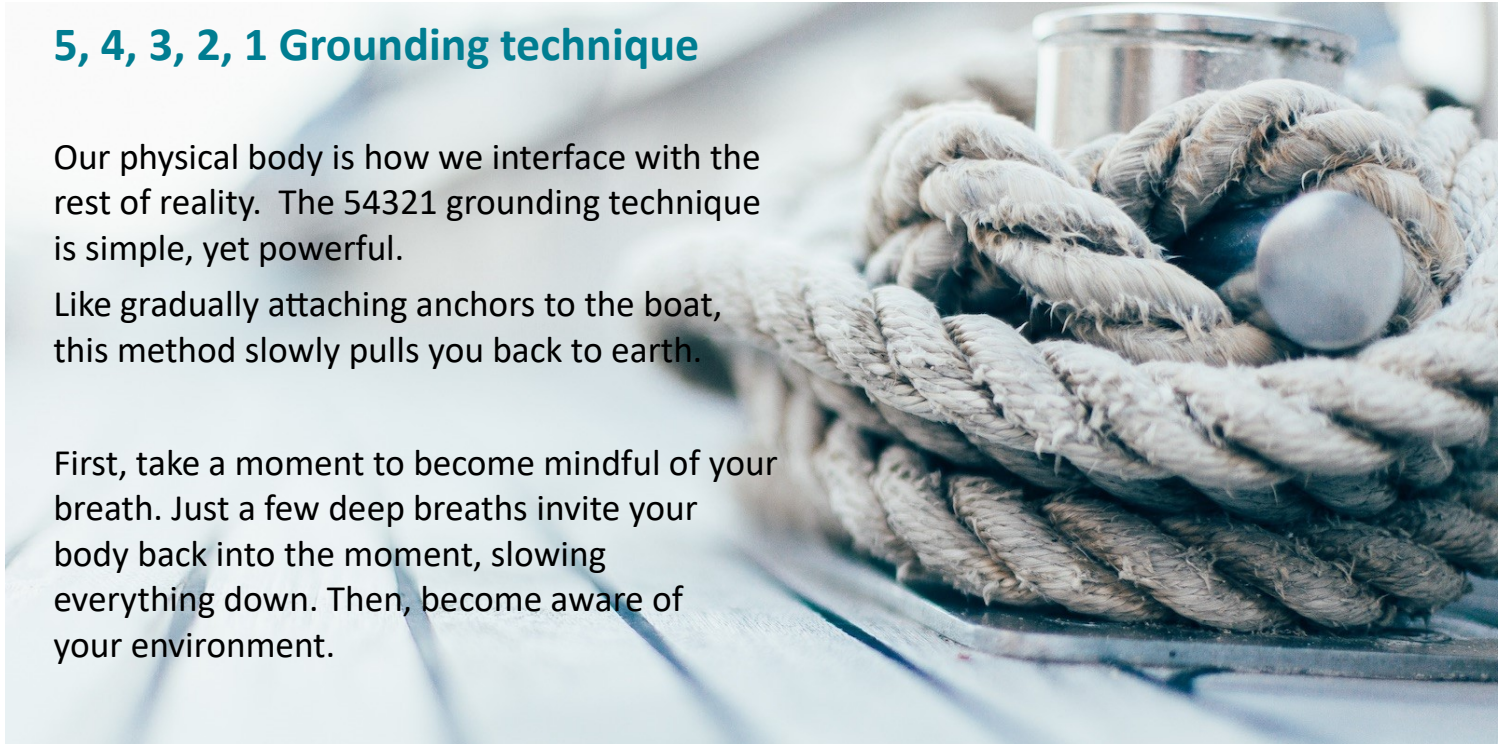
Become Aware Of 4 Things You Can Touch: The satisfyingly rough texture of the car seat. Your cotton shirt against your neck. If you like, spend a moment literally touching these things. Maybe notice the sensation of gravity itself, or the floor beneath you.

Acknowledge 3 Things You Can Hear: Don't judge, just hear. The distant traffic. The voices in the next room. As well as the space between sounds.

Notice 2 Things You Can Smell: If at first you don't feel like you can smell anything, simply try to sense the subtle fragrance of the air around you, or of your own skin.

Become Aware Of 1 Thing You Can Taste: The lingering suggestion of coffee on your tongue, maybe?

Repeat this process as many times as necessary. Take your time and notice how you feel afterward.



3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing Mindfulness

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Simple mindfulness exercises

One minute breathing

This exercise can be done anywhere at any time, standing up or sitting down. All you have to do is focus on your breath for just one minute.

- Start by breathing in and out slowly, holding your breath for a count of six seconds once you've inhaled. Then breathe out slowly, letting the breath flow effortlessly out.
- Leave your eyes open and breathe normally. Be ready to catch your mind from wandering off (because it will) and return your attention to your breath.

Use this exercise throughout the day to restore your mind to the present moment and to restore your mind to clarity and peace. Over time, you can gradually extend the duration of this exercise to longer periods.

Drop anchor

This is a simple exercise to centre yourself and connect with the world around you. Practise it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

- Plant your feet on the floor. Push them down – notice the floor beneath you, supporting you. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
- Notice your entire body – and the feeling of gravity flowing down through your head, spine, and legs into your feet.
- Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.

Mindful observation

This exercise is simple but incredibly powerful because it helps you notice and appreciate seemingly simple elements of your environment in a more profound way. It is designed to connect us with the beauty of the natural environment, something that is easily missed when we are rushing around in the car or hopping on and off trains on the way to work.

1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon.
2. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into watching for as long as your concentration allows.
3. Look at this object as if you are seeing it for the first time.
4. Visually explore every aspect of its formation, and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence.
5. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world.

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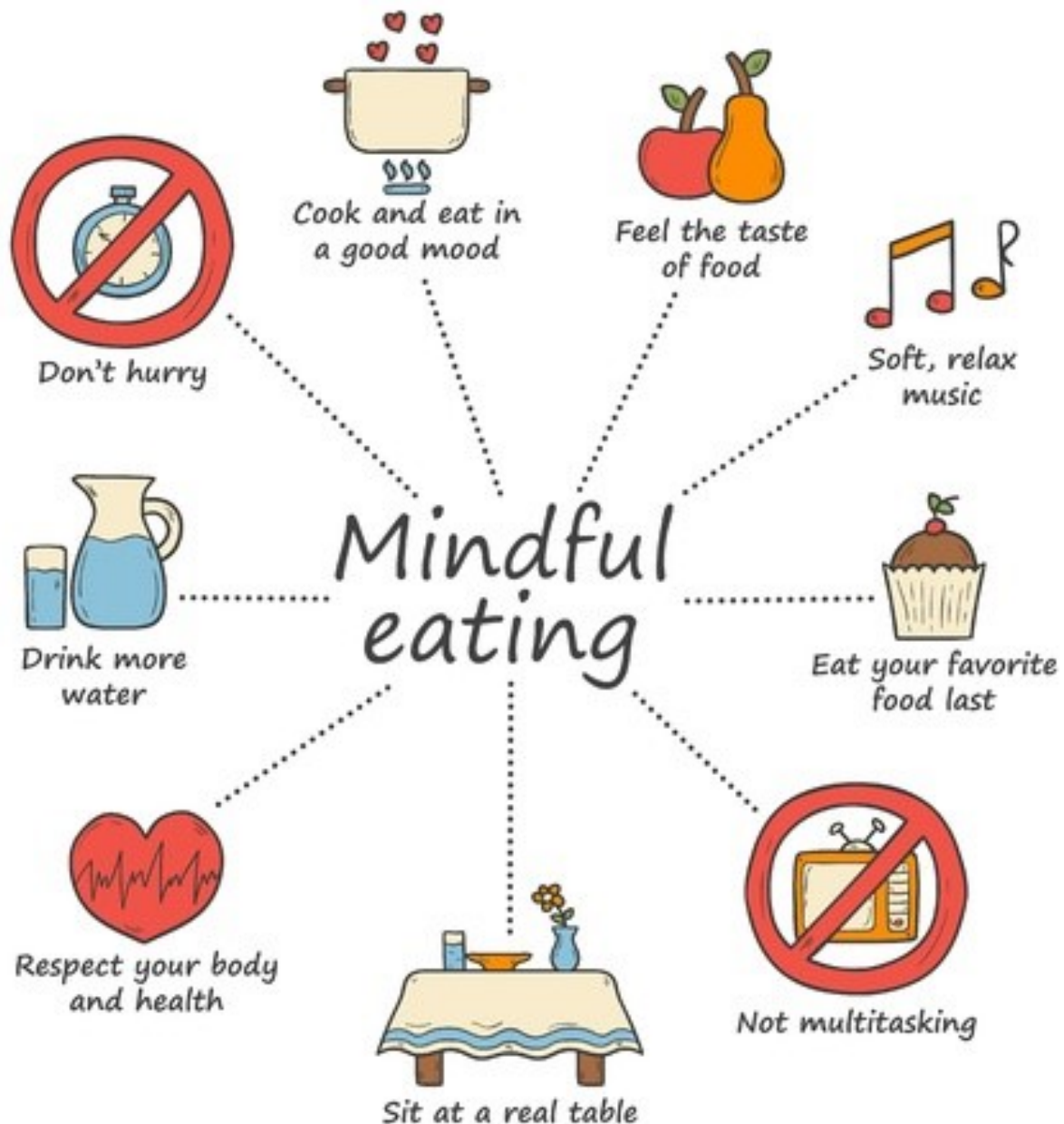
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Mindful eating

Mindful eating is maintaining an in-the-moment awareness of the food and drink you put into your body. It's about observing rather than judging how the food makes you feel and the signals your body sends about taste, satisfaction, and fullness.

For many of us, our busy lives make mealtimes rushed affairs, or we find ourselves eating at the desk in front of a computer screen, or parked on the couch watching TV. Sometimes we often eat for reasons other than hunger—to satisfy emotional needs, to relieve stress, or cope with anxiety, loneliness, or boredom.

By paying close attention to how you feel as you eat—the texture and tastes of each mouthful, your body's hunger and fullness signals, how different foods affect your energy and mood—you can learn to savour both your food and the experience of eating. Being mindful of the food you eat can promote better digestion, keep you full with less food, and influence wiser choices about what you eat in the future. It can also help you free yourself from unhealthy habits around food and eating.



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Family violence - keeping safe

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The pandemic response of physical distancing and self-isolation may mean that there is more risk of family violence occurring. Below is some information to help you keep yourself safe.

IN DANGER NOW?

If you're in immediate danger call **111**. If you fear for your safety or the safety of your children:

- Go outside, call out and ask someone to call 111
- If you have children, take them with you if you can
- Don't stop to get anything else.

CONSIDERING LEAVING?

Some important things to contemplate when you consider leaving could be:

- Contacting Women's Refuge and/or a specialist family violence agency to discuss your options and plans. Get all the information and support you need.
- Knowing the safest times to leave.
- Arranging transport in advance. Know where you'll go. Make arrangements with the refuge or a safe house.
- Telling only one or two trusted friends or a refuge worker about your plans. Go through the details together.

NEED TO TALK?

Women's Refuge 0800 REFUGE (0800 733 843)

Shakti 0800 Shakti (0800 742 584)

Oranga Tamariki 0508 326 459

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers free counselling: Hutt Valley DHB & Wairarapa DHB - 0800 327 669 www.eapservices.co.nz, or Capital & Coast DHB - 0800 735 343 www.eapworks.com

You can also talk to your HR Manager, Social Work, Whanau Care or our Violence Intervention Programme teams: CCDHB RES-FamilyViolence@ccdhb.org.nz and HVDHB RES-VIP@huttvalleydwb.org.nz.

WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE?

Support them by keeping in touch with them. Be aware their conversations and activities may be monitored:

- Agree on a 'code word' in advance with your friend. If they message you that word, you can call the police and ask them to check on them.
- Ask them if they have the essential things they need and help them to get them.
- Help them to feel less isolated by setting up regular times to talk to you and to others.

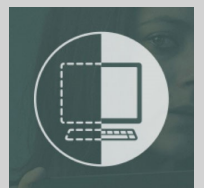
YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

There is new legislation to support family violence victims. You can:

- Take up to 10 days of paid domestic violence leave – this is separate from annual leave, sick leave and bereavement leave, and
- Ask for short-term flexible working arrangements – lasting up to 2 months. You may be safer working from your office.
- You can discuss options for support with your Manager, your HR Advisor or your Violence Intervention Programme Coordinator. They will know what to do.

OPTIONS TO CONTACT WOMEN'S REFUGE

- Ring the 24/7 crisis line 0800REFUGE (0800 733 843)
- Send a message through the [Women's Refuge Facebook page](#)
- Email us on info@refuge.org.nz
- Send a confidential message through the Shielded Site feature found on many major websites e.g. The Warehouse, NZ Post.



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Where to go for support

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COVID-19 means we are living with uncertainty and dealing with an evolving situation. It's important to look after your mental health and wellbeing and reach out if extra support is needed. There are several options available.

TRUSTED INFORMATION

Our 3DHB COVID-19 staff intranet site is being updated daily.

Email COVID-19 related Occupational Health or Human Resource questions to COVID19Enquiries@ccdhub.org.nz or phone 0800 333 8822

Refer to the [staff welfare & wellbeing page](#) for ideas and resources.



BUDDY UP

Pair up with a peer or buddy at work (or at home), for short regular check-ins about how you're feeling.

You might want to:

- Share 'what's on top'
- Problem solve something that's bothering you
- Share something that's helping or going well
- Commit to an achievable wellbeing goal (e.g. long bath, jog, early night).

MANAGER or LEADER

Your manager, supervisor, clinical or professional leader can be a listening ear, and also assist with practical steps and help point you in the right direction for further support if needed.



SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

Chaplaincy services are available for staff and patients by phone. Call the DHB operator and ask for the on-call chaplain.

Call the Prayer Hotline on 04 3855 999 ext. 7729 to leave an anonymous prayer request.



CULTURAL SUPPORT

Dedicated support is available for our Māori and Pacific staff.

Māori Health Team contacts:

[Wairarapa DHB: Jason Kerehi](#)

[Hutt Valley DHB: Carrie Maniapoto](#)

[Capital & Coast DHB: Cheryl Goodyer](#)

VISIT YOUR GP

Your GP is likely to have a good overview of your health and will be best placed to help you.

CONTACT EAP

Contact our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for free counselling:

Hutt Valley DHB & Wairarapa DHB:

☎ 0800 327 669

✉ www.eapservices.co.nz

Capital & Coast DHB:

☎ 0800 735 343

✉ www.eapworks.com

Need āwhina / help now?

Free call or text **1737** anytime

Contact Te Haika (Mental Health & Addictions contact centre) 0800 745 477 or tehaika@ccdhub.org.nz

For immediate safety concerns, call emergency services on 111.

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing Āwhina - need help or support?

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Who	Contact Details	About
Need to talk helpline	1737	Free call or free text to talk to a trained counsellor.
Lifeline	0800 54 33 54	Confidential counselling service.
Anxiety Helpline	0800 ANXIETY 0800 269 4389	24/7 support for people who experience all forms of anxiety.
Depression.org.nz	0800 111 757 Free text 4202 depression.org.nz	24/7 telephone counselling support for those experiencing anxiety or depression. Range of wellbeing information for Māori , Pasifika , pregnant wāhine / new parents and whānau . Webchat option also available via thelowdown.co.nz .
Te Haika	0800 745 477	A 24/7 mental health and addictions contact centre for people in crisis or experiencing moderate to severe mental health or addiction problems.
Suicide Crisis Helpline	0508 TAUTOKO 0508 828 865	24/7 free service operated by highly trained and experienced counsellors.
Women's Refuge	0800 REFUGE 0800 73 38 43	24/7 crisis line for women dealing with violence in their lives.
Shatki Asian Women's Centre	0800 SHATKI 0800 742 584	24/7 multi lingual crisis line for ethnic women experiencing domestic violence.
Māori Health Providers	Maori Health Provider Directory	A list of Māori health providers contracted to DHBs, or iwi and kaupapa Māori organisations that work independently in our region.
Safe to talk - Kōrero mai, ka ora	0800 044 334 Text 4334	24/7 access to free and confidential information and support to people affected by sexual harm in any way.
Mapu Maia Pacific Services	0800 212 122	Phone or video counselling support in English, Samoan and Tongan languages.
Family Services helpline	0800 211 211	For help finding (and direct transfer to) community based health and social support services in your area.
Parent Help	0800 568 856	For parents/whānau seeking support, advice and practical strategies on all parenting concerns.
Alcohol Drug Helpline	0800 787 797 Free text 8691	24/7 confidential non-judgemental help and advice.
Youthline	0800 376 633 Free text 234	24/7 helpline for youth which covers all aspects of life.
Kidsline	0800 KIDSLINE 0800 54 37 54	New Zealand's only 24/7 helpline for children and young people, run by trained youth volunteers.
Wellington Food Banks	Wellington Food Banks	If you are in need of food assistance, this website lists all the foodbanks or agencies across the region who may be able to help you.

If you are concerned about your safety or the safety of someone you care for, call the emergency services on 111 for an immediate response.

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Leading others resources

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Family violence - advice for managers

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The pandemic response of physical distancing and self-isolation may mean that staff may be required to work from home. This can pose additional risks to those staff members who are, or may be, victims of family violence. You may become aware of a staff member experiencing family violence when they disclose it themselves, or a third person (i.e. family member, friend, or concerned work colleague) advises you of the situation.

RESPONDING TO A VICTIM OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

As a manager, you have a responsibility to keep staff safe. Where they are required to work from home, their home becomes the workplace and there are actions we must consider.

Establishing safety

- Contact the staff member to establish immediate safety of them, and children or other vulnerable people in the home.
- Before asking anything else, ask them if it's safe to talk? Ask if they are alone?
- If they are not alone, do not ask about the family violence.

Consider

- Are they in immediate danger? If so, call Police (111)
- How can you support the employee? See section on Victim protection legislation.

Consult

Encourage contact with Family Violence support agencies :

- Women's Refuge / Shakti
- Police Family Harm Team
- DHB VIP Coordinators
- Human Resources and Payroll for leave entitlements (Domestic Violence Act 2018).

Agree with the staff member on a plan so they can keep you advised of their safety and wellbeing. This would include maintaining regular contact (i.e. phone or email).

OTHER OPTIONS AND SUPPORT

There are a number of options which can be considered to support and keep staff safe.

Contacting specialists

Consult with Women's Refuge, Shakti and/or a specialist family violence agency to discuss options and plans. There is no need to disclose personal details or breach confidentiality.

- Women's Refuge - 0800 REFUGE (0800 733 843)
- Shakti - 0800 Shakti (0800 742 584).

Your Violence Intervention Programme (VIP) Coordinator can also provide details of other support services:

CCDHB RES-FamilyViolence@ccdhb.org.nz and
HVDHB RES-VIP@huttvalleydhb.org.nz.

Victim protection legislation

The Domestic Violence Act 2018 enables victims of family violence to:

- Take up to 10 days of paid domestic violence leave – this is separate from annual leave, sick leave and bereavement leave, and
- Ask for short-term flexible working arrangements – lasting up to two months. It may be safer for the employee to work from the office.

Counselling

Offer our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for free counselling: Hutt Valley DHB & Wairarapa DHB - 0800 327 669 or www.eapservices.co.nz
Capital & Coast DHB - 0800 735 343 or www.eapworks.com



3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing

How we work resources

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Focussing on our values

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This tool provides a helpful guide to review whether what you currently do, or are planning to do, aligns with our values. This could be staff or patient-facing e.g. letters and forms, a project plan / programme of work, a new Model of Care, response to a harm event, a change to service delivery, templates, communications, policies, or a performance review process.

Alignment with values	How might this be improved?
Does it feel kind, caring and respectful? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language and tone Key messages Images 	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
Does it represent/describe fairness? Would someone reading this think it seems fair?	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
How does it reflect our workplace diversity? Is the language inclusive? Is there an opportunity to increase visibility of diversity? E.g. Te Reo, gender neutral, use of images.	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
Will it increase equity? How might it be experienced by priority populations? E.g. Māori, other ethnicities, age, sex, different work roles, literacy levels.	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
Does this increase a sense of connection and belonging? Does this highlight connections and create unity?	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
Does it empower people to feel capable and autonomous? Does it highlight ways to maintain or increase a sense of personal power; ownership, responsibility and control?	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
Is it honest? Does it build trust? Does it pass the cynics “yeah right” test?	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>
Is it high quality? Has attention been paid to ensuring this is well thought through, evidenced and connected to wider intent?	<div> <div>-5</div> <div>0</div> <div>+5</div>  </div>

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing

Keeping the connections going

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We've been working differently for a few weeks and it's important staff continue to feel supported and valued as a team and as individuals. Keeping a cohesive and connected team allows staff to work with purpose and feel they are contributing, no matter how or where they are working. Every person's situation (both professionally and personally) is different, so it's also vital to continue checking-in with staff and their wellbeing on a one-one-one basis. This way you can understand how people are really feeling and provide additional support, even if it's being that 'listening ear' we all need sometimes. Use the tips below and over the page to help you with this.

Connecting with your team



Set up or maintain a regular short team check-in call that everyone attends or dials into. You might adjust the frequency and time to what is needed in your team e.g. it was daily, but now the team is 'in the groove', it could be twice or three times a week. Make sure you speak to everyone on the call and that they all have the opportunity to contribute.



Make time for Covid-19: to update the team, provide a safe space for people to speak out and ask questions. Be honest and transparent about what you know and what you will find out, as this will maintain credible leadership and trust.



Ensure part of the conversation involves general wellbeing and what is going on. This helps maintain a sense of connection, some awareness of what might be going on in an employee's life, and it gives you a sense of your team's overall wellbeing.



Set team goals and what your expectations for the team are for that week. Make sure you do a round-table of your team to gauge progress of tasks, celebrate success and uncover any challenges that are being experienced.



Have a routine agenda so everyone knows what to expect:

- Set team expectations/goals for the week/understand progress
- Ask each person to name their personal goal for the day
- Ask people to reflect on a personal success since the last check-in, "my best win from yesterday was...", or "I was proud of..."
- Check in on who needs assistance, "something I need help with today is..."
- Include personal aspects to maintain an element of fun and connection e.g. recognise birthdays, anniversaries, and celebrations.



Get a general understanding of any concerns your team may have.

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Connecting with individuals



Set up regular times (ideally over video rather than audio) to check-in rather than check-up on each of your staff. It's important the connection is genuinely about the welfare of the person themselves, and not focussed on work output. Lead with an empathic and compassionate approach and listen non-judgmentally.



Look for visual cues:

- Do they look ok?
- Are they not their usual selves?
- Ask are you OK? Ask twice. Sometimes we say we are fine when we are not.

This lets people know its okay to talk about how they are feeling and seek support when needed. Remember you don't have to have all the answers.



Be aware and have specific knowledge about who is /or who has vulnerable family members. You need to understand any personal circumstances that may be adding pressure to them at this time and any support they might need.

Keep questions simple, and if they don't want to talk about it, let them know you are always available. Example questions:

- What do you think I need to know?
- What's challenging you on the work or home front?
- What would help you right now?
- What can I do to support you or your family?

Offer Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) support if needed. EAP offers free confidential advice and guidance for individuals and teams. Or encourage your team to talk to someone they trust.



Over-working can be a problem for people working from home. Encourage your team to keep supportive daily routines, or create new ones if they're now working from home e.g. meal times, physical activity, breaks from the computer etc. Doing this helps tell our brains it's safe to dial our stress response back down and prevents us from being more anxious.



Not everyone will have perfect home office to work from. Check in on their working arrangements and offer support if needed. Refer to the ['Setting up your workstation'](#) guide for help with this.

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing

Co-creating how we work together

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During COVID-19 we need to be able to work together in different ways. Teams are either all working from home, all working on site, or have a mix of both scenarios happening. Co-create your approach to what this means for your team and how it will work using the template below.

Ideas	Team Action
How will we communicate with each other? E.g. Zoom, Skype, phone.	
How will we help team members to stay connected and to help when no one is around to help? E.g. virtual buddy system.	
How will we communicate with people outside our team?	
How will we keep up to date and provide space for questions on Covid-19?	
How will we maintain some team fun during this time?	
What are some of the impacts of working in this way, and how can we support each other?	

Uncover opportunities

Once you have identified how you want to work together, have a think together about what other opportunities there might be?

- Problem solving issues you've never had the time to work through (use small groups to work on these)
- Reviews and audits – policies, letters/publications
- Learning and development opportunities.

3DHB Staff Welfare & Wellbeing

Managing challenging calls

Mai i te Korowaitanga, ka tauke te ora.

When one is fully supported and guided, there is hope.

It's useful to be prepared for challenging phone conversations. Here and over the page are some suggestions for keeping yourself safe, and the conversation calm and constructive.

STAY CALM

When the caller cannot see you, the situation can escalate more quickly.

Show calmness by speaking at your normal rate and volume; it can be helpful to drop your pitch a little.

Pause and breathe – you will be calmer and so will the other person.

Don't be afraid to put the caller on hold if you need to calm yourself or gather your thoughts.

USE THE CALLER'S NAME

If the person sounds frustrated, say their name, wait a couple of seconds and then refocus them (e.g. acknowledge they are frustrated and move straight into asking a question about the issue).

Most people will stop when they hear their name, and asking a question related to the issue moves the conversation away from the person's frustration.

LISTEN & EMPATHISE

Allow people to vent, as long as it's not abusive. This can be healthy and help them move on to solutions.

Be kind and understand that there is likely a lot going on for the person.

Empathise and focus on the behaviour not the person by being assertive, but respectful e.g. "It's ok to be angry/frustrated, however, it's not ok to speak to me like that."

TAKE IT SLOWLY

When people are stressed, they don't process information the same, so take it slowly.

In escalating situations both the caller and the responder might go into flight / fright / freeze mode; therefore KISS – keep it short and simple.

You might also need to repeat the same information two or three times before it sinks in.



KNOW YOUR ESCALATION PATHWAYS

Make sure you understand the when you would:

- deal with the situation yourself
- escalate the call to your supervisor or manager
- disconnect the call
- report the event.



LOOK AFTER YOUR OWN WELLBEING

After a challenging call you may need to discuss the situation with a buddy or your manager.

Think about what you felt you did well in the conversation, as well as what you might have done differently.

If needed, take a break to help yourself calm down and process the call.



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ESTABLISHING A COMMUNICATION PATHWAY AND SETTING LIMITS

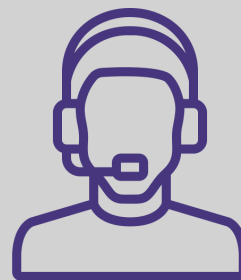
It's a good idea to practice useful responses. Rehearse out loud some of the phrases that you think might be helpful; this really does help!

When you answer the call

"I'm sorry you had to wait so long, how can I help?"

"Thank you so much for your patience, how can I help?"

Jot down the person's name (it can be useful later).



At the first sign of increased frustration

"This is frustrating, I know. We will get there/work it out/get it sorted."

"Thank you for letting us know about this issue; I will do my best to help you, [name of caller]..."

"I do understand the inconvenience you've faced; let me see how I can fix this, [name of caller]"

Label the emotion and focus on the behaviour, not the person. Place an emphasis on 'why' they are frustrated and finding a solution. Remember to stay calm and breathe.

At the first sign of anger/abuse

"I understand you are really stressed, but it's not ok to speak to me like that."

"I truly understand your concern, [name of caller], but we cannot tolerate the kind of language you are using right now..."

At the next sign, something like...

"I can hear that you're frustrated. Would you like to continue this conversation now, or shall we talk again in half an hour?"

"I can hear you are really angry. If you can't get past that right now, I will need to hang up."

Giving the caller choices is helpful. Make sure you can deliver on what you offer – e.g. you can actually call them back within the agreed timeframe.

At any further sign...

"I'm going to hang up now; please call back when you feel able to work calmly through this."

If the problem continues when the person calls back, terminate the call again, and escalate it through the agreed process in your team.