

# RECONNECT

## MHAW 2022 GUIDE

To help you bring MHAW to life in your workplace, school or home.



Mental Health  
Awareness Week

26 Sept – 2 Oct  
Hei pikinga waiora

[www.mhaw.nz](http://www.mhaw.nz)

**Mā te whakarongo, ka mōhio**  
through listening, comes knowledge

**Mā te mōhio, ka mārama,**  
through knowledge, comes understanding

**Mā te mārama, ka matau,**  
through understanding, comes wisdom

**Mā te matau, ka ora**  
through wisdom, comes wellbeing

# KIA ORA!

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) is about reconnection. The past couple of years have been tough and it's easy to feel disconnected from the people and places that are important to us. Whether it's reaching out to someone you have lost contact with, visiting a place that's special to you or getting outside in nature, we hope you'll take some time this MHAW to reconnect with the people and places that lift you up - hei pikinga waiora.

## He hononga tāngata e kore e motu The connection of people can never be severed

This guide is designed to provide inspiration and activities to help bring MHAW to life in your workplace, school or home.

It's important to acknowledge that everyone goes through hard times, and sometimes your mental health and wellbeing might not feel as good as you'd like it to. Knowing what can help during these times can make a big difference. Included in this pack is a short guide on the things you can do if you or a friend, whānau member or hoamahi/colleague isn't feeling good and needs some tautoko/support.

### What is mental health and wellbeing?

We all have mental health. It's a taonga/treasure, something to look after so we can lead our best and most fulfilling lives.

The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing as 'a state in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.'

One in five New Zealanders experience a mental illness and/or addiction each year and it's important to remember that with the right tautoko many people can and do recover. Wellbeing isn't just for people who have not experienced mental illness – it's for everyone.

There are all sorts of ways to help us cope in difficult times. This Mental Health Awareness Week, we're encouraging you to **reconnect with the people and places that lift you up**. Feeling connected to the people and places that are important to us can make a big difference to our mental health. MHAW is an opportunity to tune into your mental health and wellbeing, reconnect with the people who lift you up and places that are special to you, and notice how this makes you feel.

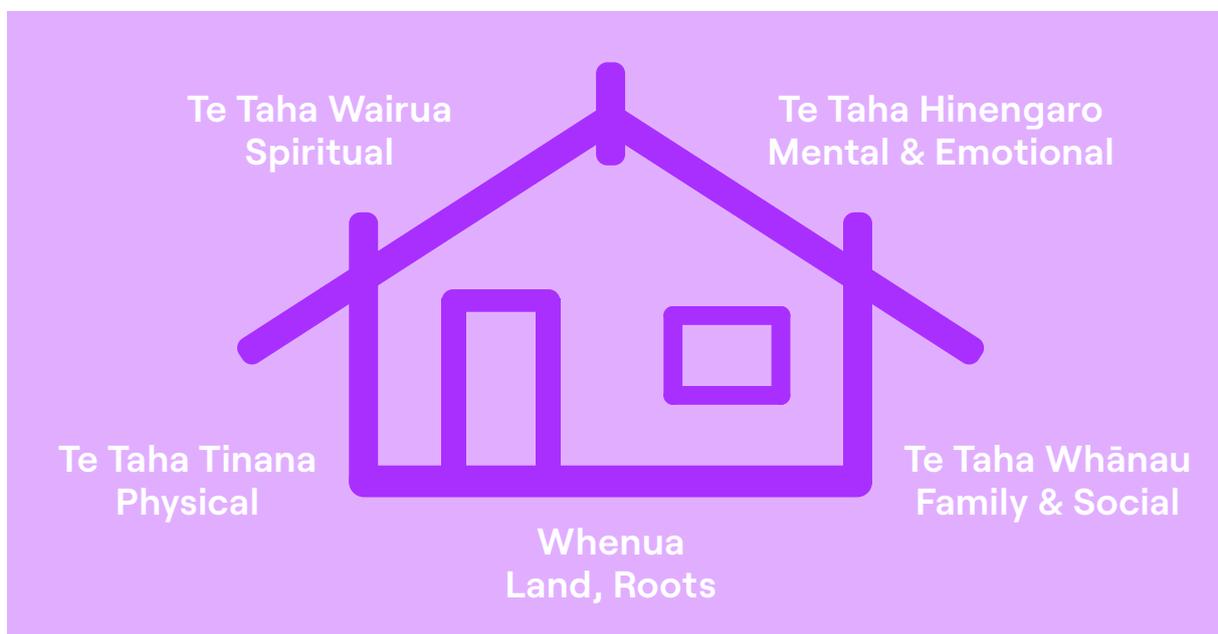
Find more resources, stories, our What's On calendar and more at [mhaw.nz](http://mhaw.nz).

Interested in fundraising for the Mental Health Foundation during MHAW? Ka pai! We're here to support you every step of the way. Send us an email at [mhaw@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:mhaw@mentalhealth.org.nz) to get started.

# TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ AND THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

Te Whare Tapa Whā was developed by leading Māori health advocate and researcher Sir Mason Durie in 1984, to provide a Te Ao Māori perspective on wellbeing.

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a model that describes health as a whareniui/meeting house with four walls. These walls represent Taha Wairua/spiritual wellbeing, Taha Hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing, Taha Tinana/physical wellbeing and Taha Whānau/family and social wellbeing. While not an official part of Te Whare Tapa Whā, our connection with the whenua/land forms the foundation.



The daily 'reconnect' activity ideas on the following pages are inspired by Te Whare Tapa Whā and the Five Ways to Wellbeing, which are simple strategies proven to boost wellbeing. For further information on the Five Ways to Wellbeing visit [www.mentalhealth.org.nz/wellbeing](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/wellbeing).

## FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING



Your time,  
your words,  
your presence



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



EMBRACE NEW EXPERIENCES,  
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,  
SURPRISE YOURSELF



TALK & LISTEN,  
BE THERE,  
FEEL CONNECTED



REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT GIVE YOU JOY

INTRODUCE THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS

 **Mental Health Foundation**  
OF NEW ZEALAND  
mauri tū, mauri ora

# RĀHINA | MONDAY

## Reconnect with yourself

Connecting with yourself is a skill. To start the week, begin by taking a moment to check in with yourself, acknowledge how you're feeling and how the last few years of turbulence affected you and your connection with others and the world around you. This is a good time to think about the people you have lost contact with who you might want to reach out to, or the special places you haven't visited in a while, and set some whāinga/goals for the week ahead.

At the end of the week, you can reflect on how you felt at the start and how reconnecting with the people and places that are special to you has lifted you up.

## A few ideas for reconnecting with yourself:

- Take a moment to ask yourself, 'how am I feeling today?' Try speaking out loud to yourself. Hearing your thoughts out loud can help you to clarify what's going on inside.
- Grab a pen and paper and write down three things you are grateful for. Taking time to notice and reflect on the things we are thankful for helps us to experience more positive emotions.
- Get out for a walk, do some yoga or another a physical activity that you enjoy. Moving your body can help calm your mind.
- Grab a cuppa, sit outside and listen to the sounds around you. Notice how taking a quiet moment for yourself makes you feel.
- Take a moment for your wairua by trying these Māori mindful breathing exercises.
- Be present in the moment and let your creative juices flow with our mindful colouring activity. Tamariki can enter our colouring competition for a chance to win an awesome prize!
- For tamariki in the classroom, try this 'How Am I Doing?' activity by Sparklers to encourage them to think about how they can support their own wellbeing. Tamariki can also use the My Pepeha activity in the classroom or at home to get them thinking about the people and places that are important to them.



## How do you reconnect with yourself?



# RĀTU | TUESDAY

## Reconnect with a friend or loved one

We know life can get busy, but feeling connected to the people that are important to us can make a big difference to our mental health. Connection brings purpose and belonging to our lives and makes us feel happier and more secure. Today is about reconnecting with the people in our lives – it could be someone special who you have lost touch with or just wish you caught up with more often.

## A few ideas for reconnecting with a loved one:

- Reach out to someone you would like to reconnect with. Call your whānau, send a message to a mate or catch up kanohi ki te kanohi/face to face if you can. We bet it will give both of you a boost.
- Organise a potluck dinner, barbeque or shared lunch with your whānau, friends or hoamahi.
- Look back through your photos and share a happy memory to reconnect with someone you've lost touch with.
- Get to know your hoamahi a little better by using our [kōrero card set](#).
- At the end of the day ask a friend, your whānau or hoamahi what the best thing about their day was and listen with interest when they respond.
- Help tamariki to connect with the people who are special to them with the Sparklers Whānau Poster activity in the [classroom](#) and [at home](#). For a fun game, check out the [classroom](#) and [at home](#) versions of the Can't Do it Without You activity.
- Have a think about whether there is someone in your life who may be going through a tough time. Reach out and ask them how they are, empathise and listen. You can find more support for how to have a safe and supportive kōrero on page 16.



How do you plan to reconnect with someone today?



# RĀAPA | WEDNESDAY

## Reconnect with a special place

The places and spaces we spend our time in have a huge impact on how we feel. Most of us have places we can go that calm, inspire or uplift us. Today, make time to go to a place that is special to you and take notice of how you feel when you are there. For some of us, the special place that comes to mind might be out of reach – perhaps it's overseas, or too far away to get to. Even if we can't get there right now, there are ways that we can reconnect with the places that lift us up.

## A few ideas for reconnecting with a special place:

- Take some time away from your work environment and have your lunch at a place that makes you feel calm and uplifted. This might be your favourite café or a nearby park.
- Grab your whānau, some friends or hoamahi and take them to a spot that lifts you up. Head to the beach, a nearby awa/river or climb up your local maunga/mountain.
- Close your eyes and think about a place that is important to you. Even if you can't be there right now, taking a moment to remember can help you reconnect with a place that is important to you. If you're feeling creative, have a go at drawing the place on the following page.
- Play a song, read a book or change your screensaver to a photo that reminds you of that special place. We bet it will transport you right back there.
- Is there a meal that reminds you of a place that is important to you? Try recreating it at home, the familiar tastes and smells might help you to reconnect with a special place.
- For tamariki in the classroom try the [Kimihiā Te Mātauranga O Neherā](#) and [Favourite Spaces](#) activities from Sparklers to help them learn more about the places that are important to them. Tamariki at home can try [this version](#) of the Favourite Spaces activity.



Where is a special place that you would like to reconnect with?



# RĀPARE | THURSDAY

## Reconnect with your community

Today is about reconnecting with your hapori whānui/wider community. It's the perfect time to sign up to be a volunteer or join a local community group, but it could also be as simple as making the effort to reconnect with the people you interact with every day. Today is all about savouring the little hononga/connections that make us human.

## A few ideas for reconnecting with your community:

- Volunteer your time to others in need – join a community group, pick up someone's groceries or simply drop off a hot meal to someone who could do with a helping hand. Not only will it create a moment to reconnect, but it will also give you both a feel-good boost.
- Take a moment to stop and kōrero with your neighbour, bus driver or the check-out assistant at the supermarket. Ask 'how are you/kei te pēhea koe?' and really listen. It might make all the difference to their day.
- Visit a friend, neighbour or family member who could do with some company or tautoko.
- Make a hoamahi a cup of tea or bring in some biscuits and create a moment to reconnect in the lunchroom – look for opportunities to put a smile on someone's face.
- Introduce yourself to a new parent at your child's school, new hoamahi at your workplace or a new neighbour in your community. Ask them if there's anything you can do to help them settle in.
- For tamariki in the classroom, check out this [Compliment Posters](#) activity from Sparklers, or for tamariki at home, try the [Give a Bunch of Kindness](#) and [Everyday Kindness](#) activities.



How do you plan to reconnect with your community?



# RĀMERE | FRIDAY

## Reconnect with nature

To round out the week, we're asking you to reconnect with the beautiful taonga that is te taiao/the natural environment. Studies show exposure to nature not only makes us feel better emotionally, it contributes to our physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones. All the more reason to spend at least a small moment today outside - breathing in some fresh air and noticing the world around you.

## A few ideas for reconnecting with nature:

- Have your lunch outside with a friend or hoamahi, take notice of the nature around you. Even if you work outdoors, it's great to take a break and spend some quality time together outside of your workspace.
- Get into the great outdoors - go on a bush walk, breathe in the salty fresh air of the moana/ocean or walk up your local maunga.
- Try these outdoor activities with tamariki, or head out on a nature walk and get them to point out the things they see, smell and hear. Ask them how being in nature makes them feel. At kura/school, pop out onto the field and try the Favourites in the Natural World activity or the tummy breathing Sleeping Statues activity by Sparklers.
- Create a green space in your home or office where you could grow a few small plants, such as herbs, on a windowsill.
- Volunteer at an organised beach or river clean-up or create your own. It's a great way to spend time outside and keep Aotearoa beautiful! Check out the Department of Conservation website for more ideas.
- Go outdoors, snap a photo of some nature that catches your eye and send it to someone to brighten their day.



What are some ways that you can reconnect with nature?



# REFLECTING ON THE WEEK

Now that it's the end of the week, why not take some time to reflect on how this week's moments of reconnection have made an impact. What have you noticed? What felt good? What do you want to take with you or continue to do in the weeks and months ahead? Is there someone else you want to reconnect with? A special place you want to make plans to visit?

**What are your reflections on the week?**



# HOW TO HAVE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE KŌRERO

Connecting with others is important, especially if you've noticed someone you care about hasn't been themselves lately. You might have noticed a change in their behaviour, in the things they are doing (or not doing) or saying (or not saying). You may have noticed them withdraw from things they would normally enjoy. Here's some advice if you find yourself having a kōrero with someone who's going through a tough time.

## Setting the scene

- **Who is the person you're concerned about, and who are you in relation to them?** Are you a colleague, manager, friend, whānau member or romantic partner, for example? To open the kōrero at work, see our [Open Minds e-learning programme](#).
- **Are you the right person to open the kōrero with them, or is there someone you know who is better placed?** Who would that be? Could you talk to them about it?
- **If you are the right person, find somewhere relaxing, quiet and private to have the kōrero.** Have it kanoahi ki te kanoahi if possible.
- **Timing is important – it's best not to open the kōrero when the person is busy doing something else.** It can be easier to start a kōrero when you're already doing something relaxing together, such as going for a hīkoi/walk. Avoid opening the kōrero at times when you're also feeling distressed, stressed or busy, so that you have the time and patience to give your best to it.



## Opening and having the kōrero

You can have a kōrero by:

- **Just opening it.** There's no right way to start, but an open-ended pātai/question such as "I've noticed you're not yourself lately, anything up?" can work a treat.
- **Giving someone space** and the opportunity to open up at their own pace.
- **Listening carefully to how they describe their experiences** and asking open-ended questions to keep the conversation going.
- **Asking them about how they're feeling and share how you're feeling.** This takes the pressure off the conversation and can help your loved one feel they're contributing and have advice of their own to share.
- **Validating their feelings.** Try to see things from their point of view and understand what might be causing their feelings. Accept your loved one's experiences as real and true for them.
- **Echoing back what you're hearing.** During your kōrero, it's important to echo or repeat key points your whānau member or loved one is saying. This will help to clarify what you're hearing.
- **Trying not to 'fix' their problems.** It's better to accept our loved ones instead of trying to rescue them. Remember that small, simple things can help, and that just being there for your whānau or hoa/friend is probably helping a lot.

Your kōrero may stop here, or it may lead to more kōrero. If it leads to more kōrero, it's important to consider whether the person would like your support, and whether you are the right person to offer that support. Make sure you don't take on the role of a professional counsellor or be someone's sole support person. See the following page for a list of services that you can turn to for help.

**Remember to look after yourself.** Being there for someone else can be tough, so make sure you take some time for yourself, and get the support you need too.

# WHERE TO TURN FOR SUPPORT

For some people, this week might have brought up some sadness or distress. If you've had a kōrero with someone and you think they need further tautoko, or if you're worried about yourself, it's okay, there is help available – no one should go through a tough time alone.

The best first point of contact is to visit your GP or tākuta or offer to go to a GP/ tākuta with your friend or whānau member. They can help assess what further support might be needed.

Below is a list of some of the services available in New Zealand that offer support, information and help. All services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week unless otherwise specified.

## In crisis

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 111.

## National helplines

**Need to talk?** Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor

**Lifeline** – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)

**Suicide Crisis Helpline** – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)

**Youthline** – 0800 376 633, free text 234 or email [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz) or online chat

Remember it's okay to get support for yourself when you're supporting someone you care about. Yellow Brick Road provides support for the loved ones of people experiencing mental distress or illness.

The action plan on the following page is designed to help you take notice of the things that make you feel good and do them more often.

# WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

<p>How does connecting with special people and places make you feel?</p>	<p>e.g. Valued, supported, happy</p>
<p>Which people and places lift you up?</p>	<p>e.g. My best mate, my local moana</p>
<p>How do you plan on staying connected with important people and places beyond MHAW?</p>	<p>e.g. Hold a whānau get together every two months e.g. Go for a walk in my nearby park once a week</p>
<p>What helps you to stay mentally healthy at work, school or home?</p>	<p>e.g. Getting outdoors at lunchtime</p>
<p>What's something you'd like to commit to doing to boost your wellbeing?</p>	<p>e.g. Doing regular mindful breathing exercises</p>