



Supporting Families in Mental Illness



NEWSLETTER | JUNE/JULY 2023



Kia ora

Welcome to the June/July newsletter. It is hard to believe that half the year has

gone already. It has been a very challenging half, with weather events and the cost of living crisis. All these factors have an impact on people's wellbeing. So, if you can it is important to find ways to take time for yourself and remember to breathe.

We have just completed an anxiety programme and will be starting a new programme for depression in Palmerston North; there are limited spaces left if anyone would like further information, please contact us.

The school holidays are coming up soon and SF will be running the Go Kidz programme again. This is for

children aged 7 to 11 who live in the presence of Mental illness and/or addiction 7-11. Please call if you are interested.

The CALM programme is running at Ashhurst school this term, with a group of extremely supportive parents attending with the students.

The weather is getting colder, keep warm. This year all my grandchildren are playing sports so, we are up on Saturday morning with the warm coat and gumboots to watch, it brings back memories of when my kids played winter sports.

Take care, keep warm.

Christine



CALL 06 355 8561

www.manawatusf.org.nz

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Family Whānau Support in Mental Illness Manawatu

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Kia ora from Palmerston North and Feilding

I can hardly believe we are near the end of May and winter is definitely here. This year seems to have flown by so quickly.

We have finished our Connections with Hope for Anxiety programme and will begin our Connections with Hope for Depression programme on June 12 2023, at 6 pm, 163 Broadway Ave, Palmerston North. These groups have proven to be very popular in the past, so if you are interested or know of anyone who would benefit from them, please contact us as soon as possible so that you can be considered for the programme.

Family/whānau work is very busy with many families that I haven't seen in a long time coming back for support. Many families are doing it hard out there. If you are one of them please reach out to us for support.

I have just come back from a rural expo that was held in Apiti, this event drew many agencies and residents who were interested in finding out what was available in support services for them. It was also a great opportunity to network with agencies to find out the services they offer and meet their worker's.

Take care
Kim

Palmerston North Office

Whānau Coordinator: Kate Philips
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Kia ora from Palmerston North and Feilding

I can hardly believe we are already into June. The first half of the year has really flown by.

The retreat was a great success and I have received wonderful feedback from it. It's worth thinking about for next year as it's a very relaxing environment and I heard the food was great.

We are starting our connections with hope for depression programme on Monday June 12th from 6 - 8pm at our Palmerston North office. This runs for 10 weeks for people with mild to moderate depression. We offer a safe space for people to talk about their experiences, get information, learn new skills, and find new ways of thinking. If you, or you have anyone you know that would benefit from this group do not hesitate to make contact. The programme is free of charge. You can call up the office and speak to one of us.

We also have spaces for our GO KIDZ programme which runs in the school holidays for school age children who have a parent, siblings or other family members with a mental illness or addiction issues. The focus is on activity-based exercises that promote an understanding of how the brain works, building confidence and resilience and provides opportunities to share experiences and help the children develop strategies for their own wellbeing. It's important for children to know:

- They are not alone.
- It's not their fault.
- They didn't make it happen.
- They can't catch it.
- It's not their job to fix it.

It's also free of charge. The children love it and so do we!

We continue to offer support, advocacy, education, and information to whānau who have a family member experiencing distress.

Kate

DEPRESSION GROUP

Connections with Hope Depression Group

*Depression is one of the most common mental health problems facing people today.
It is okay to ask for help.*

- ✓ 10 week programme for 2 hours per week
- ✓ This is a free and confidential programme

For more information or to make an appointment for an assessment please ring your SF office.

Palmerston North 06 355 8561



Dannevirke Office

Whānau Coordinator: Lyn McNair
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Hello to our Supporting Families friends and families from Lyn in Tararua,

As the season changes I have decided it's time that I do an inventory on my spending. The prices of everything have gone up and it is time to get a bit creative and mindful of how I spend my money, BUT without going all cheap and nasty. I am a bit of an eco-warrior so that helps guide me in a baseline of where to start. I want to share my plan with you:

1. Replace the hens that I had (they died – no not me!) with young productive layers.
2. Collect food scraps to supplement the hen's food as commercial food is very expensive now.
3. Check out some different brands of my constant pantry supplies. I have bravely tried the SPC brand of Spaghetti and Baked Beans and they have passed my 'acceptable' measure for taste. They are Australian however quite a bit cheaper than our local brand.
4. Look for the specials (obviously). We have only New World in Dannevirke so we don't get to shop around locally so shopping at certain times of the day when things get put out on 'special' such as meat and breads helps.
5. Plant a few edible things in pots, silver beet, herbs etc.
6. Go back to the basics of products for cleaning and other household chores using good chemical free bicarbonate of soda.

I have found some helpful cost saving things I would like to share with you;

Ants; sprinkle bicarbonate of soda around where the ants are coming in and out of the house, particularly doors and window. They don't like it.

Fleas; you can sprinkle bicarbonate of soda directly on to your pet to get rid of fleas. Brush it through the coat. Worth a try with the expense of flea treatments for they critters currently.

Indigestion; known as an effective antacid it can work for many stomach discomforts such as indigestion and heartburn. Add one teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda to a glass of water and drink that. Seek medical advice if the problem continues.

Teeth; for whitening teeth and stain removal you can use a little bicarbonate of soda on your wet toothbrush once a week. Spit out the once you have brushed.

Insect bites; mix some bicarbonate of soda and water into a paste and apply to the insect bite or sting. Leave it and you will find relief – especially if you don't keep touching it!

Acne; to help relief from the itching you can mix bicarbonate of soda with water to form a paste and apply to the affected area for 5-10 minutes. It is extremely mild and will wash away easily with water without damaging the skin in any other way.

Electricity; sadly bicarbonate of soda can't help with the electricity costs but do let us know if you have found a way. It may be time to consider checking out which company in your area can provide you with the best deal on your electricity charges. There are many companies out there so I recommend there is a site that can help you work out called 'get sorted'.

This is just the beginning of my journey to being more frugal but I am making it a challenge to myself.

I wish you all well for the next two months until we have our next newsletter. Good luck with your thrifty money saving ideas.

Lyn McNair

Dannevirke Office

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Kia Ora,

I hope all of you deserving mothers had a wonderful Mother's Day and had some time to yourself. I spent the afternoon at the Women's Expo with a colleague, manning the Supporting Families (SF) display, which featured brochures and information, and we met and spoke with some wonderful people. Because it was Mother's Day, there were many mothers, daughters, and even granddaughters enjoying a great day out. I had the opportunity to wander around and look at all the stores, and there was plenty to look at, from haircare to apparel, gorgeous soaps and other beauty care products, food, and much more. Not good for me because I spent far too much money in that short time. Some stalls offered freebies and SF had a bottle of bubbles (not wine) with a nice poem attached that attracted people of all ages. Some store owners had travelled all the way from Christchurch for the two-day event. I'd never been to a Women's Expo before, but found many kind and friendly people to talk to and I'd recommend this event to all.

Julie



Coping With Disaster Fatigue: A Guide for Families

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inside-out-outside-in/202010/coping-disaster-fatigue-guide-families?eml>

The extensive weather-related disasters and the pandemic require coping skills.

Mother nature has not been easy on us lately.

We have shouldered one weather-related crisis after another. The United States has sustained a record number of extensive wildfires, tropical storms, derechos, and tornados. And these disasters do not include additional serious weather-related conditions, such as record-breaking heat, drought, floods, and prospective mudslides, often the consequence of severe fires.

These threats have been personally experienced by thousands of families, while those of us outside the dangers of imminent harm have been barraged by daily accounts of the disasters on television and through digital media.

Compounding weather-related disasters is that we are in the midst of a pandemic that has already taken over 210,000 American lives. Most parents and children are physically isolated from family and friends, and utterly uncertain about the health of our loved ones. All this is embedded in an economic downturn and social unrest, with many concerned about systemic racism, healthcare, and economic disparities, threats to obtaining healthcare coverage, and the impact of climate change.

I don't mean to sound apocalyptic, but sometimes these events feel that way — kind of like being in a Mad Max film.

Many of us, and particularly those directly impacted by weather-related events, are suffering from "disaster fatigue." While not a bona fide diagnosis, this is a condition characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion. Emotionally, many are riddled by anxiety, stress, and loss of sleep.

Many parents affected by weather events are worried about all of the following:

- Taking care of kids, especially younger kids
- Worrying about older kids who have left home for college or work, and are on their own
- Caring for other family members, such as older parents or those with chronic illnesses
- Diminished focus and productivity at work, whether working remotely or out of the house
- Lack of socializing with family, friends, and peers, resulting in isolation and loneliness
- Excessive worry about housing, finances, schooling for kids



- What to do in case of the need for evacuation — it's hard enough without a COVID pandemic, but where do we go to be safe from both a weather-related disaster and a viral illness?

With so many worries, how can you support yourself and your family during this time? We offer some guidance below.

Coping With Disaster Fatigue: A Guide for Families

Guide for Taking Care of Yourself

Parents and other caregivers, you can best help your kids and teens if you take care of yourselves. Like the flight attendant that says, "If the pressure drops, put the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping others."

Here are some ways to manage your disaster fatigue:

- **Control your anxiety.** We all know anxiety is contagious. Your kids will pick up on this, and it may impair your ability to manage your own needs and help your kids. Find ways to diminish your anxiety, such as the techniques listed below.
- **Practice self-care.** Use whatever works to diminish your anxiety and replenish your energy, such as yoga or meditation. Be sure to get enough sleep, exercise, and maintain a healthy diet.
- **Use social support.** There is no better way to improve your mood, stress, and re-energize than connecting with your spouse, partner, friends, family, community, and spiritual leaders.
- **Get good information, but not too much.** For any possible weather condition, get the best possible facts, but beware of flooding yourself with digital media. Turn the smartphones and other screens off for a while.
- **Take some time for yourself.** You have so much to do — caring for your kids, maintaining the



home, keeping everyone safe, working remotely or out of the house. Plan to carve out some time for your own personal relaxation, such as taking a walk, riding a bike, listening to music, catching up on your reading, or watching a good (hopefully funny) TV show.

Guide for Helping Children

All kids in times of crises have three basic questions:

- Am I safe?
- Are you, the people caring for me, safe?
- How will this affect my daily life?

Here are some tips to help you manage their disaster fatigue:

- **Think developmentally.**
 - Pre-school kids are more responsive to your emotional reactions than anything else. They may need a bit more cuddling or TLC, or even to sleep in your room. Be sure to turn off all media they may hear or see.
 - School-age kids are concrete. They think in black and white terms, require structure, and need simple and concrete explanations. They often don't know how far the wildfires on the West Coast are in relation to where they live, so you may need to show them how far away they are. They, too, can be overwhelmed by too much media, so it's best to shut it off or monitor it closely.
 - Adolescents are more advanced and can understand the dangers of fires, mudslides, flooding, and other weather-related issues. Let them watch limited media with you and have conversations about the conditions, means of evacuation, and implications for their daily life.
- **Ask if they have any questions.** Don't assume your kids have the information they want and need, or that it is accurate. If you ask them what they know about fires or storms, you can better help them diminish their anxiety. You can also correct or explain any misconceptions, like "How will we take our cat with us?"
- **Be prepared to answer questions over and over.** Some children will need you to repeat answers to their questions more than once — possibly through the course of several days or weeks. They, like you, cannot take in highly emotional information on the first round.
- **Reassure your child that they are safe.** Be sure they know that you have plans for evacuation if needed, a place to go, and that first responders are geared to keep everyone safe. Let them know that there are many folks in the community working together.

- **Have frequent conversations.** These disasters are a marathon, not a sprint — many different weather events are occurring, and while a single event may happen in a single day, the aftermath stays with us. Many new questions will come up as time changes, so be prepared to have many conversations.
- **Ask how they are feeling.** To complicate the situation further, we are coming into the weather-related crises during the COVID-19 pandemic, and all family members are feeling the emotional impact on some level. Teens and Gen Z were experiencing higher levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness even before the pandemic. It is super important to ask how they are feeling and understand how it affects their academic, social, and recreational life.
- **Share family narratives.** Kids love stories. Remind them of difficult times your family has faced before, weather-related or not. If you haven't experienced anything like this as a family, share stories of hard times you or their grandparents have gotten through. Let them know that by sticking together, you have gotten through hard times before, and you can do it again.
- **Don't be afraid to let them know how you are feeling.** Kids will know if you are worried or depressed, so be honest! But also let them know how you are handling your fatigue. Remember that you are their most important role model!

What to Look For: Signs of Anxiety in Your Kids

If your child or teen is suffering from anxiety or disaster fatigue, here are some things you may notice:

- Worrying about the safety of others
- Physical complaints, such as headaches or stomach aches
- Trouble sleeping, concentrating, mood changes (irritability), or appetite changes (excessive or reduced)
- Trouble with academics
- Worrying about bad things happening, in general
- Increased sensitivity and extensive questions about the disaster situation and different types of events

If you see any of these changes, talk about them with your kids, and consult your primary care provider. It may also be helpful to get a psychiatric or psychological evaluation.

Finally, one important thing to remember, just as you would say to your children: This is not the first time or the last we have been through a national crisis. If we all stay as calm as we can, maintain our physical and emotional health, and take care of our families, we can manage this.

This blog post also appears at the MGH Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds.



FREE

Practical Skills Group for Adults

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH

WELLBEING



(Image - University of Minnesota, 2023)

Six Sessions Modulated Learning - enter and leave at any stage of this learning package:

Commencing

Thursday 20 July 2023 10am to 12 noon

All sessions located at Kikorangi Room, Hancock House, 77-85 King Street, Palmerston North 2pm to 4pm

- Session 1 20th July Introduction – Connections
- Session 2 27th July Physical Wellbeing
- Session 3 3rd Aug Mental and Emotional Wellbeing
- Session 4 10th Aug Spiritual Wellbeing
- Session 5 17th Aug Whānau/Family
- Session 6 24th Aug Celebrating success

If you are interested, please call Specialist Primary Mental Health and Addictions Service on **0800 653 357**. Alternatively, email: mhasspadmin@mdhb.health.nz

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand



Donations and Acknowledgements

We are grateful to be in a position to provide support. However in order to continue to improve and develop our service we require the ongoing support of donors. The ongoing support of your small gift each month is the most effective way to assist our valuable work. All donations are tax deductible, and there are no longer any restrictions on the amount you can claim back. Payments can be made by internet banking, this can be set up with the following details:

Manawatu Supporting Families in Mental Illness
Westpac 03 1522 0020097 00

*Please place your Name/s under Particulars and "Donation" under Reference.
A receipt can be issued upon request for tax credit purposes.*

We gratefully thank the following for the funding we receive:

MidCentral District Health Board, Lottery Grants Board, The Lion Foundation, Infinity Foundation Ltd, T G McCarthy Trust, Vavasour Trust, Eastern & Central Trust, COGS Manawatu, COGS Tararua, Mainland Foundation, Community Services Council, Frozen Funds, Milverton Trust, Kingdom Foundation, Heartland Lion Foundation, donations from the general public and of course our members.



PROJECT CALM



Skill based anxiety reduction programme for school aged children

- 8 week course. One hour per session. One session per week.
- Parents attend alongside child. Parents learn theory and reasoning behind the strategies children are learning.
- Practical strategies are taught by the child programme facilitator.
- Based on Acceptance Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Self Compassion models.
- Children learn skills in mindfulness, relaxation, self compassion and problem solving.
- Adults learn about identifying and managing sensory issues, thinking errors and social difficulties.

School Based Option

- School choose students to attend – up to 8 per group.
- Children and parents received Project CALM Programme on school site after school.
- Teaching staff offered a workshop and PD into anxiety reduction

For registration of interest in hosting a Project CALM course contact
Supporting Families christine@manawatusf.org.nz 06 3558561



Sender:



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