



Supporting Families in Mental Illness

NEWSLETTER | FEB/MAR 2024



Kia ora

Welcome to the first newsletter of the year. I hope you all got some time to relax and enjoy this lovely weather. I had a lovely Christmas with the family and at New Year my daughter got married it was a lovely day bringing two families together.

At this time of the year it's about getting organised to start the many programmes that we provide to people in our communities. Starting in February we will have in Palmerston North the CALM programme, Connection with Hope for Depression, and the Family Connection programme. If any one is interested in the programmes or would like more information, please don't hesitate to call 06 3558561. Dannevirke will be running the Connection with Hope Anxiety starting early March. Levin will be running the Connection with Hope depression programme around the same time, once again if anyone is interested, please contact us.

I have booked the Carers Retreat for mid-April, this is for family/whānau members to take a break and a opportunity to meet other people living with similar issues. If you would like more information or to register for the weekend, please call your family/whānau worker.

Take care, look after yourself. Take some time to enjoy the small things in life.

Christine

Christine Zander-Campbell | Manager | Email: christine@manawatusf.org.nz

NEED
HELP?

CALL 06 355 8561

www.manawatusf.org.nz

Connections with Hope Depression Group Palmerston North – February • Levin – March

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 Levin 06 368 6116

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Palmerston North Office (Main Office)

Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

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Family Whānau Support in
Mental Illness
Manawatu
or search for ManawatuSF

Palmerston North Office

Whānau Coordinator: Kate Philips
Email: kate@manawatusf.org.nz



Kia ora from Palmerston North and Feilding

I just want to give a big shout out to Kathy Simpson from StarLight. What an amazing job of an unexpected gift, and to give hope through the knowing that the community cares.

StarLight was set up by Kathy Simpson and Cathy Barker from St Matthews. They approached Ward 21 and asked if they would like Christmas gifts for their patients. The staff response was "no one ever asks us!"

StarLight now provides Christmas and Easter gifts for Ward 21, Star1, teenagers with cancer, the Children's Ward, CAMHS, Palmerston North and Horowhenua Community Health Services as well as respite patients at Dominics in Feilding.

Amenity packs are provided for Ward 21 patients throughout the year. At Christmas pet packs are given to people who own pets, because pets are so important in recovery.

StarLight has become too big for two grandmothers to run, so for a number of years, Awapuni Rotary has adopted StarLight as a project.

As of this year, StarLight will be run by Awapuni Rotary with the help of the other Rotary Clubs in Palmerston North.

Thank you so very much to all the clubs, churches and businesses that have got behind this amazing initiative (there are too many to name!) and of course to you Kathy for your unwavering dedication, hard work and kindness.

As far as my mahi goes please feel free to make contact should you require support, advocacy or education, or if you are interested in attending any of our programmes.

Nga mihi

Kate

Palmerston North Office

Whānau Coordinator: Aaron Oliver
Email: aaron@manawatusf.org.nz



FYI, 2024 hasn't started as I had hoped; muscle strains, a sprained ankle and illness are among the annoying and discouraging gifts of 2024, so far. This was not what I expected or how I wanted to feel, at the beginning of the year, but these are not new emotions, either; I've had them before. So, I've been taking stock of what's happened, how I can understand the emotions and, most importantly, what I can do about them, because that is what makes the most difference to how I feel and where I have the most power to act.

I turn to my wellness skills: What is affecting me? What helps when I feel this way? Who can help me figure this out?

I had my own thoughts, I chatted with some people and we shared some ideas. A useful understanding emerged and, with it, opportunities to act, to use wellbeing tools, knowledge from my kete and the kete of others.

I adjusted my expectations.

There are times when I find it useful to talk about my emotions and circumstances, in confidence, and there are some people I can do this with. By doing that, it dawned on me there were some things I'd been looking forward to that were different from how I'd first imagined; they no longer matched the circumstances. When I let go those expectations; when I accepted the circumstances and I was offered a fresh perspective; I noticed an improvement in how I felt, like I was freed from a confinement.

So, now I'm looking forward to two weeks holiday, in a new way, different from how I'd first imagined it. No longer burdened by the disappointment of what I'd previously desired, I'm optimistic, some of my new, more realistic expectations, will be fulfilled.

Here are some recent additions to my resource kete, you might find useful:

Headstrong app – on your phone or using the web app -
<https://www.headstrong.org.nz/>

- This wellness app for rangatahi / youth, is also useful for 50 year olds, I discovered.
- Researched and developed right her in Aotearoa / New Zealand, with Te Whatu Ora and Auckland University.
- Give it a go or learn more about it on their website.

Another of my favourite e-tool finds is
<https://aroawellbeing.co.nz/>, from Te Aka Whai Ora

- Take a beautiful, mindful, stroll through the sights and sounds of te ngahere / the native bush, with this Te Ao Māori wellness tool.

Ngā mihi / with thanks.

Aaron

Notice of Supporting Families

AGM

21st February 2024
at 6.00pm
163 Broadway Ave



Connections with Hope Anxiety

Dannevirke – March

A programme for people with mild to moderate anxiety

- ✔ 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.



Dannevirke 06 374 8797

Dannevirke Office

Whānau Coordinator: Julie Fromont
Email: julie@manawatusf.org.nz



What is a News Years Resolution?

Something that goes in one year and out the other.

But that's okay because you are grate just as you are.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

We should all pat ourselves on the back we made it to another year. Let this year be the year you go after progress over perfection and savor every victory you make along the way to your goals. Enjoy the beautiful sunshine, make time to do something you love doing.

Cheers, Julie Fromont

Levin Office

Whānau Coordinator: Julie Gibson
Email: JulieG@manawatusf.org.nz



Hello from Horowhenua

Hoping everyone managed to have a bit of time for themselves over the Christmas period and have made some pleasant memories with loved ones, saw a beautiful sunset or even discovered a new spot in nature where there could relax for 10 minutes and catch their breath to help them get through the day.

This year has started at a busy pace and I'm settling into my new role here at Supporting Families while also meeting some wonderful people and agencies in the community.

For those of you who enjoy the warmer months, we've had some glorious weather "although a little hot for me at times" it is lovely.

Life's events can be challenging at times, but there is support in the community, even if it may be hard to tap into, it is here, so if in need reach out and keep trying.

Remember to find some beauty in every day, even if it's as simple as just smelling a rose or seeing a beautiful butterfly dancing around the back yard.

Stay safe.

Kia Kaha

Julie Gibson



BRINGING JOY, GIVING HOPE

Our Aim is to bring joy and hope to mental health patients. We want them to know their community cares about them. We drop off welcome packs to Ward 21 and Crisis Respite in Feilding. During the Year we drop in Easter and Christmas gifts.

If you could help us with the following supplies throughout the year we would be most grateful.

- * Caps, beanies, t-shirts
- * Underwear for men and women
- * Toiletries - deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, face cloths, soap, hand cream, sunblock, lip balm, shampoo, feminine hygiene products
- * Toilet bags, cosmetic bags, tote bags, gift bags
- * drink bottles
- * sweets, chips, soft drinks (not energy drinks)
- * puzzle books and pens
- * books, current magazines, stationery
- * colouring books, coloured pencils
- * pet food, pet treats and toys

ALL DONATED ITEMS MUST BE NEW
- this gift may be the only gift the patient receives at Christmas.

We want them to feel cherished.

Items can be dropped into Supporting Families anytime and we will collect and distribute.





What is mental health?

Medically reviewed by Marney A. White, PhD, MS, Psychology

By Adam Felman and Rachel Ann Tee-Melegrito — Updated on January 3, 2024

Mental health is all about how people think, feel, and behave. Mental health specialists can help people with depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, addiction, and other conditions that affect their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Mental health can affect daily living, relationships, and physical health.

However, this link also works in the other direction. Factors in people's lives, interpersonal connections, and physical factors can contribute to mental ill health.

Looking after mental health can preserve a person's ability to enjoy life. Doing this involves balancing life activities, responsibilities, and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

Stress, depression, and anxiety can all affect mental health and disrupt a person's routine.

Although health professionals often use the term mental health, doctors recognize that many psychological disorders have physical roots.

This article explains what people mean by mental health and mental illness. We also describe the most common types of mental disorders, including their early signs and how to treat them.

What is mental health?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Trusted Source:

"Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community."

The WHO states that mental health is "more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities." Peak mental health is not only about managing active conditions but also looking after ongoing wellness and happiness.

It also emphasizes that preserving and restoring mental health is crucial individually and at a community and society level.

In the United States, the National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that almost 1 in 5 adults experience mental health problems each year.

In 2020, an estimated 14.2 million adults Trusted Source in the U.S., or about 5.6%, had a serious psychological condition, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).



Risk factors for mental health conditions

Everyone is at some risk of developing a mental health disorder, regardless of age, sex, income, or ethnicity. In the U.S. and much of the developed world, mental disorders are one of the leading causes of disability.

Social and financial circumstances, adverse childhood experiences, biological factors, and underlying medical conditions can all shape a person's mental health.

Many people with a mental health disorder have more than one condition at a time.

It is important to note that good mental health depends on a delicate balance of factors and that several elements may contribute to developing these disorders.

The following factors can contribute to mental health disruptions.

Continuous social and economic pressure

Having limited financial means or belonging to a marginalized or persecuted ethnic group can increase the risk of mental health disorders.

A 2015 Iranian study^{Trusted Source} describes several socioeconomic causes of mental health conditions, including poverty and living on the outskirts of a large city.

The researchers also described flexible (modifiable) and inflexible (nonmodifiable) factors that affect the availability and quality of mental health treatment for certain groups.

Modifiable factors for mental health disorders include:

- socioeconomic conditions, such as whether work is available in the local area
- occupation
- a person's level of social involvement
- education
- housing quality
- gender

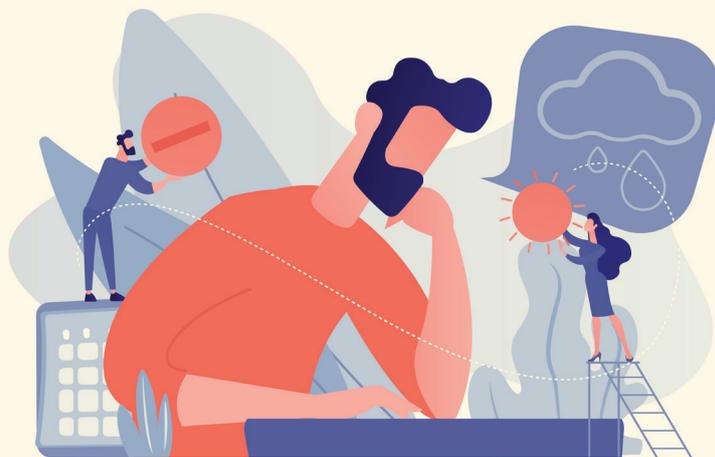
Nonmodifiable factors include:

- gender
- age
- ethnicity
- nationality

The researchers found that being female increased the risk of low mental health status by nearly 4 times. People with a "weak economic status" also scored highest for mental health conditions in this study.

Childhood adversity

Several studies^{Trusted Source} support that adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse, parental loss, parental separation, and parental illness significantly affect a growing child's mental and physical health.



There are also associations between childhood abuse and other adverse events with various psychotic disorders. These experiences also make people vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Biological factors

The NIMH suggests that genetic family history can increase the likelihood^{Trusted Source} of mental health conditions as specific genes and gene variants put a person at higher risk.

However, many other factors contribute to the development of these disorders.

Having a gene associated with a mental health disorder does not guarantee that a condition will develop. Likewise, people without related genes or a family history of mental illness can still have mental health issues.

Chronic stress and mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety may develop due to underlying physical health problems, such as cancer, diabetes, and chronic pain.

Types of mental health disorders

Specific mental disorders are grouped together due to features they have in common. Some types of mental illness are as follows:

- anxiety disorders
- mood disorders
- schizophrenia disorders

Anxiety disorders

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness.

People with these conditions have severe fear or anxiety related to certain objects or situations. Most people with an anxiety disorder try to avoid exposure to whatever triggers their anxiety.



Below are some examples of anxiety disorders.

Generalized anxiety disorder

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) involves excessive worry or fear that disrupts everyday living.

People may also experience physical symptoms, including:

- restlessness
- fatigue
- poor concentration
- tense muscles
- interrupted sleep

A bout of anxiety symptoms does not necessarily need a specific trigger in people with GAD.

They may experience excessive anxiety when encountering everyday situations that do not pose a direct danger, such as chores or appointments. A person with GAD may sometimes feel anxiety with no trigger at all.

Panic disorder

People with a panic disorder experience regular panic attacks involving sudden, overwhelming terror or a sense of imminent disaster and death.

Phobias

There are different types of phobia:

- **Simple phobias:** These may involve a disproportionate fear of specific objects, scenarios, or animals. A fear of spiders is a typical example.
- **Social phobia:** Sometimes known as social anxiety, this is a fear of being subject to the judgment of others. People with social phobia often restrict their exposure to social environments.
- **Agoraphobia:** This term refers to a fear of situations where getting away may be difficult, such as being in an elevator or a moving train. Many people misunderstand this phobia as the fear of being outside.

Phobias are deeply personal, and doctors do not know every type. There could be thousands of phobias, and



what may seem unusual to one person can be a severe problem that dominates daily life for another.

OCD

People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) have obsessions and compulsions. In other words, they experience constant, stressful thoughts and a powerful urge to perform repetitive acts, such as handwashing.

PTSD

PTSD can occur after a person experiences or witnesses an intensely stressful or traumatic event. During this type of event, the person thinks that their life or other people's lives are in danger. They may feel afraid or that they have no control over what is happening.

These sensations of trauma and fear may then contribute to PTSD.

Mood disorders

People may also refer to mood disorders as affective disorders or depressive disorders.

People with these conditions have significant mood changes, generally involving either mania, a period of high energy and joy, or depression. Examples of mood disorders include:

- **Major depression:** An individual with major depression experiences a constant low mood and loses interest in activities and events that they previously enjoyed (anhedonia). They can feel prolonged periods of sadness or extreme sadness.
- **Bipolar disorder:** A person with bipolar disorder experiences unusual changes in their mood, energy levels, levels of activity, and ability to continue with daily life. Periods of high mood are known as manic phases, while depressive phases bring on low mood. Read more about the different types of bipolar here.
- **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD):** Reduced daylight during the fall, winter, and early spring months triggers this type of major depression. It is most common in countries far from the equator.

Schizophrenia disorders

The term schizophrenia often refers to a spectrum of disorders characterized by psychotic features and other severe symptoms. These are highly complex conditions.

According to the NIMH, signs of schizophrenia typically develop between the ages of 16 and 30. The individual will have thoughts that appear fragmented and may also find it hard to process information.

Schizophrenia has negative and positive symptoms. Positive symptoms include delusions, thought disorders, and hallucinations, while withdrawal, lack of motivation, and a flat or inappropriate mood are examples of negative symptoms.

Early signs

No physical test or scan reliably indicates whether a person has developed a mental illness. However, people should look out for the following as possible signs of a mental health disorder:

- withdrawing from friends, family, and colleagues
- avoiding activities they would normally enjoy
- sleeping too much or too little
- eating too much or too little
- feeling hopeless
- having consistently low energy
- using mood-altering substances, including alcohol and nicotine, more frequently
- displaying negative emotions
- being confused
- being unable to complete daily tasks, such as getting to work or cooking a meal
- having persistent thoughts or memories that reappear regularly
- thinking of causing physical harm to themselves or others
- hearing voices
- experiencing delusions

Diagnosis

Diagnosing a mental health disorder requires a multi-step process. A doctor may begin by looking at a person's medical history and performing a thorough physical exam to rule out physical conditions or issues that may be causing the symptoms.

No medical tests can diagnose mental disorders. However, doctors may order a series of laboratory tests such as imaging exams and bloodwork to screen for other possible underlying causes.

They will also do a psychological evaluation. This includes asking about a person's symptoms, experiences, and how these have impacted their lives. Sometimes, the doctor may ask a person to fill out mental health questionnaires to get an idea about a person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns.

Most mental health specialists use the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) to make a diagnosis. This manual contains descriptions and specific criteria to qualify for a diagnosis.

Treatment

There are various methods for managing mental health problems. Treatment is highly individual, and what works for one person may not work for another.

Some strategies or treatments are more successful in combination with others. A person with a chronic mental disorder may choose different options at various stages in their life.

The individual needs to work closely with a doctor who can help them identify their needs and provide suitable treatment.

Below are some treatment options for people with mental ill health.

Psychotherapy, or talking therapies

This type of treatment takes a psychological approach to treating mental illness. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure therapy, and dialectical behavior therapy are examples.

Psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, and some primary care physicians carry out this treatment.

It can help people understand the root of their mental illness and start to work on more healthful thought patterns that support everyday living and reduce the risk of isolation and self-harm.

Medication

Some people take prescribed medications, such as antidepressants, antipsychotics, and anxiolytic drugs.

Although these cannot cure mental disorders, some medications can improve symptoms and help a person resume social interaction and a routine while working on their mental health.

Some of these medications boost the body's absorption of feel-good chemicals, such as serotonin, from the brain. Other drugs either boost the overall levels of these chemicals or prevent their degradation or destruction.

Self-help

A person coping with mental health difficulties may need to change their lifestyle to facilitate wellness.

Such changes can include reducing alcohol intake, sleeping more, and eating a balanced, nutritious diet. People may need to take time away from work or resolve issues with personal relationships that may be causing damage to their mental health.

People with conditions such as anxiety or depressive disorder may benefit from relaxation techniques, which include deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness.

Having a support network, whether via self-help groups or close friends and family, can also be essential to recovery from mental illness.



CALL 06 355 8561

www.manawatusf.org.nz



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

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.

