



**Supporting
Families**
in Mental Illness

NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2025



Kia ora

Welcome to the last newsletter of the year. I don't know where the year has gone and I must start planning for the next year. This year has seen a growing demand for our services throughout the region. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for all their hard

work and dedication to the people that we support. I hope they all get some time to rest and relax over the Christmas and New Year break. Supporting Families will be closed from the 19th December and will re-open on the 5th of January 2026. Should anyone need support over this period please call 06 355 8561, as I will be on call.

In the new year, we will be starting our groups – Anxiety, Depression, Project CALM and the Family Connection programme. If anyone is interested, please make contact. Additionally we will be providing a Carers Retreat again next year, so get in touch if you would like to participate.

This year has been challenging for many, so please take care of yourselves. It can be a particularly stressful time of year.

"Life is like a camera. Focus on what is important, capture the good times, develop from the negatives, and if things don't work out, take another shot."

I hope you all can take some time out to enjoy the sun, to breathe and relax. Be amazing, believe in yourself and remember that anything is possible.

Take care,

Christine

Christine Zander-Campbell | Manager
Email: christine@manawatusf.org.nz
☎ 027 317 5339



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Palmerston North Office (Main Office)

Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

📍 163 Broadway Avenue
PO Box 5010, Palmerston North
☎ (06) 355 8561 or (06) 355 8562

Manager Family/Whānau:

Christine Zander-Campbell,
christine@manawatusf.org.nz
Cell: 027 317 5339

Family/whānau co-ordinators:

Kate Philips, kate@manawatusf.org.nz
Cell: 027 355 8564
Aaron Oliver, aaron@manawatusf.org.nz
Cell: 027 355 8560

Administrator: Sharon Gutry,
admin@manawatusf.org.nz

Dannevirke Office

Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

📍 40 Denmark Street
(ground floor)
☎ 027 355 8568

Family/whānau co-ordinator:

Julie Fromont, julie@manawatusf.org.nz

Levin Office

Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

📍 58 Bath Street, Levin
(1st floor)
☎ (06) 368 6116
027 330 8277

Family/whānau co-ordinators:

Jenna Kennett, jennak@manawatusf.org.nz
Nicole Deans, nicole@manawatusf.org.nz



CALL 06 355 8561

www.manawatusf.org.nz

Palmerston North Office

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



**Ngā mihi mahana, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei,
Namaste; warm greetings everyone.**

Perhaps my traditional seasonal greeting is this:

1. Look after yourself.
2. Give help on your terms.

These tips are from [MethHelp](#).

I encourage you to do one thing that's just for you.
Then do it as many times as you can.

Something for me, will be sunshine. Or, a siesta.

Also for wellbeing, my favourite resource this year is the [Farmstrong Toolkit](#). It's like a first aid kit; "practical solutions that work for busy people." And, it's Made in NZ. Professionally developed and evidence-based tools put together to support people's resilience after damaging cyclones; also handy for other storms in our lives.

Notice any successes can also be a boost, no matter how big or small. Seeing the difference our support and programmes have made to families this year, amidst some of the most intense experiences we can have as people, feels like fulfilling the purpose for which this organisation was established. I'm immensely grateful that as an organisation, and in partnership with Te Whatu Ora / Health NZ, we achieved an additional [Family Connections](#) programme this year, up from three last year to four.

I'm looking forward to what our team can achieve with families in 2026. We welcome Nicole to our kapa mahi and her contribution to building on Jenna's achievements in Horowhenua.

**Ngā mihi o te wā; seasons greetings.
Aaron**

Palmerston North Office

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



Kia ora from Palmerston North and Feilding

Wow I am really finding it hard to get my head around the fact that the year is almost over. We are busy in the Palmerston North office with a steady stream of referrals coming in. You don't need a referral however to receive our services; you can just make a call to our office. I have met and worked with some wonderful people over the last year and have enjoyed facilitating the Family Connections programme.

There are many useful resources, tools and phone lines to be found on the New Zealand Mental Health Foundation website www.mentalhealth.org.nz.

Just one of the many is 'Need to Talk' which you can call free or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.

Parent Help – 0800 568 856 for parents/whānau seeking support, advice and practical strategies on all parenting concerns. Anonymous, nonjudgemental and confidential.

There are also many helplines for children and young people:

Youthline 0800 376 633, free text 234 or email talk@youthline.co.nz or,

Online Chat thelowdown.co.nz – or email team@thelowdown.co.nz or free text 5625.

What's Up 0800 942 8787 (for 5-18 year olds).

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and a safe and happy new year.

**Nga mihi
Kate**



Levin Office

Whānau Coordinator: Jenna Kennett
Email: jennak@manawatusf.org.nz



Kia Ora, We are fast approaching the “silly season,” and it is with immense pleasure to share that I have been working for Supporting Families Manawatu for just over 7 months.

In the time I have worked for Supporting Families I have had the great privilege of supporting Family/Whānau within my community.

Supporting Families have provided me with the tools and skills to share helpful information and resources to the people that are seeking much needed help.

Over the past 7 months I have had the opportunity to engage with several community support organisations who share the same values/passions as we do.

My goal for 2026 is to continue the magnificent work that we do, to support Family/Whānau throughout their journey and to walk alongside them with love, kindness, and respect.

I am pleased to share that Supporting Families have recruited Nicole Deans as a Family/Whānau Coordinator, Nicole and I share similar values, I am so thrilled that we will be working together in Levin. I would like to officially welcome Nicole to the team, Nicole has some wonderful skills and background experience which I believe will add value to our team, I'm so excited to be working with Nicole and together I believe that we will make positive difference.

I'm grateful to Supporting Families for welcoming me to the team and supporting me throughout the year, I would also like to thank my clients for sharing their stories with me and welcoming me in to their homes, I look forward to continuing to support you into the New Year and welcoming new clients in 2026.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year, be kind to yourself, take care of yourself, I look forward to seeing you in 2026.

Thank you very much,
Jenna Kennett

Levin Office

Whānau Coordinator: Nicole Deans
Email: nicole@manawatusf.org.nz



Kia ora rawa atu,

I'm pleased to introduce myself and share a little about the journey that's shaped my passion for strengthening community and supporting whānau wellbeing.

I'll be based in Levin, bringing experience across crisis response, community development, journalism, and education – beginning with my early work as a Police call taker and dispatcher.

More recently, I worked with the Horowhenua Abuse Liaison Team (HALT), where I developed the Where to Get

Help directory, coordinated Safety Assessment Meetings addressing family harm, facilitated interagency networking hui, and supported training on sensitive and trauma-informed topics. This mahi strengthened my understanding of whānau dynamics and the power of well-connected community support.

I also bring experience from my role as Communications and Engagement Specialist at Horowhenua District Council, where I worked across community development projects and local networks; from my time at Palmerston North City Library supporting inclusive access to information; and from earlier work as a journalist, which strengthened my communication skills and passion for community storytelling.

Mental health is a kaupapa close to my heart, shaped by experiences within my own whānau and a commitment to sharing knowledge in ways that are compassionate, empowering, and mana-enhancing.

Outside of work, I'm a proud mum to two energetic boys, aged 9 and 7, who keep me busy with their extracurricular activities - and I fill my own cup through musical theatre.

I'm looking forward to contributing to this mahi alongside you all.

Mā te wā,
Nicole



Dannevirke Office

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



Greetings from Dannevirke.

Another year is almost over with Christmas approaching fast. The weather has been all over the place, spring has sprung and it's lovely to see the sun.

In Dannevirke, the Christmas 2025 events include the Christmas Parade on Saturday 6th December starting at 12pm. There will also be the Dannevirke fantasy cave pop up starting from 13th to 24th December. These are great, fun family outings!

It has been a busy year with families here in Dannevirke and our Connection with Hope Depression and Anxiety courses was a huge success. It is always a privilege running these courses, watching the group connecting with each other and building friendships, and knowing they are not alone. If you missed out this year, our next Anxiety course is going to be mid February 2026. Give me a call would love to hear from you.

Please be kind to yourselves and always remember you are doing the very best you can.

Take care,
Julie Fromont



Looking after yourself if Christmas feels hard

Source: <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/looking-after-yourself-if-christmas-feels-hard>

Christmas is supposed to be an uplifting time of year spent with whānau and enjoying good weather but, for a lot of us, Christmas can be really challenging. There is no shame in not enjoying the festive season, whatever your reason might be. If you're feeling worried about how you might cope with Christmas this year, there are things you can do to support yourself, and help is available, should you need it.

"I can find it hard to listen to other people's big Christmas plans with their whānau as it reminds me of what I don't have. I don't like being asked about my plans and usually don't know what to say. It feels awkward to have to explain that I won't see my whānau on Christmas." – Aida*, Tāmaki Makaurau

There are a few different reasons why the festive season might feel stressful or upsetting for you.

- Money stress
- Feeling lonely or being disconnected from whānau
- Social anxiety or overwhelm
- Disruption to your usual routine
- Reflecting on the year as it comes to an end
- Grieving a loved one who has died.

Whatever the cause, there are ways to get through – and maybe even enjoy – Christmas on your own terms.

"I sometimes find it frustrating that my mental illness doesn't just go away at Christmas. Most of the year I manage okay, but at Christmas it seems like everyone is suddenly expected to feel happy, and I'm failing to live up to that. One thing that helps me is to remember that Christmas is celebrated by millions of people, and everyone's Christmas will be different. Not everyone will be perfectly happy. I can find pockets of joy by doing things that I know are good for my wellbeing; I just have to take the pressure off to have that perfect Christmas." – Kate*, Tāmaki Makaurau

What you can do

- Think about what you'd like your experience of the Christmas season to be: a time to relax? A time for tradition? A time to connect with people? If you know what will bring you comfort – regardless of the traditional idea of what Christmas 'should' be – you can try to plan things that help uplift your wellbeing. You might find some local walks you want to complete, a community meal you want to go along to, or start your own festive tradition.
- Remember that family can be what you choose, especially if you're disconnected from the family you grew up with – if you have friends, neighbours,



or people in your community who you feel connected with, you might prioritise spending time with them over Christmas.

- Try to let yourself feel your feelings; you can recognise and experience your feelings without being totally absorbed by them. It might help to keep a mood diary so that you can understand what helped or what was hard during the Christmas season. Remember that Christmas will end, and so will these feelings.
- Share how you're feeling with someone you trust. It can help you to feel less alone if you tell someone what's been going on for you. This could be a friend, family member, or mental health professional.
- Plan things to look forward to after the Christmas season is over. It can feel uplifting to celebrate the hard work you have put in to look after yourself during a challenging time.
- Keep up a good wellbeing routine.

If you are facing loneliness

Most of us have some supportive connections in our lives – whether with whānau, friends, neighbours or colleagues. Even if you feel like you have no-one there are ways to connect with people during Christmas.

- Spend time with other people who may be lonely or just want to chat; you could volunteer at a food bank or care home.
- Attend a local community event or join a community group. There are always events around Christmas for people seeking community,



which you could find through Facebook or an event directory. Although some community groups (sports clubs, choirs, book clubs, etc.) may pause over the festive season, joining one beforehand and knowing you can look forward to returning after the break might also be helpful. Neighbourhood NZ is a good example of a community group (based all over Aotearoa New Zealand) for adults seeking new friendships.

- Arrange phone calls or video calls with loved ones who live far away. You can find ways to connect even if you're not together in person; make sure you set aside dates to call so that you know you'll have dedicated time to talk.
- Find ways to manage your feelings of loneliness. Read [Mind UK's article on loneliness for more information](#).

If you're facing social anxiety or overwhelm

The social demands around Christmas tend to be a lot higher than usual and it's okay if you feel overwhelmed. There are ways to create boundaries and look after yourself while still enjoying festivities.

- Take time to be alone and re-charge; even if you're staying with family, you should be able to find time each day to be alone. You might like to go for a walk and listen to music.
- Do things that you know bring you peace and comfort – read a book you love, go for swims in the sea, call a friend on the phone. If you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed, it really helps to continue doing things that build up your wellbeing.
- Stay present. It can feel easier to cope with anxiety by withdrawing or shutting down your feelings. You could take a moment to yourself and try the 5 senses grounding exercise, or another mindful exercise that works for you, until you're feeling more present and less absorbed by your anxiety.
- Prioritise – if there are social occasions that are really important to you, or that you know you really have to attend, try to reduce your other obligations around those days.
- Leave if you need to. It's very unlikely that the event you're at is more important than looking after your wellbeing. If you're feeling unhappy or uncomfortable head home or take a break from the event, knowing that you're doing what is best for you and your mental health.

“You are not alone! I think many people have complicated feelings about Christmas even if they don't talk about it. Lean on your support system and talk about how you're feeling with trusted friends. Make some plans (even if they seem small) for the day so you know what to expect and stay off social media if it is triggering.”

– Aida*, Tāmaki Makaurau

If you're facing grief or bereavement

- Give yourself permission to grieve – try to free yourself from the expectations that Christmas should be a perfectly happy time.
- Let the people around you know that you are feeling your grief particularly strongly, and that you'd appreciate their support in accepting and managing this.
- Remember the person you have lost; you might create a new tradition to honour them, like adding their photo to the Christmas tree. Taking time to acknowledge your loved one might help you to feel like they are still part of Christmas even if they can't be there with you.
- Make sure you have plans to see friends and whānau. Feeling connected to the people you love – and people who also loved the person you have lost – will help you to cope with the grief you're feeling.

If you are facing money stress

Christmas can be an expensive time. You may feel an expectation to host an elaborate celebration or to gift expensive presents. In reality, most of us feel that our best Christmases have been spent connecting with people that we love, being out in nature – the free stuff!

- Start by making a budget that works for your situation, and a plan for the season ahead. This will help you to have realistic expectations about what you can do over Christmas and give you more certainty about your finances.
- Take advantage of free stuff – there are plenty of free community Christmas events. You could also use community 'free stuff' Facebook groups to find gifts.
- Change your approach to gift-giving. You might give an experience-based gift – like offering to accompany someone on a hike – or make them a gift, like a personalised playlist. A gift doesn't have to cost anything. Your presence is the best present.

For more advice, read our [wellbeing tips for managing financial stress](#).

If you are facing stress because your routine has changed

- Try to retain as much of your routine as you can; even if you're not going to work that day, you might still choose to wake up at the same time and get yourself ready for the day ahead.
- Make a list of the places you normally go each week and what their Christmas opening hours are. You might need to call them to find out, or you may be able to find the information on their social media pages. This means you'll be prepared, knowing which days shops and services will be available, and you can plan ahead with this in mind.



- If you experience anxiety or panic attacks, write down the coping mechanisms that usually work best for you. That way even if you're feeling a bit scrambled by the changes to your routine, you now have tools available to cope with difficult feelings.

If you're feeling suicidal

If you're struggling with suicidal thoughts over the festive season, many services are still open and available to help you. All the services on our crisis page are open 365 days a year – [please see our crisis page for more information](#).

Call 111 if you, or someone else, is in immediate physical danger. Or contact your regional mental health crises team – visit mentalhealth.org.nz/help for contact details.

No matter what you're struggling with at this time of year, there is a way forward. Reaching out to chat to someone you trust is always a good first step. Prioritising your wellbeing and the things that give you strength, happiness and stability, will help you to have a better Christmas.



Manawatu Supporting Families wish you a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

We will be closed from December 19th and re-open on January 5th 2026.



ANXIETY PROGRAMME

Connections with Hope Anxiety

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.

 (06) 355 8561



ANXIETY PROGRAMME

Connections with Hope Depression Group

Depression is one of the most common mental health problems facing people today. It's 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.

 (06) 355 8561





FOLLOW US ON facebook

Family Whānau Support in Mental Illness Manawatu

or search for ManawatuSF



Holiday Opening Hours 2025/2026

YOSS PALMY AND LEVIN

31 Princess Street, PN –

06 355 5906

Closed from 23rd December

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

YOUTHLINE CNI

Closed from 19th December

Re-Open: 20th January 2026

LUCK VENUE

Berryman's Lane, PN –

06 357 6798

Last Day: 19th December

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

METHODIST SOCIAL SERVICES

663 Main Street, PN –

06 350 0307

Closed: 18th December

Re-Open: 12th January

JUST ZILCH

248 Featherston Street, PN –

022 597 2569

Open: 24th December

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

TE AROHA NOA

12-26 Brentwood Ave, PN –

06 358 2255

Last Day: 22nd December

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

TU TONU MAI

Levin Alternative Respite

Open referrals from CRS or

Horowhenua MH Team

WHAIORO TRUST

6 Linton St, PN - 06 354 0670

Last Day: 17th December

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

BEST CARE

(WHAKAPAI HAUORA)

140 Maxwells Line, PN –

06 353 6385

Closed: from 12pm 23rd Dec

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

MANAWATU SUPPORTING FAMILIES

163 Broadway Avenue, PN –

06 355 8561

Closed: End of day 19th Dec

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

ACROSS

294 A Church St, PN –

06 356 7486

Last Day: 18th December

Re-Open: 12th January 2026

SALVATION ARMY

431 Church St, PN –

06 358 7455

Closed: 22nd December

Re-Open: 12th January 2026

PATHWAYS/ST DOMINICS

35 Campbell Rd, Feilding

Open: Referrals Mental Health

Respite Care

MANA O TE TANGATA – PN AND LEVIN

601 Featherston St, PN –

06 358 5444

534 Queen St, Levin –

06 357 3393

Closed: from 22nd December to

2nd January 2026

Re-Open: 5th January 2026

Te Puna Wai (Café) Open:

27th/28th Dec 3-10pm,

and 3rd/4th Jan 3-10pm

Te Puna Wai will be closed on 26th

Dec and 2nd Jan 2026

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF MANAWATU

Level 3, 22-30 Broadway Avenue,

PN – 06 358 1204

Closed: End of day 19th Dec

Re-Open: 12th January 2026

RAUKAWA WHANAU ORA

3 Keepa St, Levin –

06 368 8678

Closed: End of day 19th Dec

Re-Open: 12th January 2026

THINK HAUORA AND TE ARA RAU ACCESS AND CHOICE

200 Broadway Ave, PN –

06 354 0670

Closed: 25th December

Re-Open: 12th January 2026

LEGACY COMMUNITY CENTRE

86 Highbury Avenue PN –

06 357 1276

Closed: from 12pm 23rd Dec

Re-Open: 20th January 2026

Last Community meal:

15th December

Re-start Meals: 10th February

MIDCENTRAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Addiction
Service

Crisis Resolution (CRS) Team

will be open throughout the

Christmas/New Year break 24/7

Call us on 0800 653 357



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.

