



New Zealand  
**DEFENCE  
FORCE**  
Te Ope Kātua O Aotearoa

Health

# Staying at the top of your Game

A Guide for Maintaining Health  
for the Defence Community

Version 01

**A FORCE FOR  
NEW ZEALAND**

# **A GUIDE FOR MAINTAINING HEALTH FOR THE DEFENCE COMMUNITY**

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This document has been produced by  
the Defence Health Directorate.

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## **I INTRODUCTION**

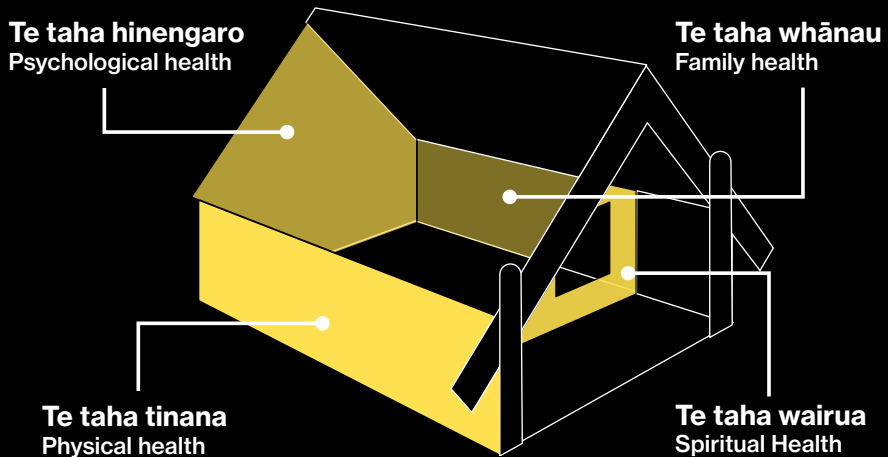
*'It is Health that is real wealth,  
and not pieces of gold and silver'*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

Our health is central to our overall wellbeing. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), healthy individuals and populations are happier, more productive and live longer.

Research has found strong linkages between our physical health, mental health, social connectedness and family health, and our sense of fulfilment and ability to live life in a way that feels meaningful. The Te Whare Tapa Whā model of health (Dr Mason Durie<sup>1</sup>) reinforces the importance of nurturing all four cornerstones of our health [Hinengaro, Tinana, Wairau and Whānau].

# TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ MODEL OF HEALTH



**Figure 1: Te Whare Tapa Whā Model of Health<sup>2</sup>**

Our health over time is shaped by complex interactions between our environment, individual life circumstances and experiences, our body's physiology, resilience levels and self-care. This resource emphasises that health is not a stable dimension and that health can fluctuate over time. While not all factors that impact our health are always in our control, there are a range of things that we can do to help keep us healthy and performing at the top of our game, and to help regain our health when we are not going so well.

This booklet is divided into four sections, spanning the four domains of our health. A range of tips and self-management tools are provided, and at the end of this resource you will find a list of additional sources of information and support (Appendices 1-3).

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<sup>1</sup> Mason Durie 1982 <https://hauora.co.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha-mason-durie/>

<sup>2</sup> Mason Durie 1982



# **TINANA** **BODY**



# TINANA BODY

Your physical health is likely the area of your health you are most aware of, and that which you are most likely to seek help for if you notice you aren't quite at the top of your game. Maintaining good physical health decreases your risk of developing certain health conditions, like heart disease, stroke, and some cancers. Being physically healthy also helps you to manage life's challenges and stay healthy across the other domains of health, helping you to stay fit for your job, and protecting against fatigue, injury and illness.

Although physical ailments are often the most obvious health concern, chronic issues that build up over time can be hard to detect. So it's important to regularly monitor your overall physical health, keeping an eye out for any change, and getting checked out if you (or someone you know) are concerned. It may turn out to be nothing to worry about which will give you piece of mind (sometimes just worrying about things can make us sick!) and if there is something going wrong, getting onto it early will increase your chances of a fast and full recovery.

Staying physically healthy can sometimes get harder as we get busy, and often as we get older, however prioritising your health is important at any age and there is a lot we can do to help ourselves. You are probably doing many of these already. The basic things are diet, exercise and sleep, but there are many other lifestyle factors that are important too.

# OPTIMISING PHYSICAL HEALTH

## Exercise

*“When the body is tired,  
exercise the mind ...  
when the mind is tired,  
exercise the body.”*

### **Get Regular exercise**

Exercise is good for almost every part of your body—heart, circulation, bones, respiratory system, skin, and brain. It has been found to help prevent a range of health conditions and also benefits your brain by reducing tension, improving sleep and aiding concentration.

### **How much physical activity is needed?**

Recommended exercise type and amount varies by age. The Ministry of Health Guidelines are:

**Adults** – Do at least 2½ hours of moderate or 1¼ hours of vigorous physical activity spread throughout the week. Moderate intensity activity causes a slight, but noticeable, increase in breath and heart rate. You can still carry on a conversation. Vigorous intensity activity makes you out of breath – you can't do these activities and chat at the same time. For extra health benefits, aim for 5 hours of moderate or 2½ hours of vigorous physical activity spread throughout the week. Do some muscle-strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.

**Older adults** – Do 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 days or more per week. Try to add 3 sessions of flexibility and balance activities, and 2 sessions of muscle-strengthening activities per week. (Some of this can be combined, e.g., hill walking may count towards aerobic and muscle-strengthening.)

**Children and teenagers (5 to 17 years)** – Do lots of physical activity. Do at least 1 hour of moderate or vigorous physical activity spread over each day. Also do a variety of light physical activities for several hours a day. Include vigorous physical activity and activities that strengthen muscles and bone at least 3 days a week. Don't spend much time sitting. Spend no more than 2 hours a day on recreational screen time. Sit less, move more. Break up sitting time.

Remember, any amount of exercise is better than none, and build up over time, especially if you have not done any exercise for a while. And if you have any health conditions talk to your doctor about your planned exercise programme before you start.



**Read more about tips for getting and staying active in Appendix 4 on page 132.**

## Nutrition

Nutrition plays an important role in your daily life. A well balanced diet is essential to achieving peak physical and mental performance, whilst maintaining a healthy weight and preventing chronic disease. This is achieved through its effects on energy stores, hydration status, nutrient sufficiency, body composition, injury prevention, recovery, immune system function, well-being and sustaining morale. There is growing evidence to suggest good nutrition is essential for mental health and that a number of mental health conditions are influenced by dietary factors.

### General Healthy Eating

Eating a variety of food is recommended for good health and peak physical and mental performance. Focus on whole-foods that are minimally processed and don't have lengthy ingredient lists. In other words, the closer a food is to its natural state – the better.

#### Resources:

See the Ministry of Health 'Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults' for more information.

[http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/eating-activity-guidelines-for-new-zealand-adults-oct15\\_0.pdf](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/eating-activity-guidelines-for-new-zealand-adults-oct15_0.pdf)

Check useful Apps here: <https://dietitians.org.nz/public-info/>

What?	Why?	How?
<p><b>Vegetables and Fruit</b></p>	<p>Provide carbohydrate, fibre, vitamins and minerals.</p> <p>Dietary fibre is essential for optimal function of the gut and is associated with risk reduction for a number of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, some cancers and type 2 diabetes.</p>	<p>Make half your lunch and dinner non-starchy vegetables.</p> <p>Fruit and vegetable sticks are good snack foods.</p> <p>Choose well-washed, fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit that are raw or lightly cooked.</p> <p>Eat a range of different coloured vegetables and fruit.</p> <p>Dried fruit, fruit juice and canned fruit in syrup are not recommended because they are high in sugar.</p>
<p><b>Meat, Chicken, Fish, Seafood, Eggs and Legumes</b></p>	<p>Provide protein, vitamins and minerals.</p> <p>Protein is important for growth and repair of muscle tissue; maintenance of strength and functional movement; and positively influences appetite and satiety (feeling full).</p> <p>Meat, chicken and fish are good sources of iron.</p> <p>Legumes are high in fibre.</p> <p>Fish and seafood are good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which have cardiovascular benefits and may improve mood and resistance to stress.</p>	<p>Aim for at least two serves of fish and/or seafood per week.</p> <p>Oily fish provide more omega-3 fatty acids, such as tuna, kahawai, salmon, sardines, eel and mussels.</p> <p>Legumes include cooked dried beans and peas, e.g. kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils.</p> <p>Legumes can be eaten instead of meat or mixed into a dish so less meat is used.</p> <p>Limit processed meats such as ham, salami, bacon and sausages.</p> <p>Boiled eggs make a great portable snack option.</p>

**Wholegrain Bread, Cereals, Grains and Starchy Vegetables**

Provide carbohydrate, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

If you choose to eat bread, cereals and grains, choose wholegrain and high fibre options.

Carbohydrate can provide an important source of energy for the body. However, they can contribute to weight gain when too much is eaten so it is important to balance your intake from this group with your activity levels each day.

High fibre grains include quinoa, barley, oats and rye.

Starchy vegetables include potato, kumara, corn, taro, yams and green banana.

Minimise intake of refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, rice and pasta; baked products, such as biscuits, cakes, scones and muffins; processed breakfast cereals, crackers and muesli bars. These are typically high in calories with limited nutritional value.

**Milk and Milk Products**

Provide protein, vitamins and minerals, including calcium.

If you can not drink cow's milk, choose a milk alternative with added calcium.

Choose plain, unflavoured milk and yoghurt.

**Nuts, Seeds and Healthy Oils**

Fats are important to meet energy needs, supply essential fatty acids and absorb fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K).

Different types of nuts and seeds have slightly different nutrition profiles.

Choose mostly unsaturated fats such as olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds and their oils and/or butters, e.g. peanut butter.

Plain, unsalted nuts and seeds are great snack foods or ideal sprinkled on the top of salads and vegetables.

## Nutrition and Mental Health

Recent evidence suggests that diet quality is a modifiable risk factor for mental health disorders. In other words, healthy dietary patterns – that consist of a high intake of vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, nuts, seeds and fish; with limited processed foods – have been shown to have less association with the probability of, or risk for depression. In contrast, unhealthy diets – high in processed food, processed meat, refined carbohydrate, salty and/or sugary ‘treats’ and sugar-sweetened beverages have been shown to have a greater association with depression and anxiety.

## Hydration

Maintaining hydration is important for peak performance and good health. Fluid requirements are individualised and influenced by a number of environmental factors and physical demands.

Make plain water your first choice. Plain milk is also good and provides protein and calcium.

Sugar sweetened beverages include fizzy drinks, energy drinks, flavoured waters, fruit juices, cordials, sports drinks, flavoured milks and breakfast drinks. They are very high in calories, have limited nutritional value and in particular, they contain large amounts of sugar. They increase risk of tooth decay and are linked to obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Am I Hydrated? Urine Colour Chart	
1	
2	If your urine matches the colors 1, 2, or 3 you are properly hydrated.
3	Continue to consume fluids at the recommended amounts.
4	If your urine color is below the <b>RED</b> line, you are.
5	<b>DEHYDRATED</b> and at risk for cramping and/or a heat illness!
6	<b>You need to drink more water!</b>
7	
8	

## Sugar

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends adults and children reduce their daily intake of free sugars to less than 5% of their total energy intake to gain health benefits and reduce the risk of overweight, obesity and tooth decay. This equates to approximately six teaspoons of sugar for the average adult. A 600mL bottle of Coke contains almost 13 teaspoons of sugar.

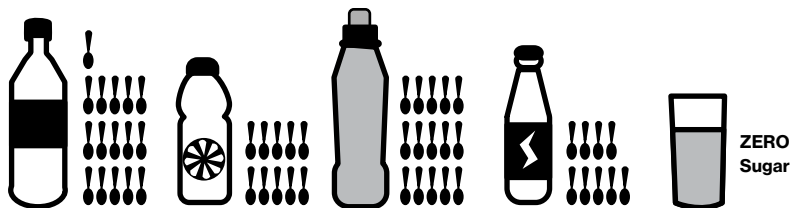
Free sugars are those added to foods or beverages by the manufacturer, cook or consumer. They also include sugars naturally present in honey syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates. Most of these sugars are 'hidden' in processed foods that are not typically considered sweets, such as sauces and breakfast cereals.

Sugars that naturally occur in fresh fruit, vegetables, plain milk and plain yoghurt do not have the same effect as free sugars and people are encouraged to include them as part of a healthy eating pattern.

Free sugars may be called many different names, such as agave nectar, coconut sugar, deionised fruit juice, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice, glucose, honey, maple syrup, raw sugar, rice malt syrup, sucrose, sugar or treacle.

**The 3pm slump** – Many people feel an energy slump around 2-3pm and have a craving for sugar. The cause is often related to a combination of (stress) hormones, lack of sleep, poor nutrition and dehydration. Rather than reaching for a chocolate bar, go for a walk, have a break from what you are concentrating on and switch to finishing off short uncompleted tasks (sending an email, paying a bill etc) and increase your fluid intake.

## How Much Sugar Do you Drink?



600ml	350ml	750ml	350ml	
Soft drinks	Fruit Juice	Sports drinks	Energy drinks	Tap water
16 teaspoons of sugar	10 teaspoons of sugar	15 teaspoons of sugar	9 teaspoons of sugar	0 teaspoons of sugar

HPA.ORG.NZ



Read more about Nutrition at Appendix 5 on page 136.

## Caffeine

Caffeine is found in many commonly consumed drinks, foods, dietary and sports supplements. Caffeine-containing products typically contain 30 – 120mg of caffeine, but this varies widely between products and brands and some sports supplements may be higher.

Caffeine is considered safe at a low to medium dose (less than 400mg per day) and health authorities warn against daily consumption of a high dose (greater than 500mg per day).

As well as total caffeine consumption, you also need to be aware of caffeine accumulation during the day. Caffeine breaks down slowly in the body and has a half life of approximately six hours. This means that after consuming caffeine, half of the caffeine will still be active in your system six hours later. For example, if you consume a 500ml V energy drink at 1000hrs containing 160mg caffeine you will still have 80mg in your system at 1600hrs and 40mg at 2200hrs.

Benefits of Caffeine	Negative Effects of Caffeine
Increased cognitive performance	Increased heart rate and blood pressure
Heightened sense of alertness and concentration	Disturbed sleep and/or difficulty falling asleep
Decreased fatigue	Increased anxiety
Decreased perceptions of effort	Impaired co-ordination, especially fine motor skills
	Interference with recovery from exercise

## Supplements

We often use dietary supplements to support or boost our health. It's important to choose wisely as some supplements simply do not work, or worse, can even be bad for your health. Even some over the counter sports supplements have been found to contain illegal or banned substances.

**An evidence based guide for Sports supplements can be found here:**

[www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition](http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition)

## Sleep

People vary in the amount of sleep they need. Adolescents need more sleep 8.5-9.5 hours compared to adults who may need between 7-9 hours. Your body will tell you what's right for you; pay attention to how you feel in the morning after more or less sleep and then make an effort to get the amount of sleep that's right for you. Lack of sleep is strongly associated with increased risk of weight gain, and decreased metabolic health. A good sign of adequate sleep is that you are waking up naturally and feel refreshed. If you are constantly waking up to an alarm you will not be getting adequate sleep. Also, as a rough guideline when you get into bed at the end of the day it should take you 10-20minutes to fall asleep. Any shorter and you may not be getting enough sleep. Any longer and you may need to look at changing your sleep habits to help you nod off quicker.

The effects of fatigue and sleep deprivation on performance in the battlefield are well known. Lowered judgement and initiative, diminished situational awareness and loss of emotional control have been linked to operational failures and preventable injuries. Sleep deprivation also compromises attention, new learning and memory off the battlefield. When you are deprived of deep sleep your immune system also tends to be suppressed.

Traditionally we may think of sleep deprivation as the consequence of pulling an all-nighter but there is a much more common behaviour that results in a very similar impairment on our performance. Sleep restriction occurs when we our sleep is limited to less than the recommended 7-9 hours that we require. This may be the result of staying up late to finish some work or getting woken up early by the kids. When sleep restriction occurs on an occasional basis (i.e. getting up early to go on a trip) the impairments are not so significant. But if our lifestyle makes sleep restriction a common occurrence our ability to function will certainly begin to suffer. After just two nights of only 6-hours sleep our performance on cognitive tasks will decline. Interestingly, although this performance decline continues to grow with every extra night our perception of how impaired we are does not. After the first few days we feel as though we have adjusted to a state of sleep deprivation and believe that each passing night has little effect. Restricted sleep, and its all too apparent effects on our ability to function, is particularly alarming given the 24-hour society we now live in and the culture that disparages the need for sleep.

Performance also suffers when we have fragmented sleep. This is the result of frequent waking or reduced quality of sleep that prevents us from getting all the benefits out of the time we spend in bed. Sleep fragmentation may be a result of an underlying medical condition, a sleep condition or simply a result of our environment, sleep habits or mental state.

There are many different stages of sleep that each have slightly different functions. During the night we cycle through the stages every 90-minutes. The ratio of time spent in each stage changes between sleep cycles early in the night and those later in the night. This means that if we wake up after only 6 hours of sleep we will miss out on time spent in the stages known as NREM2 and REM. It is these stages that are attributed to many of the benefits of sleep on memory.



**Read more about  
Sleep at Appendix 6  
on page 140.**

## Sleep Tips

These are tried and true ways of maximising your sleep efficiency. Start small. Make one or two changes, stick with them and see if you notice improvements in your sleep and daytime functioning. Remember it takes time to establish new habits but over time the changes you make will become second nature. If you've tried introducing healthy sleep habits into your life and you are still struggling to get enough sleep you may have a sleep condition such as: insomnia, obstructive pulmonary apnea or restless legs syndrome. If you suspect this might be the case it is definitely worth seeking professional advice to find out what's going on and get treatment.

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Pick a time that you can maintain during the week and on weekends, then adjust your bedtime to target 7-8 hours of sleep. This allows your circadian rhythm to align with your sleep patterns and help you fall asleep when you jump into bed. Even in the weekend try and keep your sleeping patterns constant to avoid disrupting your circadian rhythm. Social jet lag is the result of staying up late and sleeping in over the weekend or on your days off. It makes it difficult to readjust come Monday morning. Looking forward to a weekend sleep-in may be a sign that you are not getting enough sleep.
2. Make your sleeping environment quiet, cool and dark – like a cave. Some noise will be out of your control. If it bothers you, use earplugs or a source of white noise such as a fan. Adjust your room temperature, bedding and clothing so that you will be comfortable and less likely to wake up sweating or shivering. A temperature that you find slightly cool will help your body achieve its lower overnight temperature. Wearing socks or keeping a hot water bottle near your feet can also help induce and maintain sleep. Darkness stimulates our body to secrete melatonin, a hormone that promotes sleep so close the curtains or block out light by covering your eyes with a mask or clothing.
3. Plan the next day's activities early in the evening, well before you get into bed. If you think of something you need to remember, get up and write it down. This will help

to postpone thinking or worrying about it until the next day.

**4.** Establish a pre-bed routine.

This may be one thing, or a series of tasks that you do every night before jumping into bed.

The routine should take about 30-60-minutes and should be enjoyable – so that you want to do it. Think of things that relax you such as taking a shower, taking the dog outside, stretching, meditating, reading or listening to quiet music. Take time to figure out what works for you: you may need time to contemplate and process events from the day or you may want to forget the day and distract yourself with a methodical, attention-consuming task to help you unwind.

**5.** Reduce your intake of caffeine.

Coffee, tea, energy drinks and some soft drinks that contain caffeine tend to disrupt your sleep. Instead try herbal teas that contain natural ingredients to help you fall asleep and have a restful night.

**6.** Avoid large quantities of fluid at night and avoid alcohol for 5 hours before bedtime. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it will disrupt and reduce the quality of your sleep.

**7.** Avoid bright light at least a few hours before going to sleep. Don't work on the computer late in the evening. If you have to, use a blue light filter to reduce the impact of blue light emissions.

**8.** Don't go to bed hungry but avoid eating a heavy meal too late at night. A light, healthy snack may be the best option.

**9.** Associate your bed with sleep. Using the bedroom only for sleep and intimacy will train your mind to sleep when you get into bed. Keep electronic distractions like the TV, laptop, and your phone out of your bedroom. Do not eat or drink in bed. Keep discussions or arguments out of the bedroom.

10. Use relaxation techniques to help you to fall asleep, and to go back to sleep if you wake during the night. Many mindfulness apps have guided sessions designed to help you sleep better but there are also simple techniques that you can try on your own.
11. If you can't sleep, get out of bed and go to another room and do something soothing until you feel sleepy again. Don't try too hard to go to sleep, try telling yourself statements like "If I don't get a good night's sleep tonight I will tomorrow night."
12. Try not to check the time during the night. This may cause you to stress or start calculating the hours, minutes and seconds until you have to get up. If you have a clock that you can see from bed just cover it up or take it out of the room.
13. Exercise regularly. Exercise three to six hours before going to bed. Getting your heart pumping during the day increases your need for sleep and will allow you to sleep more restfully. Exercising less than three hours before bed may raise your body temperature and make more difficult to attain.
14. Consider magnesium and unsweetened tart cherry juice as dietary supplements that have benefits for your sleep.

## Screening – Whole body health

Visit your doctor for regular checkups, particularly as you get older. Preventive care can detect disease or prevent illnesses before they start. Tell your doctor if you have a family history of a significant medical condition. Keep an eye out for signs that you are not tracking OK. It's important you contact your GP or local health treatment centre if you have experienced any of the following over the last 4 weeks. Remember, early recognition and action will prevent issues becoming more chronic and debilitating.

- Severe Headaches or Migraine
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Stomach complaints
- Skin rashes or infections
- Physical injuries - breaks, abrasions or sprains
- Other concerns about your physical health

## Women's and Men's Health

Breast cancer and prostate cancer are leading causes of death for women and men. Breast cancer affects 3000 NZ women each year and rates of prostate cancer in men are similar. Talk to your doctor about when you should start getting mammograms or prostate checks. You may need to start screening early if you have risk factors, such as family history. One way to detect breast cancer is to do a monthly self-exam. Women aged 21 to 65 should also get routine pap smears every 3 years. Adults should get screened for colorectal cancer starting at age 50, and your doctor may want to check for other types of cancer depending on risk factors and family history.

### Resources:

You can find out more information about common health issues: <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living>

# HEALTH RISKS & LIFESTYLE FACTORS

Physical health risks can impact more broadly on our overall health. Our lifestyle choices influence our physical and broader overall health.

## Chronic Pain

Pain related to injuries can greatly undermine your sense of wellbeing. Chronic pain has been linked to general disability, emotional distress and depression. It is also common for people to self-medicate with alcohol or other drugs when struggling with chronic pain.

Left untreated pain can impact negatively on occupational, social and recreational functioning. It is important to get effective treatment for your physical complaints if you are to minimise your risk of developing, or making worse, other conditions. Your mind and body really are one united system that cannot be neatly divided for the purposes of physical and psychological treatments.

## Weight

If you're overweight, losing weight is one of the best things you can do for your health. Carrying too much weight increases your risk for several health conditions including:

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- type 2 diabetes
- heart disease
- stroke
- some cancers
- gallbladder disease

Being overweight can also lead to weight-related injuries. A common problem is arthritis in the weight-bearing joints, such as your spine, hips and knees. If you are storing weight around your midriff that is proving difficult to move, also consider whether stress may be a factor. Our midriff is where we store fat when cortisol levels (produced in times of stress) are activated. If you are craving sugar, try eating more protein and fat (eg. cheese, eggs, chicken, fish) at your previous meal (and go cold turkey on sugary treats for a while to break your addiction).

There are several things you can try to help you lose weight and keep it off. Refer to the healthy eating, physical activity, sleep and stress management guidelines above, seek advice from your doctor or dietician, and check out the additional sources of information in Appendix 2.

## Alcohol Use

Alcohol consumption can be pleasurable for many people. However, too much alcohol can damage your liver and it has also been linked to some cancers. One standard drink is equal to 330ml of beer (4%), 100ml of wine (12.5%), or 30ml of straight spirits (42%).

Even if you don't drink frequently or don't have many drinks in one go you may be putting yourself at risk.

### **Alcohol.org.nz have the following guidelines:**

To reduce your long-term risks:

- **Men** – drink no more than 3 standard drinks a day. And no more than 15 per week.
- **Women** – drink no more than 2 per day. And no more than 10 per week.
- **And have at least two alcohol free days per week.**

To reduce risk of injury:

- **Men** – no more than 5 on any single occasion.
- **Women** – no more than 4 on any single occasion.

Think about why you're drinking and the possible impacts your drinking behaviour may be having on your overall health. Some of the physical effects of alcohol are well known but consider how you're drinking behaviour impacts your psychological, social and spiritual health and whether it is helping or hindering you from achieving your goals. Also consider how your drinking impacts your friends and family.



**Check out how you are going using the AUDIT checklist in the self-assessment tools in Appendix 3.**

## Tobacco Use

Smoking and tobacco use have been linked to a range of health issues and the sooner you quit the better. You'll also notice a big impact on your budget - someone who smokes half a pack a day can save \$70 a week by giving up. Quitting isn't always easy, but help is available. If you are a member of the NZDF you can contact your Defence Health Centre or Occupational Health Nurse. Alternatively, you can:

- Contact Quitline through [www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz), a website that also gives you heaps of other reasons to quit, or by phoning 0800 778 778 for a Quit pack and support over the phone, online and by text
- Or for those that would prefer it, phone apps such as Goal Post ([www.goalpost.it](http://www.goalpost.it)) can help.
- Find information and local help in your region to stop smoking with Smokefree [www.smokefree.org.nz/help-advice/stop-smoking-services](http://www.smokefree.org.nz/help-advice/stop-smoking-services)

## Practicing safe sex

Safe sex is good for your emotional and physical health. The safest form of sex is between two people who only have sex with each other. Use protection to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Condoms are the most effective form of prevention. Read more about STD's and STI's online:<http://www.justthefacts.co.nz/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/facts-about-stis-sexually-transmitted-infections-stds/> and talk to your doctor if you have concerns or want to get tested for STDs.

## Protecting your skin

Sun exposure is linked to skin cancer and other skin damage. It's best to limit your time spent in the sun and/or be sure to wear protective clothing and a hat when you are outside. Use sunscreen year-round on exposed skin including your face and hands. Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays (the NZ Cancer Society recommends at least SPF 30), and stay away from tanning booths.

## Liver Care

Our liver is one of our biggest guns when it comes to health. It works hard to burn up fat and to excrete substances that your body no longer needs. Too much alcohol or diets high in processed food and drinks reduce the performance of our liver. You can 'detox' your liver by improving your diet and reducing your intake of alcohol, sugary drinks and coffee.

## Oral Hygiene

In order to keep your teeth healthy, it is important to develop a good dental care routine early in life and maintain your teeth as you get older. You can do this by practicing good oral hygiene (brushing twice a day and flossing regularly), eating a healthy diet, and supplementing these good habits with professional care when necessary. Check out the guidelines for maintaining good dental hygiene: <http://www.wikihow.com/Care-for-Your-Teeth>

# **HINENGARO** **MIND**



# HINENGARO MIND

Mental health is about how we think, feel and act as we deal with life's ups and downs. It also helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, make decisions and go about our daily lives. Like physical health, mental health is important at every stage of life.

Being mentally healthy is not necessarily about being free from problems. Some stress in our lives is good and can help us perform at our best; resilience is about being able to bounce back from life's setbacks, and even to grow as a result of dealing with challenges. Everyone feels worried, anxious, sad or stressed at various times in their lives; however sometimes the cumulative impact of events in our lives, our relationships, physical health, jobs and family wellbeing, can become challenging and affect our mental health, even in circumstances where we previously thrived. Sometimes these thoughts and feelings do not go away, and are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

Mental health, like physical health, exists on a continuum. It is a dynamic changing state that can deteriorate or improve depending on life circumstances. As can be seen from the NZDF Mental Health Continuum (Figure 2), this can affect what we do (behaviours), how we feel (emotions) and how we think (cognitions).

***The World Health Organisation describe mental health as 'a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.'***

***New Zealand Health research suggests that around one in six adults will experience some form of psychological distress or mental illness in any given year over their lifetime.***

Healthy	Reacting	Injured	Ill
Normal mood fluctuations; Calm and takes things in stride	Irritable/Impatient; Nervous; Sadness/ overwhelmed	Anger; Anxiety; Pervasively sad/ hopeless	Angry outbursts/ aggression; Excessive anxiety/ panic attacks; Depressed/suicidal thoughts
Good sense of humour; Performing well; In control mentally	Displaced sarcasm; Procrastination; Forgetfulness	Negative attitude; Poor performance or workaholic; Poor concentration/ decisions	Overt insubordination; Can't perform duties/ control behaviour or concentrate
Normal sleep patterns; Few sleep difficulties	Trouble sleeping; Intrusive thoughts; Nightmares	Restless disturbed sleep; Recurrent images/ nightmares	Can't fall asleep or stay asleep; Sleeping too much or too little
Physically well; Good energy level	Muscle tension/ headaches; Low energy	Increased aches and pains; Increased fatigue	Physical illnesses; Constant fatigue
Physically and socially active	Decreased activity/ socialising	Avoidance; withdrawal	Not going out or answering phone
No/limited drug and alcohol use/gambling	Regular but controlled drug and alcohol use/gambling	Increased drug and alcohol use/gambling – hard to control	Frequent drug and alcohol or gambling use – inability to control with severe consequences
Continue to strengthen resilience and build peak performance. The same tools we can use to buffer in times of challenge will also help us to thrive and perform to our potential everyday	Use self-management and support strategies to build mental health. Section 2 provides a range of tools that help build resilience and act as a buffer in times of stress.		Talk to someone you trust and seek help from a mental health professional.
Maintain positive attitude Focus on task in hand Break problems into manageable tasks Build support networks	Recognise limits, take breaks Get adequate rest, food and exercise Identify and resolve problems early	Make self care a priority Maintain social contacts Don't withdraw Talk to someone	Follow care recommendations; Know resources available and how to access them

**Figure 2:** NZDF Mental Health Continuum (Based on work of Keyes 2002 and adapted from the CF Mental health Continuum with permission).

Common markers of mental health status are grouped into six themes – **Mood, Performance, Sleep Patterns, Physical Health, Social Interaction and Activities**. The model goes from healthy adaptive coping (green), to mild and reversible distress or impairment (yellow), to more severe, persistent injury or impairment (orange), to clinical illnesses and disorders requiring more concentrated medical care (red). As the continuum shows, a person can have a mental health problem or concern without having a diagnosable mental illness.

Where we sit on the continuum at any point in time can shift depending on life experiences, cumulative level of stress, levels of resilience (natural and learned) and levels of support. By leveraging tools and strategies we can learn to minimise the impact that life experiences can have on mental health. It is important to be aware of what the signs are that may indicate the need to use additional coping strategies, or to seek assistance when it is too difficult or no longer helpful to try to go it alone.

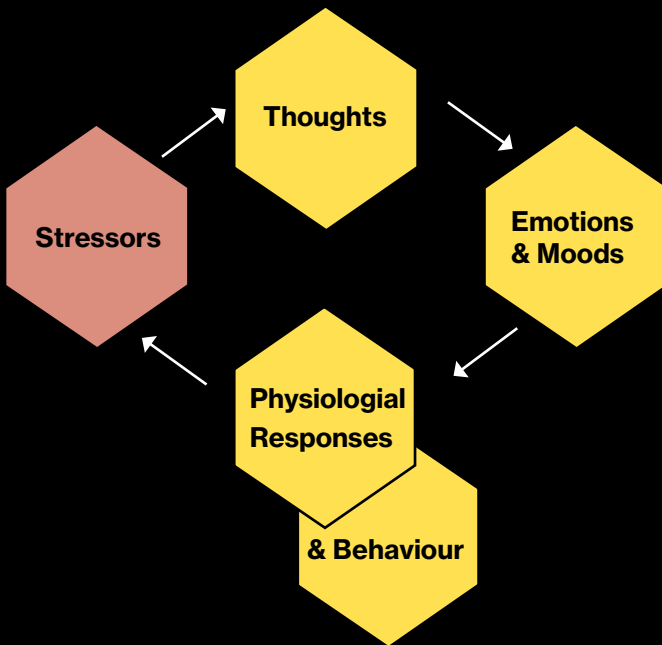
### **The role of stress on mental health and performance**

Stress is one of the key influencers on our mental health and can affect where we sit on the mental health continuum at any time. Stress can trigger or exacerbate the development of more serious episodes of mental illness, or reduce our coping and resilience levels. While it is fairly obvious that life events, such as threat to life, divorce, bankruptcy or the death of a loved one, may negatively impact on physical and mental health, daily stressors can exert an even greater influence in the long term. The tipping point between healthy coping and a negative impact on our health starts when our perceived ability to cope is eroded. The cumulative impact of stress can shift your tipping point. Therefore, you should understand how to identify the unique tipping points of yourself and others.

# I THE STRESS CYCLE

Life stressors can affect our thoughts, moods, and behaviours... and over time, our physical health. Each of these is interconnected and can either reduce or perpetuate the stress cycle.

When we perceive situations as dangerous or threatening this activates the 'fight or flight' response. So how we interpret life events has a huge bearing on how much stress or anxiety we experience; our body doesn't tell the difference between real and imagine events so if we imagine (perceive) a bad outcome, our body reacts to the thought as though it were actually happening.



# OPTIMISING MENTAL HEALTH

## Resilience

Resilience means being able to bounce back from challenges that life throws at you. It doesn't mean being unrealistically happy and trouble free all of the time. We can think of a resilient person as being like a spring...they can bend and stretch and get a bit bent out of shape but eventually they spring back to shape and continue to function as they normally would. In contrast other structures are more prone to breaking when placed under stress (like a twig). Resilient people are able to thrive in spite of conditions that are difficult, and they are able to recognise what things they can control. Resilient people also make the best use of the resources they have knowing that life is often not perfect.

### **What does resilience look like and how do we know when we are resilient?**

- ✓ The demands we face are challenging rather than demoralising
- ✓ Our health is generally good
- ✓ We have healthy habits and good social connections
- ✓ We can identify and use all of our resources to help us stay strong

**Resilience is about taking action** to manage whatever life throws at us. Surprisingly it is often small actions that can produce a big upturn in our quality of life. This booklet will guide you through some simple, practical actions that you can take to improve your resilience and performance.

Follow the Mental Health Foundation (NZ) recommendations for 5 Ways To Wellbeing and the tips and tools on the following pages.

<b>Connect</b>	With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.
<b>Be active</b>	Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.
<b>Take notice</b>	Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.
<b>Keep learning</b>	Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.
<b>Give</b>	Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, as linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

In order to manage our resilience, it's important that we pay attention to what is helping us to be resilient and what is hindering our resilience. The exercise over the page (the Bucket Model) is a good place to start to take stock of your levels of resilience.

## Bucket Model of Resilience

Think of your resilience as being like a bucket of water. The water is resilience but the bucket has holes that drain this resilience away. This exercise gets you to identify what those holes are, and how you might plug them, and how you might top up the resilience levels. The bucket represents your level of resilience at any one time. Resilience can drain through holes in the bucket. The holes represent life stressors. They are things that reduce your ability to cope (e.g. restricted sleep, high workload, unwell family members, or a myriad of other things).

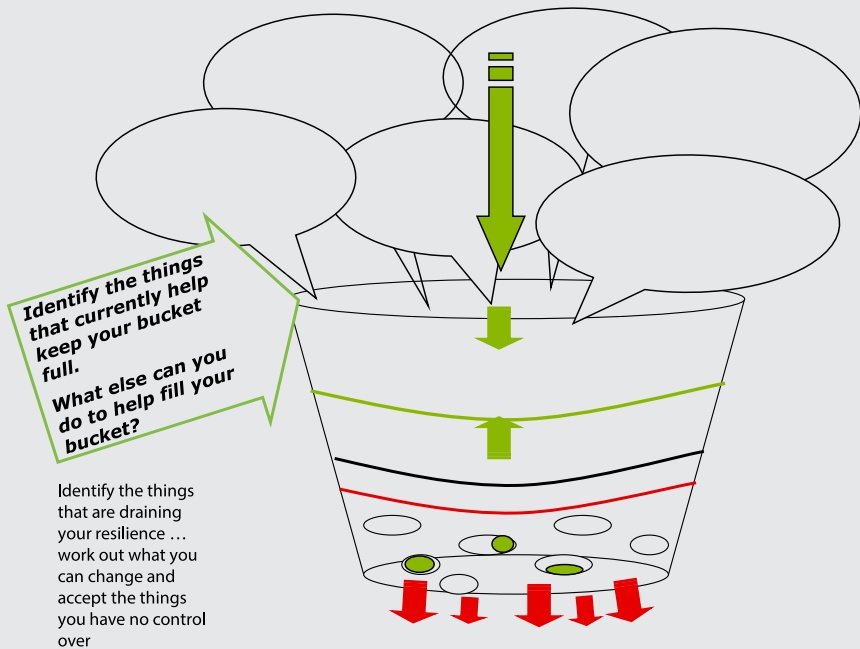
Fortunately, the bucket of resilience can also be topped up by things that help you to cope. Identify the things that increase your resilience, leveraging what you already know can help and drawing on the tools in this section. Things that top up your bucket include the things that you enjoy, the things that make you feel whole again, relaxed or in control. Things like playing sport, walking on the beach or having a family dinner.



**Use the Mental Health Continuum model and self-assessment tool at Appendix 3 to help build awareness about your own mental health, levels of resilience and any areas where you may be at risk.**

# ACTIVITY

Fill out this Bucket Model to help you realise what fills your bucket as well as what drains it. It may help to think on it for a while. Once you know what your Bucket looks like you will be able to prioritise things that fill your bucket and build your resilience, and be wary of things that drain it.



## My Actions

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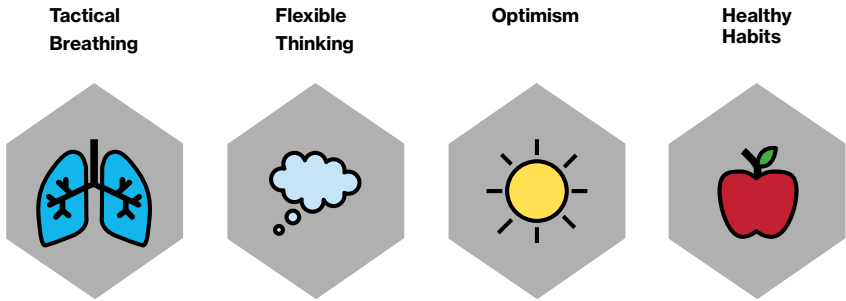
## What's draining your bucket?

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- 
-

# RESILIENCE TOOLS

## THE BIG FOUR

Resilience tools can help you to build resilience and performance, and target aspects of your thinking, emotions and behaviour that may be having a negative impact on your health. The NZDF Resilience Framework promotes tools for maintaining resilience, collectively these make up The Big Four:



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The Big Four NZDF Resilience Tools

International research has shown these tools to be effective in building resilience and assisting members to bounce back from difficult and challenging situations.

Like any other skill these skills must be learned and practiced regularly. It is important that there is regular opportunity to reinforce and apply these skills during unit activities.



## 1. Tactical Breathing

Tactical breathing is one of the most effective skills to manage stress and keep you in the optimal zone for performance. Aside from the obvious, breathing is useful for reducing nerves or anxiety at any time, but particularly during a stressful situation when nerves may impact your performance or during/after exercise. Tactical breathing can decrease your physiological arousal, help you return to baseline and even assist with the removal of by-products formed during exercise. Snipers and professional athletes have been using this information to improve their performance for many years. This skill is very effective, but it needs to be practiced. This is particularly important because when we are stressed our natural physiological reaction is to breathe rapidly and shallowly. This actually increases your stress levels. With practice you can be more successful in quickly calming this natural physiological reaction down.

The key is to breathe abdominally, taking deep slow breaths through your nose into your diaphragm. This delivers oxygen to the brain, relaxes the central nervous system, calms you down and improves your performance. Breathing through your nose helps to cool the blood flowing near your brain. This offsets the rise in temperature that may accelerate stress responses and prevent you entering a 'hot head' state.

Not surprisingly, breathing is exceptionally easy, and just like the other Mental Skills you can practice this skill anywhere, at any time. There are many guided breathing apps available to download. Look for one that focuses on long, slow breathing.

Otherwise you can try the following:

### **How To... Tactical Breathing**

- Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4
- Hold for a brief second
- Breathe out through your mouth or nose for a count of 6 (long, slow breath out)
- Hold for a brief second
- Repeat

Stand, sit comfortably or lie down. Place one hand on your abdomen and the other on your upper chest. Remember you need to breathe deeply into your diaphragm. Visualise your belly filling like a balloon.

To start with your mind will wander during this activity if you notice you have become distracted just bring your attention back to your breath.

If you practice this daily for 4 minutes, for one to two weeks, you will be able to use this skill during stressful situations when your anxiety goes up; you won't have to sit or lie down, or place your hand on your abdomen. You will simply need to take a few deep tactical breaths, and this will reduce your arousal level. Again, this skill will only be effective at these times if you practice it beforehand.

Try tactical breathing during a stretch session at the end of a workout, when stopped at the traffic lights while driving, or while waiting in line at the supermarket.



## 2. Flexible Thinking – Problem Solving and Goal Setting

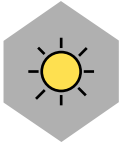
When people have a lot going on in their lives, it is common to feel threatened and overwhelmed by problems, and the thought of having to deal with them. Using a stress diary can be useful to identify the problems and then apply **problem-solving** techniques to gain more control over them. This can reduce the feeling of being threatened or overwhelmed.

**Goal Setting** – Goal setting has also been proven to reduce arousal levels, help control stress, improve performance and help to manage setbacks and obstacles. When something seems overwhelming it is useful to break it down into achievable objectives and develop a plan for achieving these; this will help build resilience and a feeling of control. Goals need to clearly define what you want to accomplish. Using **SMART (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound)** criteria ensures that the goals you set will be achievable and improve your performance. Once you have set your goals work out your plan for achieving these by prioritising and problem solving.

**Accept that some events are beyond your control** – invest time in things you can control, and accept the areas that you can't.

## Structured Problem Solving

<b>1</b>	Write down the problem causing you worry or distress.
<b>2</b>	Think broadly about your options for dealing with this problem, good and not so good, write them down.
<b>3</b>	Write down the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
<b>4</b>	Identify the best option(s) to deal with the problem.
<b>5</b>	List the steps needed to carry out each option (bear in mind the resources needed and any pitfalls to overcome).
<b>6</b>	Review your progress in carrying out your option(s): What have you achieved? What still needs to be done?



### 3. Optimism and Self Talk

It's our interpretation of situations that drives the level of stress that we feel, rather than the situation itself. Thus, how we perceive life events (the things that happen to us, challenge us, make demands of us, or that we perceive may have consequences for us) has a huge bearing on how much stress or anxiety we experience. Perception is shaped by what we think, how we think, and what we say to ourselves in our head (our self-talk). For some reason humans are hard-wired to notice the bad stuff and pay more attention to it than the good stuff.

A simple exercise that you can do is called "3 good things." A couple of times a week pay some attention to three things that are going well or that you are grateful for. This could be as simple as work finishing early one day, or winning a prize, or getting some good feedback on your performance.

Often, we can be overly harsh and unjust to ourselves in a way that we would never be with friends or team members. While we talk to ourselves constantly, we rarely stop to consider what we are saying or test our own assumptions. When these messages are negative...

*"How could I do such a foolish thing!"*

*"I know I won't be able to achieve that"*

*"I'm an idiot!"*

... and we don't counter them we can start to believe them, lose our self-confidence, and the negative talk can become self-fulfilling.

First, identify thoughts that contribute to stress. What are you telling yourself?

Then, challenge these thoughts:

- Is this thought helping me be resilient?
- What other ways can I look at this situation?
- What evidence do I have that this thought is true?
- What would I say to a friend in this situation?

When our perception changes – either because perceived danger or threat ceases, or because we alter the way we think about or interpret the situation...

*“This is not a threat or danger to me”*

*“I can deal with this”*

*“I’m learning from what happened”*

... the ‘fight or flight’ response is turned off.

## Life Events and Cycle of Stress

	Opportunity / Open Mindset	Threat / Closed Mindset
	←—————→	
<b>Thoughts</b>	“I can do this” “I can’t do this yet” “I can become better at this”	“I can’t do this” “I’m no good at this”
<b>Mood / Feeling</b>	Excitement, Anticipation	Anxiety, Fear, Discomfort
<b>Physical Sensations</b>	Alert, muscles primed	Jitters, sweating
<b>Behaviours</b>	Engage, problem solve, action	Get angry Avoid problem
<b>Outcome</b>	More likely to succeed and feel optimistic about future	Situation not resolved, negative thoughts strengthen

Become more aware of your thoughts and the affect they have on your life. Following the performance of a difficult task or skill think back to what was running through your head while you were performing. What sort of words ran through your mind when you made a mistake? Or when you forgot what to do? How did it make you feel? Emotion provides clues to the content of your subconscious self-talk, and helps you identify if it is helping or hindering you in achieving your goals and performing well. You may find some of the language was negative. You may have blamed yourself for making the mistake or expressed frustration or even anger.

When you're more aware of the way you think, you can take action to use positive situations to your advantage, and re-shape the negative ones. The goal is to think in a balanced way, regardless of the situation, and make a conscious effort to see opportunities instead of obstacles.



**Read more about  
attitude and other  
mental skills in  
Appendix 7.**

Positive self-talk can have a number of benefits for your performance. Developing mantras that you say to yourself may boost your confidence and reduce the stress associated with being in a challenging situation. The words you use can also act as cues to keep you focused on the task at hand and stop your mind from wandering to unrelated thoughts.

### **Learn to recognise and modify your thoughts**

First, identify thoughts that contribute to stress.

- What are you telling yourself?
- It may help to keep a stress diary

Then, consider...

- Is this thought helping me be resilient?
- What other ways can I look at this situation?
- What evidence do I have that this thought is true?
- What would I say to a friend in this situation?

Finally, modify the thought or replace it with something more positive and constructive.



## 4. Healthy Habits

As we discussed in the previous section, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly and maintaining healthy eating habits are important. Often when we are under stress or busy our eating patterns change. We may not feel like eating much or we may eat a lot. We may also crave certain foods, especially those containing sugar, like chocolate! If you are aware that you are in a stressful environment, monitor your eating patterns and ensure you are eating properly. Take time to eat, not at your desk and preferably with others.

Sleeping well and getting a chance to unwind and relax is also very important. There are many ways to do this, playing sports, doing yoga, reading, or simply doing nothing every now and then. Having people to rely on and talk to is important for wellbeing, so put time into those relationships, be a good friend yourself and people will be there for you during tough times.

When you have a healthy lifestyle you can cope with challenges better:

- Identify the healthy behaviour you want to implement
- Identify the barriers to implementing and continuing this behaviour
- Make a plan to overcome those barriers

# OTHER RESILIENCE TOOLS

## Relaxation and Arousal Reduction

You can't be stressed and relaxed at the same time. The relaxation response uses breathing and relaxation to counter the negative effects of stress. Arousal reduction allows our rational brain to remain in control, without letting emotions hijack our behaviours and impact upon our performance. This strategy is taught to Special Forces, especially Snipers, as a way to assist them in remaining in control in unpredictable, dangerous and often isolated, situations. As a mental skill arousal reduction is simple and effective. No one around you will even know that you are doing it.

By the time you get to step three of this activity, you should notice that your attention is focused externally and your body and mind are starting to relax. Arousal reduction distracts your mind, allowing you to maintain control and perform highly in whatever situation you are in.

### How To... Arousal Reduction

1. Look around you, notice five things you can see
2. Now be quiet. What are four things you can hear
3. Think about your body. Notice three things you can feel on your skin
4. Sniff the air. What are two things you can smell
5. Focus your attention inside your mouth. What is one thing you can taste

Arousal reduction is a useful technique that you can use anywhere, at any time. It is helpful for dealing with situations when you notice that your nerves are impacting on your performance. You can use it either before, during or after a stressful or high-pressure situation or experience. This technique is also particularly useful when need stretch yourself (think fast running over distance), to push past the point where your mind is telling you to stop (in these instances, look around you and notice five things...).

## Progressive Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a method of relaxation with proven effectiveness. It relieves muscle tension, and can help switch off the 'fight or flight' anxiety response as the nerves in our muscles change the type of signals they transmit to the brain. The brain stops sending panic messages to our nervous system, and a general feeling of physical and mental calmness begins to prevail. The two main principles of this technique include:

1. Tensing muscle groups (one at a time) to become aware of the feeling of tension.
2. Relaxing the muscles and feeling the tension in them subside – as if flowing out of the body.



**Read more about  
Relaxation techniques  
at Appendix 7 on  
page 146.**

Allow about 15 minutes for this relaxation exercise. Find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.

Sit in a comfortable straight-backed chair, with your feet flat on the floor.

Close your eyes and use the controlled breathing technique for about 5 minutes.

Tense each of the following muscle groups for 5 seconds, then relax them completely for 15-20 seconds (pay particular attention to the different sensations of tension and relaxation):

Curl both your fists and tighten your biceps and forearms (as if lifting weights). Relax.

Wrinkle up your forehead; tighten the muscles in your face causing your face to wrinkle; purse your lips and press your tongue against the roof of your mouth; hunch your shoulders. Relax.

Arch your back as you take a deep breath into your chest. Relax.

Taking a deep breath, gently push out your stomach. Relax.

Pull your feet and toes backwards, tightening your shins. Relax.

Curl your toes at the same time as tightening your calves, thighs and buttocks. Relax.

Now resume normal activities in a calm and peaceful manner.

## Imagery

Imagery and Self-talk can boost your confidence and help you visualise positive outcomes. Imagery can be used on its own as a mental skill, but becomes especially powerful when used in conjunction with other techniques such as Arousal Reduction and Goal Setting. It's essentially Arousal Reduction for a task we have not yet completed - it involves imagining ourselves performing perfectly in an upcoming situation. Imagining ourselves successfully achieving goals makes us much more likely to actually achieve them.

Imagery can include all of our senses but most commonly consists of visual detail hence it is often referred to as visualisation. The best way to prepare for a task is to physically practice it but research has found that mental rehearsal (imagery) also creates changes to the brain and improves later physical performance.

For example, mentally running through what a perfect performance in a task you have coming up would look, feel, sound and even smell and taste like activates many of the same mental pathways involved when you actually perform the activity. This helps to strengthen the neural connections to allow you to perform at the top of your game. Imagery can also be used to prepare for unplanned events or obstacles that arise. Imagine the 'what ifs' that might be distracting you. What if I get an obstruction in the middle of the serial? What will I do to minimise the impact on my overall score? Having a plan for different situations will allow you to respond calmly and effectively.

## Talking / Support

Often during times of stress, we withdraw socially (not in the mood, tired, too much to do). Activities we previously enjoyed are often the first to go during times of stress.

One of the first rules for managing stress is never worry alone. Talk with someone you trust. Talking helps you feel more in control. Your talking partner can ease your mind by reassuring you that you're okay or that the problem can be solved. They may also help you reflect on the situation and get the facts straight. When you're stressed, you tend to exaggerate the situation, making it worse in your mind. A talking partner can offer a different point of view—a different way of seeing the situation. Sometimes just the process of verbalizing the situation can help.

Parts of the brain also thrive on social contact. When activated these can help you deal with stress more effectively, and boost your immune system. Research shows that people who have close personal relationships experience fewer health problems, live longer, and are less depressed and anxious.

Even doing things for total strangers can benefit our mental health. Doing something generous, considerate or helpful for another person, even a complete stranger, can help us feel happier, better about ourselves and better able to cope with our problems. Random Acts of Kindness are deliberate but spontaneous attempts to improve someone else's day without expecting anything in return. They don't need to be anything big. For example, you could pay for the coffee of the person behind you in line, help someone struggling to carry something heavy or just complimenting a stranger on your way to work. Trying to do one Random Act of Kindness everyday – this can be a good way to pay forward the support and kindness you get from those in your life.

## Take a break

Our bodies and minds need breaks from work and stressful activities. When you feel tension rising and energy falling, take a break (go for a walk, make a cuppa, chat with colleagues, climb some stairs). Also, be sure to schedule longer breaks (extended weekend, short getaways, longer holidays) as well. Make time every few hours for a “human moment” — a face-to-face exchange with a person you like.

## Humour

Humour and laughter are natural and healthy ways to release tension, and put aside serious thoughts for a while. Several physiological changes occur with humour – in the cardiovascular system, the immune system, and musculature. Cognitive function is improved, cortisol levels are reduced, and the immune system is boosted. The vitality of thoughts and emotions is boosted, enhancing self-esteem and the ability to deal with stress, anxiety and depression.

## Smile!

Believe it or not, involuntary emotions and the corresponding muscle movements triggered by our environment send signals to our brain, which create physiological changes in our bodies. For example, a red traffic light that makes us frown causes our body to tense, whereas the sight of a friend that causes us to smile results in the release of results in a little feel-good party in your brain. For starters, smiling activates the release of brain chemicals (endorphins and serotonin) that work toward fighting off stress. These chemicals relax your body and can also lower your heart rate and blood pressure. Many of today’s pharmaceutical anti-depressants also influence levels of serotonin in your brain, but smiles are free!

### The Power of a hug

Positive relationships are good for your health; they have been shown to reduce cardiovascular activity, blood pressure, cortisol level, cholesterol, vulnerability to catching a cold, depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, and improve sleep and immunity.

Try this....

Close your eyes. Pay attention to what is happening inside your body. Notice your mood and emotions.

Now, force your face into a frown. Bring your eyebrows together, and pull down the corners of your mouth. Now, think about your mood and emotions. Any change? Leave your face in a frown, and now try forcing yourself to feel happy when your muscles are tense, your face is frowned, and your brow furrowed. Feeling happy?

Let's try again. This time, smile. Pull your cheeks up and allow the lines around your eyes to crinkle. Pull up the corners of your mouth. Let your face fall into a smile. Now have a think about how you feel and what emotions you are experiencing.

What emotional changes did you notice this time?

**Fake it till you make it, baby!** Even if you're not actually happy, activating the muscles associated with smiling can fool your brain into thinking you are. It's not just that our brains are happy and make us smile, it can also be the opposite; we feel the smile and become happy. BUT, for this to work, you need to do it right. A true, genuine smile uses all the muscles in the face, including the "laugh lines" around your eyes. Engaging all these muscles is important, even in a fake smile. If you're smiling on purpose to help your mood, you want to smile until your cheeks lift and you feel your laugh lines crinkle. And smiling is contagious so if others see you grinning they too will reap the rewards.

## Mindset

If you feel stressed when doing a task or assessment, it's good to be able to call on strategies to manage this and keep your performance on track. Mental skills are commonly used by professional athletes and teams, like the All Blacks, and can be used to maintain stress at an optimal level, prepare for performances and preserve a positive mindset under pressure.

Growth mindsets, resilience and mental skills offer practical ways we can improve our response to stressors - change negative thoughts to positive ones, choose productive behaviours and manage our physiological responses. These techniques, when learnt and applied, will give you an edge that no amount of physical training can achieve.

## Growth vs Fixed Mind-sets

Positively managing the way you think helps to alter thought patterns which in turn shape our behaviours. Our brains are very malleable and the way we think changes the connections in our brain. Beliefs about our ability, performance and learning orientations have direct influence on our learning as well as resilience.

Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
Focus on growth	Focus on the outcome
Success comes from hard work	Success comes from talent
See failure as a chance to learn and improve	Failure means you have reached the limits of your ability
Intelligence and abilities are malleable so learning and development are continuous	Intelligence and abilities cannot be changed
Practice makes perfect	Having to work hard is a sign of low intelligence
Persist when faced with obstacles	Struggle to bounce back from failure, give up on difficult things
Set learning orientated goals	Try to validate their intelligence through successes

Mindsets can be changed. Focus on the process and not the outcome. Embrace challenges and think about what you get out of difficult experiences rather than just the outcome. When you master something new reflect back to a time when you couldn't do it. This will help you realise that you too have the potential for growth. Through the repetition of growth mindset statements and activities, we can create new connections in our brains which promote a growth mindset, which then influence how we think and how we take on challenges. **Realising our potential** is an important aspect of maintaining positive mental health. A growth mindset is fundamental to this as our potential is always much greater than what we can do currently.

Check out this short Ted Talk on Mindset and how it can be changed at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN34FNbOKXc>

Check out other useful Ted Talks: [https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the\\_importance\\_of\\_self\\_care](https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care)

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the process of bringing your attention to the things occurring in the present moment. 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. This allows emotions to pass more quickly and result in us being less likely to focus or dwell on the negative. Much scientific research has been completed on mindfulness, across a range of demographics, populations, cultures and countries. The results indicate that mindfulness is strongly associated with greater wellbeing and better perceived health. At first mindfulness meditation may seem like a waste of time but stick with it. Like any skill the more you practice the easier it becomes and the more enjoyable you will find it. Because there are so many different ways to practice mindfulness don't be afraid to shop around and find something that works for you. It may be mindful eating, yoga or even mindful walks.

Mindfulness apps are one of the easiest ways to practice mindfulness meditation. The 9 short exercises (in Appendix 7) may help get you started or check out this website: [https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/21/mindfulness?gclid=CjwKCAiAj53SBRBcEiwAT-3A2O5M9eBBLU1LIO\\_ylle8auQHknTyQAvlThY-6MLVM9FOV5N15tfyFRoCbpbkQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/21/mindfulness?gclid=CjwKCAiAj53SBRBcEiwAT-3A2O5M9eBBLU1LIO_ylle8auQHknTyQAvlThY-6MLVM9FOV5N15tfyFRoCbpbkQAvD_BwE)

# WAIRUA SOUL

WAIRUA  
SOUL



# WAIKUA SOUL

Spirit and spirituality can mean different things to different people. A person's spirit or spirituality is hard to define, but broadly it is the non-physical part of a person, it is the source of our emotions, our character and even our soul. It deals with aspects of human life that are both intensely personal and difficult to describe.

Spirituality is a broad concept with room for many perspectives. In general, it includes a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, and it typically involves a search for meaning in life. As such, it is a universal human experience—something that touches us all. People may describe a spiritual experience as sacred or transcendent or simply a deep sense of being and interconnectedness. Our spiritual self is where we find our sense of belonging, our connections with certain people or groups of people, and with places.

## What is Wairua / Spirit

Māori have always recognised the significance of wairua (spirituality) for wellbeing and good health in general, and this is a human truth that really applies to all people. Wairua describes the capacity to have faith, and to recognise the links between you and others and the world around you. It doesn't necessarily mean having a religious belief, although this might be an important part of your spirituality.

Wairua is also reflected in places and people we feel a connection to - the place you grew up, the beaches you surfed, lakes, mountains and rivers or the lands your ancestors fought for. You will also have spiritual connections to certain whānau, friends, your unit, hapu or iwi. These are powerful bonds that can help you maintain your 'belonging' with these groups even when things are not going well or you are far away.

There may be times in your life when you will feel you have lost your way. This can leave you feeling unsettled or disjointed within yourself, or you may feel like you don't 'belong' anywhere. These feelings can start to affect other areas of your life, such as your relationships with your family or the people at work - at its worst you may even have a strained relationship with yourself.

The good thing is that even if you feel you have lost your spiritual way, you can find your way back. It might just take a little help from others to re-establish your connections with those important people and places.

**Is being spiritual the same thing as being religious?** For some people, but not for all, developing a sense of spirituality does involve connecting with a specific religious belief or practice. But you do not need to identify with a religion or set of beliefs to look for and find a larger spiritual meaning in life. Spirituality is the recognition that something beyond ourselves influences us and the world around us. While some people associate that “something” with the notion of a deity or god, others simply acknowledge the presence of some form of “higher power” in the universe.

**What does spirituality have to do with my health?** Research suggests that cultivating some sense of spirituality can help people build their sense of identity and meaning and purpose in life. It can also help people find more significance in relationships, better handle adversity, and experience life more fully. Studies have also indicated that having a sense of meaning or purpose in one’s life (even while struggling to understand exactly what that meaning is), is associated with better overall health.

## Optimising Spiritual Health

Spiritual health brings satisfaction and happiness, just as physical health does. But you can’t get healthy spiritually by joining a gym. Spiritual health is about your sense of purpose and belonging. For some it is linked to religious faith and prayer, for others it is about connection with culture, and for others it is merely a connection with something that provides you with a sense of fulfilment.

If you are interested in developing your own sense of spirituality, you might consider pursuing one or more of the following:



Read more about  
**Finding your  
Why at Appendix 9  
on page 157.**

## Sense of Identity

Sometimes we feel like we have lost our direction in life and we are not sure what to do about it. Fulfilling your own life starts with finding your own individual purpose; or belief which takes honest self-reflection. Once you find your purpose, your cause, your belief, your WHY<sup>4</sup>; the way you look at life and the world will change. You will see life with more clarity, you will become more creative, and you will have more confidence in yourself. Your innovativeness will grow alongside your passion of life. You will find your identity and place in this world.

## Meditation

For centuries, people of all different beliefs have practiced meditation as a strategy for connecting with their own sense of spirituality, and disconnecting from the demands of everyday life. Research indicates that meditation can be helpful in reducing stress, speeding recovery, increasing the quality of life, and, in some instances, reducing pain. Meditation can be divided into two different approaches:

- During **concentration meditation**, an individual focuses attention on a single object, and continues to return the focus back to that object, even when their mind wanders. Focusing on a specific object creates a neutral point upon which to centre one's energy and attention. People often use a mantra, which is a simple word or phrase repeated over and over again, a visual object, or even the breath. This type of meditation has been found to be useful for achieving relaxation, which in turn can reduce stress.
- **Mindfulness meditation** focuses a person's attention on the present moment. When we allow ourselves to be truly aware of the moment, we pay attention to physical sensations, sounds, thoughts, and feelings without attaching judgment to them. As is the case with concentration meditation, a person's mind will tend to wander. When that happens, the goal is to recognize it and bring the mind back to the present moment. Mindfulness meditation has been associated with reduced stress, increased quality of life, reduced pain and faster recovery from injury or illness. See also the earlier section on Mindfulness.

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<sup>4</sup> Thank you to Chaplain Russel Bone for the material in Appendix 9.

## Values and Beliefs

It's important you are able to live life in a way that is aligned with your values and beliefs. The difference between how you are and how you want to be is in the actions you take and the thought that you think. Your thoughts are shaped by your perception of how things are and this is shaped by your beliefs. Changing your beliefs will change your actions.

**Stop Keep Start** – If you feel you have too much going on in your life or that what you are doing is not fulfilling, take a piece of paper and draw three columns. Ask yourself the following questions:

- *What am I going to stop doing?*
- *What am I going to keep doing?*
- *What am I going to start doing?*

## Prayer

Prayer is often used to cultivate a stronger spiritual/religious connection, ask for guidance to cope with difficult life events, seek forgiveness or help in forgiving others, or express a sense of gratitude. Books, websites and information provided by specific religious organisations can all be helpful in understanding more about how others have benefitted from prayer, and how you might incorporate prayer into your own life.

When thinking about such things as: life, meaning, purpose, spirituality or God (across faiths), you might find that you want to explore these concepts more. Every Camp and Base has Chaplains that would be happy to have a totally confidential conversation with you on these matters.

## Community

Many people find comfort, strength and guidance on their spiritual path by sharing with others. The most familiar examples of spiritual community are religious organisations, or congregations, which are organised around a specific set of beliefs. Think about your specific beliefs, and what you are hoping to gain from the experience, and find out more about the beliefs and practices of nearby groups. Many people tend to make these decisions based on the religion or spiritual practice they experienced while growing up. It's important to remember that, as an adult, your views may have changed and you may want to explore a broader range of options.

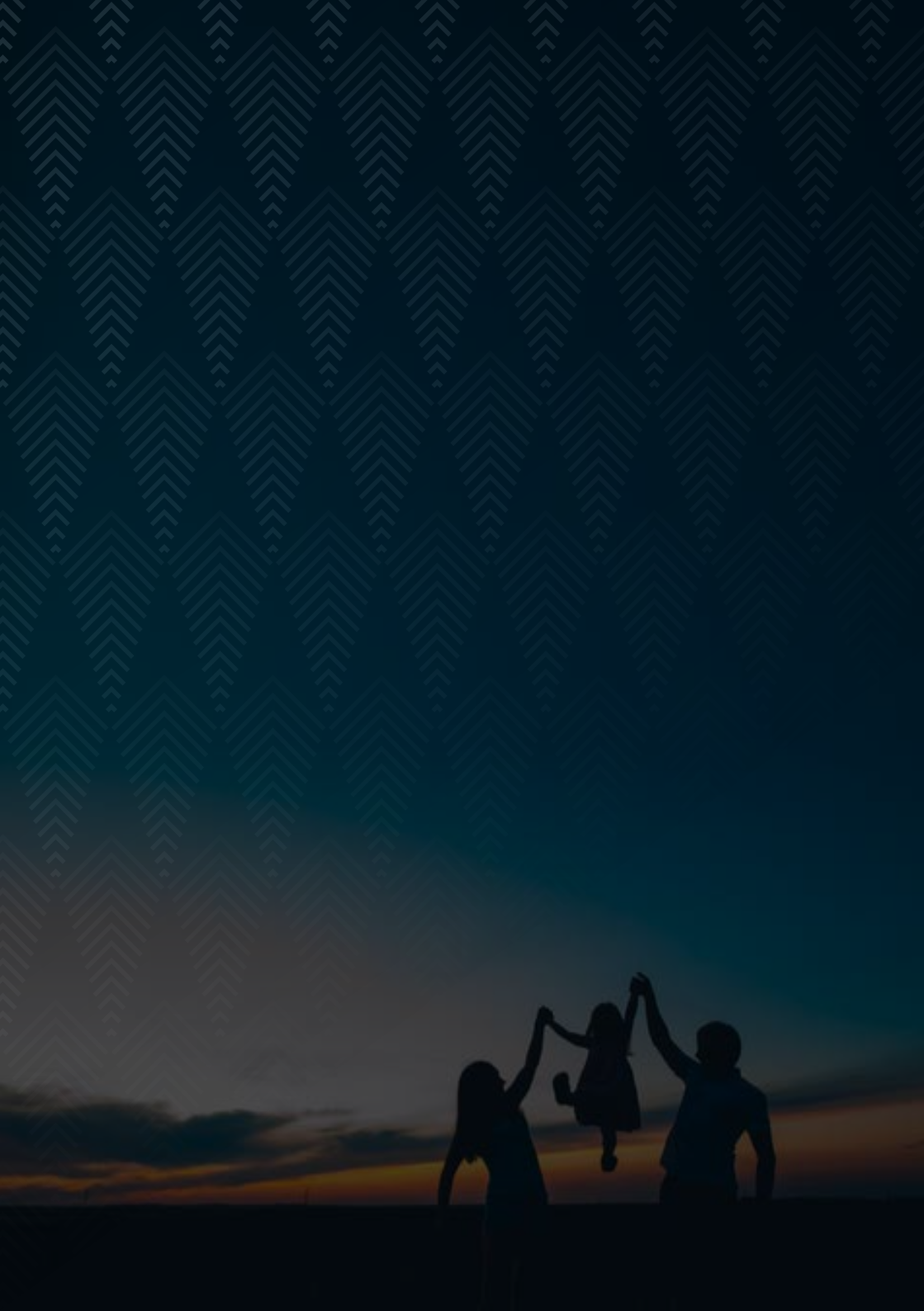
- **Reflect on your beliefs.** Maintain the principles of your faith by writing down the things you hold to be true. If something is troubling you, don't hide it from yourself. Share it with someone you trust, and discuss your concerns together.
- **Spend quiet time in nature.** Connect with the natural world by going on hikes and walks. Find quiet places to sit and observe the plants, animals, and clouds. Turn your phone off so you can quiet your mind. Don't check your texts or take pictures.
- **Foster empathy for others.** Develop empathy towards all people by paying close attention to the people who surround you. If you find yourself feeling contempt, disgust, or hatred towards others, take a deep breath and try to see things from their perspective. Think of what they may have suffered, of what they fear, and of the things that bring them feelings of joy and safety.
- **Express yourself creatively.** Creative exploration will strengthen your spiritual understanding. For example, try singing, dancing, baking, decorating, painting, writing, or even gardening.
- **Do good works – Volunteer.** Focusing on others will help you develop yourself. Find a cause you care about and donate your spare time to it. Look at local organizations that could use volunteers, start a fundraiser, or begin your own volunteer group.

## **Finding Balance in your Life**

Balance is spending the right amount of time to meet your responsibilities and take care of your needs. There are many common causes of imbalance in life including: a lack of focus and not planning ahead; never saying “no” to requests, mixing work and personal time, difficulties in relationships or personal issues or neglecting self-care. It’s important that you know your limits and set boundaries. Consider what you can reasonably accomplish, set priorities, work out your schedule and practice self-care (looking after your own health and wellbeing).



# **WHĀNAU** **CONNECTION**



# WHĀNAU CONNECTION

Our social and family health is the fourth cornerstone for overall health. Whānau can be defined in different ways, but a common meaning is the extended family, family group, or a familiar group of people. A lack of social connection and harmony in our relationships with others can have wider impacts on our health. When our relationships are not going ok or we don't feel we have people around us we can rely on to talk to when times get tough, it's time to do something about it.

Research shows that people who have close personal relationships experience fewer health problems, live longer, and are less depressed and anxious. Doing things for other people has also been found to have a beneficial effect on your own health.

Family and friends play an important role in our overall health. Every family and relationship can go through stressful times. It's important to be able to recognise potential signs of trouble and know what you can do about it. Sometimes there can be some good and very explainable reasons why relationships are having problems, perhaps you are dealing with a major life change, the kids are being a handful, or your relationship is going through a rough patch. At other times though, the problem can be caused by things that are more difficult to understand or come to terms with.

The nature of service life can sometimes place additional strain on daily living and relationships – separations (training, deployments), postings and relocations, absence of usual social support networks. Sometimes we may need additional support to manage difficult times (e.g. relationship issues, health problems, financial issues and bereavements). The NZDF 0800NZDF4U helpline is now available to both serving personnel and their families. You can also contact community resources, chaplains and health services for support.

Family members are also likely the first to notice when things are not going OK. While people can often 'keep it together' at work, health issues often show in the home environment (e.g. withdrawal, low mood, aggression, restlessness, alcohol use and difficulty sleeping). Keep an eye out for changes in behaviour. If you or your family member is experiencing any of these symptoms be proactive in dealing with these before they become more of a problem.

Comradeship, teamwork and buddy support is core to our culture. Social support and being able to talk to someone trusted act as protective factors in the emergence of many health issues. Mates and family members are in a good position to keep an eye out for each other and will often be the first to notice changes in behaviour.

## Keeping Families and Relationships Strong

It's easy when life is busy to take our relationships and family for granted. It is important to nurture these alongside juggling the other things going on in our lives.

Service life and living and working so closely together can sometimes test relationships. Family relationships can also be tested due to the time away from home associated with training, exercises and deployments. When relationships break down, it can be difficult to see a path forward. The separation process can often be lengthy and emotionally draining, particularly where children are involved. Try out these tips for keep your relationship strong:

- ✓ Make time for family. Life can be very hectic and it's all too easy to take those closest to us for granted. It's important to prioritise your family even when it's hard to find the time.
- ✓ Keep communication lines open – Whether it's tackling big issues or just dealing with the day-to-day stuff, keep talking. Sharing thoughts, feelings and problems with those close to you helps to keep relationships strong and shows your support for each other.
- ✓ Plan healthy and rewarding activities together – Sharing important and meaningful activities can help families stick together. Those activities can easily fall by the wayside when families are under the pump. If your family is going through a stressful period, plan some rewarding activities together – they don't have to be fun, just important for your family.

✓ Stay connected to friends – It might seem odd but a great way of improving your relationships within your family is to make sure that your outside relationships are healthy as well. In the same way that friends are an important source of support for individuals, communities are important supports for families. Get your family involved in school, sporting or other community groups.

✓ Work out what's important – If you're stressed and overwhelmed, re-evaluating what's really important to you in the short term might allow you to take some pressure off your family. Talking through what's important and what can wait gives you breathing room and a sense that you're working together.

## Social Fitness

It's important to keep connected with others, even when life gets busy:

- Strengthen relationships, communicate openly, and accept support from close family members and friends. Cultivate meaningful social relationships.
- Use communication to enhance relationships, such as active listening and responding, expressing interest, and giving encouragement or praise.
- Good friendships and relationships will make you stronger, happier, more creative and more resilient to challenges.
- Nurture relationships and make time to keep connected with friends. Maintain a balance between work and personal life.
- Keep an eye out for your mates. Remember too that your mates will be there for you too if the going gets tough.
- Learn effective skills for dealing with conflict, difficult opponents, and other people when they are negative or being difficult.

## Relationships

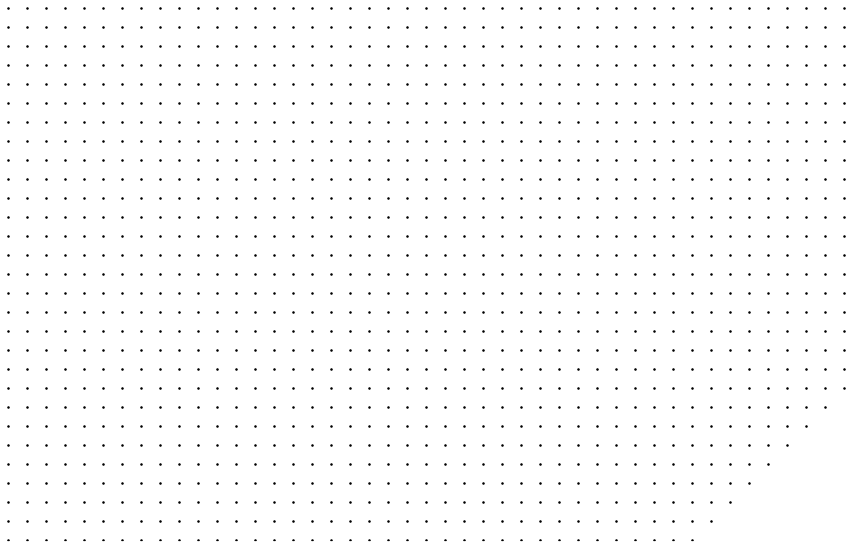
Relationships can be fun, exciting, and fulfilling. But relationships can also be difficult to manage for a range of reasons, real and imagined. Developing a relationship, even dating, can be stressful, and even during the best of times relationships take work.

The qualities of significant relationships:

<b>Good</b>	<b>Opportunity to Improve</b>
A feeling of trust	A lack of trust
Give and Take	Feelings things are one sided
Warmth and Caring	A sense of distance, uncaring
Feeling physically safe	Unsure of physical safety
Loyalty	Not reliable or faithful
Feeling relaxed & comfortable	Anxiety, uncertainty
Truthfulness	Dishonesty
Enjoyment	Feeling unhappy
Understanding	Confrontation
Good will	Resentment
You can express yourself	Guarded in what you say & do

When a relationship is new or under stress, there are things that can help:  
Before getting into a new relationship:

- Make sure you are ready – consider hanging out with groups of co-workers and friends rather than having a single partner if you don't feel you are ready for anything more.
- We learn from our experiences – each person you date will help you learn what is and is not important to you in a relationship. This will make it easier for you to know when a relationship is right and you'll work hard to make it work.
- Know what a healthy relationship involves
- Be realistic in your expectations and willing to work for the relationship.
- Communicate openly to make sure you are both on the same page.



## Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Good communication is critical. Healthy relationships thrive on good, ongoing communication. Good communication works because everyone is clear about what is going on, no one is making assumptions, and everyone has the opportunity to clarify and focus on what needs to be fixed.

Good communication requires (all) people to be open with each other, and be involved in improving the relationships. Useful communication strategies include:

- Being open and honest
- Sharing with your partner
- Using “I” statements
- Avoiding magical thinking (trying to guess what others are thinking or assume they know what you are)
- Having reasonable expectations
- Showing appreciation
- Taking the time to listen
- Not ignoring your feelings
- Fitting your communication style to the relationship and situation
- Do not make assumptions

Communication can be harder over distances. Some things that can help are:

- Phone call, emails, instant messaging
  - Ahead of time make notes about what you want to talk about, list at least 2 specific things you want to share, list at least 2 things to ask about
  - During your call watch your time so you cover important items and listen carefully and show interest in what is said to you
- Send electronic or printed photos
- Video and text postings on social media and personal website
- Letters



**Read more about Staying connected, building sense of belonging and overcoming loneliness at Appendix 10 on page 160.**



**TAKING  
CONTROL  
OF LIFE  
CHALLENGES**



# TAKING CONTROL OF LIFE CHALLENGES

There are many obvious sources of stress and challenge in our lives, in particular, exposure to traumatic events and significant physical health issues. Other sources of stress are less extreme but the cumulative effect of these can be significant.

A list of useful contacts and resources are provided in Appendices 1 - 3. If you need help, you can call the NZDF confidential helpline 0800NZDF4U (0800 693348) or in an emergency call 111. You can also talk to one of our Chaplains, Defence Community Facilitators and Social Workers, who are available to support NZDF members, families and whānau. There's also further information on the Force 4 Families website.

## Workload

Busy workloads, career pressures, and demands for increased productivity are in almost all areas of the workplace. Over time stress can be a constant factor in our professional lives and on the homefront. We can choose to ignore this, and work unreasonably long hours to stay on top of things even though working harder and longer can be counterproductive. The alternative is to work more intelligently, by focusing on the things that are important for job success, and reducing the time we spend on low priority tasks.

**Prioritise.** Understand the priorities of your role, what constitutes success within it, and focus on these activities to avoid task overload as much as possible.

If you are overloaded with work your performance will drop. If you can't achieve everything that is important or doable at work, tell your manager. It's okay to say 'no' to taking on extra work.

If you are struggling on the home front or with other commitments, identify and focus on what is important and let go of what can wait.

Create a “Stop Doing” List	We all have “To Do Lists”, but what can you eliminate to make room for what energises you and brings you closer to achieving your goals?
Focus on your strengths	Focus on your core business – that which you do best.
Avoid fighting battles you don't need to win	Pick your battles wisely. In the heat of the moment, stop for a second and think: is this truly worth fighting for? Can you be content to know that you are right without having to prove someone else wrong?
Focus on your priorities	Minimising stress means looking at life through a holistic lens - physical, psychological/emotional, spiritual, and whānau/social. What are some daily practices that you can introduce to create reserves in each of these important areas of your life? (e.g. spending more time with family and friends, focusing on a healthy diet).

When you need to focus on a particular task, small actions can make a big difference: shut your door, turn off your cell phone and email alerts, and at work consider using an automatic email response to let people know that you are currently not available.

**Take a break.** Our bodies and minds need breaks from work and stressful activities. Setting up intervals of 25–60 minutes of devoted work focus and taking 5–10 minute breaks in between will help make you more productive. When you feel tension rising and energy falling, take a break (go for a walk, make a cuppa, chat with colleagues, climb some stairs). Make time every few hours for a “human moment”— a face-to-face exchange with a person you like.

Make time for hobbies and other activities that energize you to help you maintain balance and keep you energized and motivated throughout the workday. Also be mindful that it's easy to bring work outside the office and constantly stay connected. Turn off the notifications, the email, and the laptop when you are engaging in the other aspects of your life. Setting some sort of on/off switch will help to conserve your energy and allow you to rest and refuel for the times when you're switched on. And ensure you schedule longer breaks over extended weekends and taking leave periods.

Remember to Practice Healthy Habits. Getting enough sleep, exercising regularly and maintaining healthy eating habits are important. If you are going through some difficulties in the workplace check out this link. <http://mentalhealth.intuto.com/public/course/784686/> This toolkit provides some basic information about mental health problems in the workplace, and about your rights and responsibilities as an employee.

### **Managing Change**

Change often feels disruptive and, at times, even a bit traumatic. A new role, a reorganisation at work, a new relationship, a new beginning... these can all feel a little scary. Because of this, many people try to avoid it. Nevertheless, change is a part of life and essential for progress. Imagine getting up at the same time each day, doing the same thing... day after day, it would get boring right? Embracing change puts you in the drivers seat and helps you to turn threats into opportunities. Approaching change with an open mind and focusing on the positive elements will help you to navigate change successfully.

Over time, daily hassles and work pressures can wear you down. You might start going through each day somewhat mindlessly, living on autopilot and doing things by force of habit. Do you....

- Feel mentally drained by the end of a typical day?
- Feel rushed, even when you are running on time?
- Have trouble doing things at a slower pace, even when you have the time?
- Tend to think about what is coming up in your day rather than being in the here and now?
- Often want to be left alone when you get home?
- Find yourself sighing a lot during the day?
- Forget to take breaks because of pressure you feel under?
- Find it difficult to relax even when you have free time?
- When you have free time, prefer activities that help you to zone out?
- Have trouble motivating yourself to do things that are healthy for you?
- Feel exhausted by the end of the day much of the time?
- Feel like you are multi-tasking even at home?
- Tend to bring your stress home with you?
- Often wake up at night and think about things that are stressing you out?
- Notice that you get impatient and irritable about little things?
- Often do tasks (like household tasks) without even thinking about them?
- Feel like taking time to relax means you'll fall behind on some duty or responsibility?

If any of these resonate for you it is likely that daily stresses are building up and having an impact on how you are functioning. Often this is very subtle, and it's only when you take a minute to review how you are doing that you notice. It's important that you stop this process from escalating to the point where stress damages your health.

## Training and performance pressures

Whether you are a new recruit on basic training, an experienced member on a development or promotion course, or going about your daily civilian life, a fear of non-performance or failing can create anxiety and concern for you. If you are new to the organisation, you might also be feeling isolated from your usual support networks which makes things seem harder to deal with. And if you have aspirations for promotion and long term career prospects, or just like to do well and work hard at everything you do, you can be particularly impacted by a disappointing performance or report.

Remember, your current situation is a point in time and it does not define who you are or what you will achieve in the future. Seek feedback about what you could do to improve or do differently. Find someone to help coach you if you are not sure how to achieve this.

## Disciplinary action

For those undergoing disciplinary action this can be a particularly difficult time. The implications of disciplinary action can be significant for military personnel, sometimes resulting in correctional detention, a reduction in rank, fines, ridicule and loss of peer support, and in some cases, discharge. Personnel can feel concerned about their future and a sense of shame for their behaviour having let themselves, their mates or loved ones down. It is important to recognise that this time will pass and that one incident does not define who you are, or your future. Help is available to work through your concerns if needed. Talk to someone you trust (buddy, boss, or chaplain etc) or you can ring the NZDF4U helpline for a confidential chat.

## Transition

The prospect of making the transition to civilian life can also be difficult for many people, especially if you have been in the organisation for many years or when the decision to leave has been sudden or involuntary. It is important that you get support through this transition in a way that acknowledges both opportunities and challenges ahead, and the apprehension that can sometimes be associated with this. It is also important to feel recognised for your service and contributions, and to access additional support if transition is feeling difficult, to reduce the likelihood of a difficult transition and / or issues down track.

## Deployments and Time Away from Home

Any time away from home can be difficult. Deployments can be both an exciting time and a source of anxiety, for example worrying about performance, deployment experiences, or separation from loved ones. The transition back home can also sometimes be difficult, and some people may need professional support to help them get back on an even keel.

There are a range of guides available that provide information and support during and post deployment for serving personnel and their families. A good place to start are the Force4Families and Defence Health websites or talk to a health provider or chaplain on camps and bases. You can also ring the 0800NZDF4U helpline or 0800VETERANS for confidential advice.

## Financial Pressures

Financial pressures can affect everyone. Many young people over-commit financially by taking on loans or hire purchase agreements without thinking through whether they can afford them or allowing for unforeseen financial demands. Sometimes it might be an unexpected bill that causes financial pressure, a partner losing a job, dropping to one income to raise a family, or a relationship split. Check out <https://www.sorted.org.nz/> and other useful websites with budgeting advice at the back of this guide.

## Addictive Behaviours

When a behaviour or activity is very pleasurable (at least initially), and when it also seems to help to relieve problems or lift low mood, there is the potential to become over-involved in the behaviour. When you begin to rely on an activity to make you feel better, and when you are struggling to control your involvement even when it is evident to you that it is harmful, the process can be referred to as an 'addiction'. The best way to avoid developing an addiction is to restrict your involvement in potentially problematic behaviours. Frequent and regular (especially daily) engagement in a behaviour greatly increases the risk of that behaviour getting out-of-hand.

Addictions can take many forms; some of the most common ones that service personnel and their families experience are:

## Tobacco

Nicotine in tobacco is a very seductive drug. It has the unique properties of being both calming and improving alertness – a powerful addiction combination. The great risk is that over time, the person's health will severely deteriorate (with a high risk of emphysema or incurable cancer), adding further to their psychological distress.

## Alcohol

In New Zealand, the most common drug problem, leaving aside tobacco (which is the biggest killer in the long run), is alcohol. Excessive alcohol impairs your ability to function effectively, and to relate to other people. It can cause great difficulties in areas such as physical health (liver and brain damage, and increased risk of many types of cancer), relationships, work, and finances.



**If you are not sure whether your drinking habits could be a problem for you, or how to cut down, take the self-assessment and find out more information about alcohol use at the back of this guide (Appendix 3).**

## Other Drug Use and Misuse

Many people also use other drugs (e.g., cannabis or prescription medications) to excess. People use substances (such as drugs) for a range of reasons, including for pleasure, to facilitate social occasions, as a coping mechanism, for health reasons, and for body enhancement. All substance use brings a risk of harm. This harm can range from individual physical and mental effects such as mental illness or heart disease, to those impacting on friends, family and colleagues including relationship breakdown and financial issues. Ensure that any drugs you take have been prescribed for you and make sure that you take them in accordance with prescription guidelines. If they are not helping you go back to your doctor.

Drug use is different from drug abuse. All of us have to take prescription medications from time to time, and for some they are a lifelong companion. This is not abuse if we take them as prescribed by a doctor. Drug abuse is a pattern of drug taking that results in harm to your health, relationships or your ability to do your job properly. Drug abuse can include legal drugs (or other substances), when you feel like you need to increase the amount of prescribed medication without medical advice. Even if you don't feel like your drug use is out of control, it might be causing problems in your relationship, or you might notice you're also drinking more than usual. Some people use drugs as a way of coping with unpleasant feelings.

Drug use and serving members – For many areas of society, especially where the use of recreational drugs is seen as acceptable, there is a difference between drug use and drug abuse. However, drug use has much more immediate and serious consequences for serving members than for the general public. Defence has very strict rules about drug use, and even though help and support for drug problems is available within the military, the consequences of admitting to drug use might be discouraging you from seeking help.

If you're a serving member and using drugs, the most important thing is to consider your safety and the safety of those around you. Don't take drugs in situations that could put you or someone else in danger. If you need help but worry about seeking help internally, community based services are available, including GPs. You can also call the 0800 NZDF4U confidential help line (0800 693348).

## **Gambling**

Many New Zealanders enjoy buying the odd Lotto ticket, playing the occasional pokies game or enjoying a day out at the races. However, for some people, gambling becomes addictive and causes havoc for their family, whānau, finances, work and friendships. You are particularly at risk if you use pokie machines often.

New Zealanders are amongst the highest gamblers per head of population. That's not necessarily a problem in itself, as gambling can be recreational and enjoyable. The same principle applies with alcohol; it's about keeping the balance right, and fitting gambling around a healthy lifestyle. Problems arise when losses exceed what can be afforded, and when the over-riding motive is to win money or to escape from boredom and low mood. It is then very easy for things to go horribly wrong, with massive repercussions for bank balances, debt and relationships. Fraud is common when problem gamblers desperately 'chase' their losses to try and repair the damage. Sports betting is the next potential wave of problem gambling, as bets can be placed at home, many types of bets can be laid, and new odds are provided as a game unfolds. Effective treatments exist for problem gambling, once the person recognises he or she has a problem and wants to do something about it. Most people with a gambling problem eventually bring it under control.

You can find out more information about gambling and how to manage this at: [www.choicenotchance.org.nz](http://www.choicenotchance.org.nz)

## Parenting

When we become parents there's no universal "how to" manual and mostly we learn as we go along, because everyone's situation is different.

However, we all need help from time to time and although close friends and family can be a good source of help, sometimes it's hard to ask. When you need good quality third party help, the internet is a good place to start.



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**Check out useful resources on parenting in Appendix 2.**

## Dealing with family violence

Violence is not just physical. It can include things people do, things people say, threats and intimidating acts. It can also mean making people do things they don't want to do, or preventing them from doing things that are important to them. Some questions you might ask yourself to see if you or your family has a problem with violence include:

Within the past year:

- Is your partner, another family member or friend ever afraid of you?
- Has anyone scared you, or threatened you, or someone you care about?
- Has anyone tried to control you, or make you feel bad about yourself?
- Have you been hit, pushed, or shoved, slapped, kicked, choked or otherwise physically hurt?
- Has anyone forced you to have sex, or do anything sexual, in a way you did not want to?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you or your family may need help. People can change angry, aggressive and violent behaviours with support; a good place to start is contacting your doctor or other mental health professional. If someone is making you feel unsafe or afraid, call 111 and ask for NZ Police, or if you need information about where to get help phone 0800 456 450. You can also call the 0800 NZDF4U confidential help line or the Family Violence Info line on 0800 456 450. Remember that the safety of children comes first, so contact the NZ Police if you are in a situation that is risky for your children or yourself.

## Problems with Anger

Anger is a normal, healthy emotion. However, it can be a problem if you find it difficult to keep anger under control. If you want to try and control your anger, try the 4 “R’S”:

**Recognise** your early warning signs e.g. Do you get sweaty, red in the face or clench your fists, feel your temper rising?

**Retreat** from the situation and spend a bit of time alone

**Relax** so that you are in a much calmer state and in a better position to look at things from a different perspective . People with anger problems often tend to think in ways that fuel their anger. Ask yourself a really simple question. “Is this worth getting angry about?” Check out the tips and tools in this resource to help you to relax and to think the situation through.

**Return** only once you’ve calmed down and have your anger under control.

## Troubled by Memories

After a distressing or traumatic experience, it’s normal to relive what happened and even to have dreams about it. If it gets too much, we might deliberately try to block it out and force ourselves to think about something else. This usually settles down within the first week or two. But if it keeps going, and you don’t feel like you’re able to come to terms with what has happened you might have a problem with posttraumatic stress.

**What is Posttraumatic Stress (PTS)?** PTS is marked by clear physical and psychological symptoms such as reliving events, nightmares, anxiety, memory and cognition problems, and other physical and mental health issues. It can also be associated with difficulties in social or family life, including job stability, relationship problems, family discord, substance misuse, and difficulties in parenting.

While PTS is sometimes associated with military personnel who have undertaken active service, the disorder is common - about two thirds of New Zealanders will experience at least one traumatic event in their lives (such as car accidents, assault, difficult childhood experiences) that has the potential to cause PTS.



Check  
out  
more

resources  
on managing  
anger in  
Appendix 2.

**Do I have a problem with PTS?** In the first few days and weeks following a traumatic event, you might experience strong feelings of fear, guilt or anger, feel jumpy or have trouble sleeping. There's no firm rule on how long it will take to get back to your normal way of life but if you're still struggling after a couple of weeks, it's probably time to ask for help. Check out the resources at the back of for more information and where to go for help.

## Affected by sexual violence?

If you have been affected by an incident of sexual violence, it is important to remember that it was not your fault, and that support is available. In the military the Sexual Assault Response Team [SART] can assist you by providing you with someone to talk to about what has happened, putting you in touch with local support services, supporting you to make a formal report, if you want to, and other processes.

**To speak to a SART professional call 0800 693 324 or internationally +64 4 496 0410 or in an emergency please call 111.**

## Discrimination, Bullying or Harassment

The most effective way to prevent the continuation of discrimination, bullying or harassment is for you to state clearly to the respondent that the behaviour is unwanted and request that the behaviour ceases. NZDF Anti-Harassment Advisors (AHA's) can provide you with further information and support. They are located in all camps and bases. For more information check out the HR Toolkit.

If other options are not successful or appropriate, you may choose to have your discrimination, harassment or bullying problem mediated or investigated. Within the NZDF Human Resource Advisors, Equity Co-ordinators and AHAs can provide more information on the mediation and investigation process and provide you with additional support.

## Loneliness

Contrary to what many people believe, loneliness isn't just a result of being alone or an absence of friends. Sometimes we can pretend to be upbeat, positive and happy, but underneath feel a bit unworthy of healthy and respectful relationships, or not know how to find these.

### **Here's some tips for conquering loneliness:**

- ✓ Realise that loneliness is a feeling, not a fact. Nurture your support network. Even if there is only one person to start with, you can build on it. Don't underestimate the importance of what you have to offer and other people wanting to spend time with you.
- ✓ Expand your social network. Online social sites are an ideal place to meet people and to explore hobbies, interests and social groups.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for your inner critic's attempts to sabotage you. Pay attention to thoughts like "I am too xxx (fat, skinny, ugly, boring, tall, short) for anybody to want to date", "I wish I were funnier and had interesting things to say", or "People never seem to get me."
- ✓ Replace negative self-talk with affirming messages, such as, "I am perfectly lovable and likeable just as I am," and "I welcome love, friendship and support into my life."
- ✓ Fight the urge to isolate. Sometimes you have to force yourself to do exactly that which you are dreading — like putting yourself out there.
- ✓ Weed out unhealthy relationships and create space in your life for relationships that fuel your spirit.
- ✓ Ask for what you need. Find your voice. Tell people what you need from them to alleviate loneliness. Friends respond to direct messages for help and support. Give it a try, you might be surprised!
- ✓ Take action. Don't wait for an invitation. Be willing to take a risk, be proactive and invite people to share in your life, whether it is for coffee, lunch, a walk, an event or a gathering in your home.
- ✓ Recognise the importance of being alone and enjoying solitude. Being alone is not the same as being lonely; it provides peace, quiet, freedom, space and the opportunity to connect with your deeper self.

## Concerns about Mental Health (including Low Mood and Anxiety)

As was noted in earlier sections, there are a number of common mental health issues that a great number of New Zealanders deal with every day.



You can read more about **Common Mental Health issues at Appendix 8 on page 154.**

## Self-Harm and Suicide

People hurt themselves for lots of different reasons. It can be used as a way of dealing with painful feelings, as a way to punish themselves, or perhaps as a way of asking for help. For others, life has become unbearable and suicide might seem like the only way out. If any of this sounds like you or someone you know, it's important to seek help.

### Self-harm

Self-harm is the direct, deliberate act of hurting or injuring your body, but without necessarily wanting to die. It's a way some people cope with intense or very difficult emotions, or overwhelming situations and life events.

Common ways of self-harming include:

- Cutting skin on wrists, arms or legs
- Biting and scratching at skin
- Head banging and punching self
- Burning of skin
- Hair or eyelash pulling
- Taking overdoses of drugs or medication
- Taking poisonous substances
- Inhalation of a harmful substance

Self-harming is not uncommon. If you self-harm you are not weak or crazy. It typically means you are overwhelmed by how you are feeling right now and this is a way you hope will help you feel better.

After self-harm you might feel better for a while (often with a momentary sense of calm or release of tension), but the feeling won't last long. If you keep self-harming it can make things worse. It can harm your physical or mental health, or damage your relationships with other people.

Self-harm does not necessarily mean you are suicidal, most people who are self-harming are not considering taking their own lives. However, for some people the thoughts and feelings behind the harming behaviour can evolve to suicidal thoughts. Self-harming behaviours can become addictive and hard to stop. Seek help from someone you trust or the list of resources provided in this guide.

## **Suicide**

Suicide is something we don't like to talk about, and we hope it will never touch our lives. But sadly some New Zealanders take their life each year and many more think about doing so or do other self-harm behaviour. It may be that you, a loved one or a mate may be at risk, either right now or in the future, and it is important to know what we can do to prevent you or others from becoming a suicide statistic.

Sometimes, people who try to hurt themselves have just lost someone or something they cared about. Maybe a close friend or loved one has passed away, or a relationship or career has come to an end. Sometimes the stresses and strains of life – things like financial problems, relationship issues and physical pain – can build up to the point where it seems that life isn't worth living. But remember that all of these problems can be solved – not easily, not perfectly, but there are solutions and there are people who can help.

One of the myths about suicide is that you have to be severely depressed to attempt suicide. While being severely depressed increases the risk of suicide, the vast majority of depressed people never attempt suicide. Many of those who do attempt suicide are not clinically depressed at the time. Suicide may follow domestic disputes, separation from partners and families, intense anger at a sense of injustice, work problems, debt, legal problems, chronic illness and other major life problems, with or without depression. It is not possible to accurately predict who will attempt suicide, except that past suicide attempts increases the risk for future attempts. Some people with many risk factors will not attempt suicide while other people, who seemed to have few risk-factors, may shock others with their attempted, or completed, suicide.

Some of the major risk factors for suicide are:

- Social isolation
- Unresolved interpersonal conflict
- Mental health conditions
- Alcohol or other drug use problems
- Severe physical conditions, including chronic pain
- Access to firearms or other lethal means

**If you have these risk factors, it is strongly recommended that you seek professional help.**

### **Having Suicidal Thoughts or Feelings?**

Whatever is going on for you that has led to how you're feeling right now is unique to you – but having suicidal thoughts is not. Having suicidal thoughts can be overwhelming and frightening. It can be very difficult to know what to do and how to cope.

It is common to feel that there is no solution to what you are going through and not to want to burden others.

**Tell someone what you are thinking if you are having thoughts about taking your life,** it's important to tell someone you trust so that you can get the help you need to feel better. If you can't immediately find someone you know to talk to, there are always people who are contactable by phone and who are willing, able and available 24 hours to help you. If you are in a serious crisis or you need urgent help, do the following:

- If you are in immediate danger, call 111.
- Call your local mental health crisis assessment team or go to local hospital emergency department.
- Contact a helpline - Lifeline 0800543354, Crisis Support Services 0508 828 865, 0800NZDF4U [0800 693348], or Men's Line 0800 636 754.

For more information and links to Mental Health resources, including the warning signs for suicide, visit the resources listed at the back of this guide.

### **Suicide Survivor NZDF**

*"I had lost all hope that I would be, or could be, well and happy again. My mind just wouldn't let me believe it. My feeling of being a burden on my family overrode any thoughts of the consequences ending my life would have on them.*

*Did I attempt to take my own life? Yes, I did. I was very lucky that my family intervened in time and got me the help I so desperately needed.*

*Am I happy to be alive and getting mentally healthy again? Yes, I am."*

*You are not alone; lots of people have thoughts about killing themselves and have found a way through. Seeking help can be hard but there is a way forward, even if it does not feel that way.*

Read more stories from our people at <http://health.nzdf.mil.nz>

### **Are you worried someone is thinking of suicide?**

If you're worried that someone might be thinking about suicide, don't be afraid to ask them directly.

If someone has thoughts or feelings about suicide, it's important to take them seriously. Below is a list of warning signs for suicide. Most people thinking about taking their own life will try to let someone know, but they often won't say so directly. If someone shows one or more of these signs, it doesn't necessarily mean they are suicidal, but it's likely they need your support. Some people who are suicidal might not show these signs, and some warning signs may not be obvious.

**What to look out for:**

- Access things they could use to hurt themselves, like a rope or gun
- Read or write about suicide online, or post photos or videos about suicide
- Become obsessed with death
- Become isolated or withdrawn from family, whānau and friends
- Don't seem to be coping with any problems they may be having
- Tell you they want to die or kill themselves
- Have changes in mood – becoming depressed, angry or enraged
- Hurt themselves – for example, cutting skin or taking an overdose
- Feel worthless, guilty, whakamā or ashamed
- Have no hope for the future
- Use drugs or alcohol to cope with difficult feelings or thoughts
- Sleep a lot more than usual, or stop getting enough sleep
- Seem to have lost interest in life, or things they used to enjoy
- Give away possessions, pay back debts or 'tie up loose ends'
- Stop taking their medication
- Suddenly seem calm or happy after they have been depressed or suicidal

People who feel suicidal might try to hide what they are going through or pretend they are okay.

Recognise warning signs and take them seriously. If you think a friend or family member is considering suicide, you might be afraid to bring up the subject. But talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life.

**What to do:**

SALT – See, Ask, Listen, Tell/Take

If you think that someone might be at risk, pay attention to changes in their behaviour (SEE) , trust your instincts and ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide (ASK, LISTEN). Some ideas for what to say are:

- ‘You haven’t seemed yourself lately, how are you doing?’
- ‘I’m worried about you, let’s have a chat’
- ‘I’m worried you might be planning on hurting yourself – are you?’
- “Are you thinking of taking your life?”

Reassure them that help is available, and that you will help them find this (TAKE, TELL).

Knowing you are there to support them can help them feel better. But sometimes they need additional help too. Don’t try and go it alone, help them get the help they need. It’s important you have support too, helping someone through a difficult time can be scary and confidential advice and support is available to help you too. Speak to someone you trust or call the 0800 NZDF4U Helpline.

## Getting Help

### Reaching Out

Sometimes during times of stress we withdraw socially, we are not in the mood, tired, or think we don't have the time. Activities we previously enjoyed are often the first to go during times of stress.

One of the first rules for managing stress is never worry alone. Talk with someone you trust. Talking helps you feel more in control. When you're stressed, you tend to exaggerate the situation, making it worse in your mind. A talking partner can offer a different point of view, and provide reassurance that you are okay and that the problem can be solved.

Sometimes, due to concerns about the stigma or not wanting to be a burden to others, it can be hard to ask for help. There may be times when you or a mate needs help but struggles to reach out. It is important that we can recognise the signs of someone struggling and that we know what to do when we spot them.

A list of places you can go for help is provided in the next section. Some of the barriers to seeking help can include: a lack of understanding about the domains of health and not recognising that we are not tracking ok. Sometimes we don't want to be a burden on others, and sometimes we just want to manage things ourselves. There can also be stigma associated with both physical and mental health issues, and concern about the impact that help-seeking in the military may have on deployability and career. It is important to recognise that seeking help early will aid your recovery, and that seeking help is a sign of strength; sometimes we can't go it alone.

## **What happens when I ask for help?**

All NZDF personnel and their families can access the 24/7 helpline (0800NZDF4U) where they can seek confidential advice and follow up support. If you are a uniformed member of the NZDF you can also contact an internal health professional (psychologist, social worker, chaplain, doctor) who may refer you for additional assessment or support from an external health professional. Civilian staff and family members are encouraged to contact their GP or seek assistance from EAP (Employer Assistance programme) if you have access to this. There is also a range of information and access to useful contacts and tools at the back of this resource.

The majority of people with health issues will make a full recovery. For most the recovery process and return to work will be rapid. For some this may be a longer journey requiring a range of specialist support and time off work. You may be prescribed medication (for example to assist with sleep, anxiety, depression or pain issues) and sometimes time off work is recommended. Employment limitations may be placed on you in the short term (for your own wellbeing and recovery, and sometimes also for the safety of the wider team), and in some cases for military personnel this will result in a change to medical grading. Medical grade changes may limit your employment in the short term, including your ability to deploy, and this can be frustrating, but in the longer term this will speed your rehabilitation and recovery.

Occasionally the seriousness of health conditions may result in a recommendation for discharge by a Medical Officer. Earlier help seeking will reduce this likelihood, and recommendations for release are rare. In such cases individuals will be provided with appropriate support and assistance to find alternative career pathways and ongoing health support as part of the transition process.

## Keeping an eye out for our buddies

*“Anyone who willingly enters into the pain of a stranger is truly a remarkable person.”*

*Henri J. M. Nouwen, In Memoriam.*

The philosophy behind recognising stress reactions in other people, in some respects, is very simple. Any sort of change in behaviour, that can't be explained, is cause for concern. It will likely be reflected in the yellow and orange columns in the Mental Health Continuum (page 34). However, everyone is different, and the impact of events on people and their reactions will be different. Changes in behaviour to watch for may include:

**Temperament:** A usually easy-going person may become difficult to be with. Laughing, joking and fun disappear and people can seem lifeless, dull and apathetic.

**Standards:** Someone who usually takes pride in their appearance may let things slip. Or someone who usually likes to perform tasks to their best ability may produce sloppy work.

**Interests:** Some people who had a range of interests may be completely disinterested in prior interests. In addition, their range of interests may narrow to include only those things that are causing them stress. Often, lack of interest is evident in appearance, health, or diet and these things often can create further problems.

**Decision making ability:** Some people may make uncharacteristically rash decisions. Others may be very rigid, in that they stick to a decision even if it needs to be adapted to changing circumstances. Others may vacillate between alternatives and some people may have so much trouble with simple decisions that they want other people to make decisions for them.

**Pace:** Some people become extremely active, trying to do lots of things – they become almost “hyper”. Others slow down, and even though they may think they are productive, may achieve very little. There is an obvious slowing down, mentally and physically.

**Control:** Some people exhibit less control over their behaviour and emotions when they are under stress. They tend to play hard (perhaps even getting into trouble) and/or be more expressive and emotional. Others are over controlled, and try to keep their emotions and feelings in check.

**Memory:** Some people have problems with their memory when they are under stress. They are often absent-minded and forgetful, especially of those things that are outside their narrowed field of focus.

**Susceptibility to illness:** Someone who is usually very healthy may seem to be sick all of the time, or complain of minor illnesses.

**Personality:** Some usually sociable people withdraw, and spend less time with other people than they normally do. Other people go the other way and become more socially oriented, wasting no excuse to go out. People who may not usually get angry very easily can become angry for trivial reasons. Others may be irritable much of the time.

Mates are there for each other in the good times, and the bad times. Being there for a mate in the good times is usually easy and enjoyable. But when a mate goes through a rough patch, it can be hard to know what to do or say. This can be particularly challenging if your mate is not just having a bad day, but experiencing a mental health difficulty. The good news is there are some simple steps you can take to look after your mates, regardless of what challenges they may be facing. These steps are sometimes called 'Mental Health First Aid', and can be remembered using the simple acronym: **REACT**.



<p>RECOGNISE symptoms of health difficulties</p>	<p>One of the easiest ways to do this is to know your mates well – any change in their usual behaviour is often the first sign of a health problem. Other symptoms of difficulties can include physical reactions like nausea, sweating or shaking; thinking reactions like poor concentration or negativity; behavioural changes like disrupted sleep, excessive drinking/smoking or increased aggression; and emotional reactions like sadness, anger or anxiety.</p>
<p>ENGAGE the person</p>	<p>After you've recognised any of the symptoms, engage with your mate. Talk to them – for example, you might say "I've noticed X, Y and Z, are you ok?" Have this conversation in a private environment if possible, just be yourself and listen to them.</p>
<p>ACTIVELY listen</p>	<p>Once you have engaged with your mate, you need to actively listen. Active listening involves both hearing and accurately understanding what the speaker has said. Your job during this step is to listen to your mate, reflect back what you are hearing and clarify any differences ("so it sounds like you're feeling angry because of XYZ, am I right?"). Allow your mate time to vent if need be, and don't be afraid to allow some silence in your conversation – sometimes people need silence in order to think. This is not the time to argue with them, tell them you know how they feel, or try to solve their problems. Simply listen, reflect and clarify.</p>

CHECK suicide risk and risk of harm to others

If, after engaging and actively listening, you are at all concerned that your mate is at risk of suicide, self-harm or harm to other people, you need to ask them about it directly. For example, ask your mate, "Have you been thinking about suicide?" If they're considering suicide or self-harm they must be taken to a doctor for assessment. If they're considering harming others, the police need to be involved. In both cases, you need to remove any threats where it's safe to do so. You should never agree to keep secrets or leave them alone if they are in crisis.

TAKE action

If your mate is not suicidal or homicidal, and you are no longer concerned about their health, you might choose to simply monitor them. However, if you think they would benefit from support, there are numerous avenues of referral that you can access, which are listed in Appendix 1.

Remember, mates don't ignore their mate who is struggling, or think that someone else will help them. Be a mate in both the good and the bad times – use the REACT Mental Health First Aid strategy if ever you're concerned about a mate's mental health.

Talk to a mental health professional or call the NZDF confidential help line (0800 693348) for advice if you are concerned about someone.

Knowing you are there to support them can help them feel better. But sometimes they need additional help too. If you are concerned about someone, contact a health professional (medical officer, nurse, psychologist, social worker, chaplain) for advice. Do not try and manage it alone. It's important you have support too, helping someone through a difficult time can be scary. Confidential advice and support is available to help you too. Speak to someone you trust or call the 0800 NZDF4U confidential helpline.



**A list of where to go for help and additional resources is provided at Appendix 1 and 2 on pages 108 – 116.**

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## Appendix 1: Where to go for help

### Regular Force

#### In an emergency Call 111

**0800NZDF4U** (0800 693348) is a confidential helpline offering 24/7 telephone support and up to 3 face to face confidential sessions with a trained counsellor. It is available to all members of the defence community including all uniformed personnel, defence civilians, veterans and families.

Call Now: 0800NZDF4U (0800 693348)

**NZDF Health Support** The first point of contact for military members experiencing health difficulties is a military primary care doctor or other health support provider (social worker, chaplain or psychologist) on camps and bases. This individual will either provide the required assistance or refer the member to the most appropriate resource.

**No Duff** No Duff provides immediate buddy support for those in need (all serving and retired members of the NZDF). It is operated by a group of volunteers across NZ, the majority of whom are operationally experienced, both serving and former members of the NZDF. You can find out more about No Duff here (<https://www.noduff.org/>) or by email [noduff.ngo@gmail.com](mailto:noduff.ngo@gmail.com)

Call: 022 3071557

**Unsure who to talk to or if need help?** If you are not sure if you need help or how to find this a good option is to talk to a manager, local Defence Community Coordinator (located in every camp and base), or another trusted person (a buddy, partner or other family member).

**Other Resources** Check out a list of some of the other available resources (useful phone lines, apps, websites) in the next pages. For free general health advice you can call the NZ Healthline 0800 611116. This is a service is operated by health professionals and provides 24/7 health advice. Further information and resources can be found at the NZDF health website [defence.health.mil.nz](http://defence.health.mil.nz)

## **Defence Civilian**

### **In an emergency Call 111**

**0800NZDF4U** (0800 693348) is a confidential helpline offering 24/7 telephone support and up to 3 face to face confidential sessions with a trained counsellor. It is available to all members of the defence community including all uniformed personnel, defence civilians, veterans and families.

Call: 0800NZDF4U (0800 693348)

**EAP** The Employer Assistance Programme offers 24/7 confidential telephone and face to face counselling support to defence civilians.

Call: 0508 664981

**GP** If you are a civilian, family member or former employee you are encouraged to speak to a General Practitioner (GP/doctor). Family physicians are often the first contact for people experiencing mental or physical health problems. This individual will either provide the right assistance or refer you to the most appropriate resources. If you are new to the NZDF community or having difficulty accessing a GP, contact your local Defence Community Coordinator (DCC) located in camps and bases or find out more information here (<https://www.govt.nz/browse/health-system/gps-and-prescriptions/find-a-doctor/>)

**Other Resources** Check out a list of some of the other available resources (useful phone lines, apps, websites) in the next pages. For free general health advice you can call the NZ Healthline 0800 611116. This is a service is operated by health professionals and provides 24/7 health advice. Further information and resources can be found at the NZDF health website [defence.health.mil.nz](http://defence.health.mil.nz)

## Reserve Force

### In an emergency Call 111

**0800NZDF4U** (0800 693348) is a confidential helpline offering 24/7 telephone support and up to 3 face to face confidential sessions with a trained counsellor. It is available to all members of the defence community including all uniformed personnel, defence civilians, veterans and families.

Call: 0800NZDF4U (0800 693348)

**NZDF Health Support** If you are experiencing a health concern that is related to or during your service in the military your first point of contact is a military primary care doctor or other health support provider (social worker, chaplain or psychologist) on your local camp or base. This individual will either provide the required assistance or refer the member to the most appropriate resource.

**GP** If you are experiencing a health concern that is unrelated to military you are encouraged to speak to a General Practitioner (GP/doctor). Family physicians are often the first contact for people experiencing mental or physical health problems. This individual will either provide the right assistance or refer you to the most appropriate resources. If you are new to the NZDF community or having difficulty accessing a GP, you can also contact your local Defence Community Coordinator (DCC) located in camps and bases or find out more information here (<https://www.govt.nz/browse/health-system/gps-and-prescriptions/find-a-doctor/>)

**No Duff** No Duff provides immediate buddy support for those in need (all serving and retired members of the NZDF). It is operated by a group of volunteers across NZ, the majority of whom are operationally experienced, both serving and former members of the NZDF. You can find out more about No Duff here (<https://www.noduff.org/>) or by email [noduff.ngo@gmail.com](mailto:noduff.ngo@gmail.com)  
Call: 022 3071557

**Unsure who to talk to or if need help?** If you are not sure if you need help or how to approach this you can also talk to your boss, local Defence Community Coordinator (DCC) located in camps and bases.

**Other Resources** Check out a list of some of the other available resources (useful phone lines, apps, websites) in the next pages. For free general health advice you can call the NZ Healthline 0800 611116. This is a service is operated by health professionals and provides 24/7 health advice. Further information and resources can be found at the NZDF health website [defence.health.mil.nz](http://defence.health.mil.nz)

## Family Member

### In an emergency Call 111

**0800NZDF4U** (0800 693348) is a confidential helpline offering 24/7 telephone support and up to 3 face to face confidential sessions with a trained counsellor. It is available to all members of the defence community including all uniformed personnel, defence civilians, veterans and families. The service is available to support you about any personal health concerns or for advice if you have concerns about your defence partner or other family member.  
Call: 0800NZDF4U (0800 693348)

**Force4Families** The NZDF Force 4 Families website contains a range of information about additional resources and services here (<http://nzdf.mil.nz/families/>)

**GP** If you are experiencing a health concern you are encouraged to speak to a General Practitioner (GP/doctor). Family physicians are often the first contact for people experiencing mental or physical health problems. This individual will either provide the right assistance or refer you to the most appropriate resources. If you are new to the NZDF community or having difficulty accessing a GP, you can also contact your local Defence Community Coordinator (DCC) located in camps and bases or find out more information here (<https://www.govt.nz/browse/health-system/gps-and-prescriptions/find-a-doctor/>)

**NZDF Health Support** If you have concerns about how your defence partner or family member is going you can seek advice from a defence social worker or chaplain. This individual will either provide the required assistance or refer the member to the most appropriate resource.

**No Duff** No Duff provides immediate buddy support for those in need (all serving and retired members of the NZDF and concerned family members). It is operated by a group of volunteers across NZ, the majority of whom are operationally experienced, both serving and former members of the NZDF. You can find out more about No Duff here (<https://www.noduff.org/>) or by email [noduff.ngo@gmail.com](mailto:noduff.ngo@gmail.com) Call: 022 3071557

**Unsure who to talk to or if need help?** If you are not sure if you need help or how to approach this you can also talk to your someone you trust (your boss at work, a buddy, partner or other family member).

**Other Resources** Check out a list of some of the other available resources (useful phone lines, apps, websites) in the next pages. For free general health advice you can call the NZ Healthline 0800 611116. This is a service is operated by health professionals and provides 24/7 health advice. Further information and resources can be found at the NZDF health website [defence.health.mil.nz](http://defence.health.mil.nz)

## **Veteran/Retired Defence member**

### **In an emergency Call 111**

**0800NZDF4U** (0800 693348) is a confidential helpline offering 24/7 telephone support and up to 3 face to face confidential sessions with a trained counsellor. It is available to all members of the defence community including all uniformed personnel, defence civilians, veterans and families.

Call: 0800NZDF4U (0800 693348)

**Veteran Affairs (Veterans Only).** Veteran Affairs provide a range of health support and other assistance to veterans. You can access this support by calling 08004838378. You can find out more about the services VA provide and eligibility for veterans support here. (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/>)

**RSA** The Returned Services Association offers a range of services and support to veterans and serving and retired members of the NZDF. You can find out more about these services here. (<http://rsa.org.nz/>)

**No Duff** No Duff provides immediate buddy support for those in need (all serving and retired members of the NZDF). It is operated by a group of volunteers across NZ, the majority of whom are operationally experienced, both serving and former members of the NZDF. You can find out more about No Duff here (<https://www.noduff.org/>) or by email [noduff.ngo@gmail.com](mailto:noduff.ngo@gmail.com)

Call: 022 3071557

**GP** If you are experiencing a health concern that is unrelated to your military service you are encouraged to speak to a General Practitioner (GP/doctor). Family physicians are often the first contact for people experiencing mental or

physical health problems. This individual will either provide the right assistance or refer you to the most appropriate resources. If you are new to the NZDF community or having difficulty accessing a GP, you can also contact your local Defence Community Coordinator (DCC) located in camps and bases or find out more information here (<https://www.govt.nz/browse/health-system/gps-and-prescriptions/find-a-doctor/>)

**Unsure who to talk to or if need help?** If you are not sure if you need help or how to approach this you can also talk to your boss, local Defence Community Coordinator (located in every camp and base), or someone else you trust (a buddy, partner or other family member).

**Other Resources** Check out a list of some of the other available resources (useful phone lines, apps, websites) in the next pages. For free general health advice you can call the NZ Healthline 0800 611116. This is a service is operated by health professionals and provides 24/7 health advice. Further information and resources can be found at the NZDF health website [defence.health.mil.nz](http://defence.health.mil.nz)

## Phone lines

**For any crisis, including medical emergencies, call 111**

WHO	NUMBER TO CALL	ABOUT
Regular Forces, Civilians, Reserve Forces, Veterans and Families	0800 NZDF4U (0800 693 348)	Confidential 24/7 help line service staffed by trained health professionals for Veterans, all members of the NZDF and their families
Civilians	0508 664 981 (Vitae)	24/7 advice line for civilian pers
Veterans	0800 VETERANS	Confidential nation-wide support service for eligible member of the serving and ex-serving community
Useful for all (including Reserve Forces and Families)		
Lifeline	0800 54 33 54	Confidential counselling service
Healthline	0800 611116	Free health advice from trained registered nurses 24/7
SHINE	0508 744633	Domestic abuse helpline 9am – 11pm 7 days
Depression helpline	0800 111757	24/7 telephone counselling support for those experiencing depression
Womens Refuge	0800 REFUGE or 0800 733843	24 hour crisis line for women dealing with violence in their life
Mensline	0800 636754	Helpline for men
Alcohol drug helpline	0800 787797	27/7 confidential non-judgmental help and advice
Youthline	0800 376663 (or text 234)	24/7 helpline
Citizens Advice Bureau	0800 367222	Free independent service to help people understand their rights and obligations' and to provide the confidence and support to take action
Parent Helpline	0800 568856	Support, practical advice and strategies for all parenting issues



## Appendix 2: Useful websites, tools and apps

There are a range of useful websites that have information and tools for managing and building physical and mental health.

### Free downloadable phone apps:



**Battle Buddy (US)** – tools and information needed to assist your buddy during a crisis



**Breathe2Relax** – portable stress management tool



**Calm** – tools to meditate, sleep and relax



**CBT-I Coach** – improving sleep habits and dealing with insomnia



**Force Fit** – building your fitness



**Headspace** – guided meditation



**High Res** – tools for managing daily stress and building resilience



**Life Armour (US)** – tools for managing common mental health concerns



**Living Well** – practical resources and support and suggestions to support living a healthier lifestyle



**Lose It** – weight loss programme and calorie counting



**Mindshift** – aims to help teens and young adults cope with stress and anxiety. Issues: anxiety, depression, general well-being, head injury, post-traumatic stress, and stress



**Mood tracker** – tool for tracking emotional experiences over time



**MYRIVR** is an app which enables the community to connect to and self-refer to services, based on needs



**Nike Plus Run** – running and motivation related tips and tools



**Nike Training** – workouts and fitness plans



**Operation Life (AUS)** – self-help tools for dealing with suicidal thoughts



**Performance Triad** – information and tips for healthy habits including sleep, nutrition & activity



**PTSD Coach** – designed for Veterans and military Service Members who have, or may have, PTSD or traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



**Sesame St for Military Families (US)** – resources for children managing challenges of military life (including moving houses and deployments)



**Virtual Hopebox** – resilience tools

<http://myhealthapps.net/#> UK-based directory of useful health apps

## Useful Websites

### NZDF

#### Internal

[www.nzdf.mil.nz/families/default.htm](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/families/default.htm)

– NZDF Intranet Force4Families site

<http://orgs/sites/nzdf-mh/default.aspx>

– NZDF Intranet Mental Health site

#### External

<http://health.nzdf.mil.nz>

<http://nzdf.mil.nz/families>

<http://homebase.mil.nz/>

### General Health information, stories and tools

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living>

– Information about health issues and healthy living

<http://menshealthnz.org.nz/health-topics>

– Information about men's health issues

[www.hpa.org.nz/](http://www.hpa.org.nz/)

– Health Promotion Agency – Health information for New Zealanders

[www.livingwell.org.au](http://www.livingwell.org.au)

– Practical resources and support for men

<http://www.myrivr.co.nz>

– MYRIVR gives you access to over 20,000 helpers from more than 7,000 health and social services across NZ

<https://health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services>

– Information about finding a GP, fees and supporting services

<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz>

– Information about healthcare providers, services and common treatments

## **Nutrition and Exercise**

[www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition](http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition)

- The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) website contains a range of resources, including fact sheets, recipes, and research, and a detailed supplement and sports food section.

[http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/eating-activity-guidelinesfor-new-zealand-adults-oct15\\_0.pdf](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/eating-activity-guidelinesfor-new-zealand-adults-oct15_0.pdf)

<https://dietitians.org.nz/public-info/>

- Useful info and apps

<http://gmb.io/ff/>

- GMB Focused Flexibility

[www.stack.com/c/flexibility-training](http://www.stack.com/c/flexibility-training)

- Stack Flexibility

## **Alcohol**

[www.alcohol.org.nz](http://www.alcohol.org.nz)

- Information, advice, research & resources to help prevent & reduce alcohol-related harm

## **Gambling**

[www.choicenotchance.org.nz](http://www.choicenotchance.org.nz)

- Support for problems with gambling

## **Mental Health, Resilience and Relaxation**

[www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz)

- Mental Health Foundation – information, stories, tools and support

[www.TheLowdown.co.nz](http://www.TheLowdown.co.nz)

- Information, stories, and interactive site designed for young people dealing with daily living

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

- Information about recognising and managing anxiety and depression (Australia)

**[www.likeminds.org.nz](http://www.likeminds.org.nz)**

- Aims to address stigma and discrimination sometimes associated with mental illness, contains resources, help options and stories from people with mental illness

**[www.livemoreawesome.com](http://www.livemoreawesome.com)**

- Information about managing depression, initiatives and events

**<https://www.leva.co.nz/>**

- Support for Pasifika families and communities to build positive health and wellbeing outcomes

**<https://thiswayup.org.au>**

- Online self help courses (Australia)

**<https://www.headspace.com/>**

- Meditation and mindfulness made easy

**[www.buddify.com](http://www.buddify.com)**

- Mindfulness tools

**[https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/21/mindfulness?gclid=CjwKCAiAj53SBRBcEiwAT-3A2O5M9eBBLU1LIO\\_yllE8auQHknTyQAviThY-6MLVM9FOV5N15tfyFRoCbPkQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/21/mindfulness?gclid=CjwKCAiAj53SBRBcEiwAT-3A2O5M9eBBLU1LIO_yllE8auQHknTyQAviThY-6MLVM9FOV5N15tfyFRoCbPkQAvD_BwE)**

- Mindfulness tools

**[www.depression.org.nz](http://www.depression.org.nz)**

- Information, resources and support

**[www.calm.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.calm.auckland.ac.nz)**

- Computer Assisted Learning for the Mind (University of Auckland)

**[www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh)**

- Self-help resources for recognising and managing stress (Ministry of Health)

**<http://mentalhealth.intuto.com/public/course/784686/>**

- Mental Health in the Workplace – Employee toolkit produced by the MHF and State Services Commission containing info about mental health problems in the workplace, and about your rights and responsibilities as an employee

<http://www.vitalityworks.co.nz/mental-wellbeing-for-new-zealand-workplaces/>

- Tips for creating a mentally healthy workforce

<http://www.depressiontoolkit.org/>

- Tools to learn how to manage mild to moderate stress and depressive symptoms

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/controlling-anger/>

- tips for controlling anger

## **Social Support Services**

<http://www.cab.org.nz/Pages/home.aspx>

- Information and advice, community directory

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/>

- Social support services and entitlements

## **Finances**

<https://www.sorted.org.nz/Sorted>

- Free website with a range of Information, tools, financial guides, and links to additional resources

<http://www.moneyforce.org.ok/>

- UK based site for military personnel

[www.cab.org.nz](http://www.cab.org.nz)

- Citizens Advice Bureau

## **Families and Relationships**

[www.nzdf.mil.nz/families/default.htm](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/families/default.htm)

- Information and resource site for family members (NZDF)

[www.supportingfamilies.org.nz](http://www.supportingfamilies.org.nz)

- Support, information and resources for those supporting family members with mental illness

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

- Support for the military community (US)

[www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/tlc#](http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/tlc#)

- Resources to support military families including deployments, homecomings, grief, injuries, and self-expression (US)

<http://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau-separating-or-getting-divorced/realionship-counselling>

- List of community organisations and local support

[www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz)

- Includes a range of services to help including family violence programs

[www.barnardos.org.nz](http://www.barnardos.org.nz)

- Barnardos provide support and advice for parents, children and families.

[www.familyworks.org.nz](http://www.familyworks.org.nz)

- Provides counselling for families and parenting programmes

[www.skylight.org.nz](http://www.skylight.org.nz)

- Offers services to those facing tough times of change, loss, trauma and grief. Whatever the cause, and whatever their age (including for children)

[www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/separating-or-getting-divorced/relationship-counselling/](http://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/separating-or-getting-divorced/relationship-counselling/)

- Relationship support

## Parenting

[www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html)

- Tips for parents to help their children stay safe in the digital world

[www.parenthelp.org.nz](http://www.parenthelp.org.nz)

- Parent Help

[www.skylight.org.nz](http://www.skylight.org.nz)

- Skylight provides resources for parents such as tips for setting limits or helping children deal with separation

[www.standforchildren.org.nz](http://www.standforchildren.org.nz)

- Stand delivers family development programmes and home and school based social work services

<http://www.kiwifamilies.co.nz/articles/relationship-services>

– Information about maintaining healthy relationships

[www.familyservices.govt.nz](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz)

– A range of providers and community support groups in your community across all of NZ

[www.skip.org.nz](http://www.skip.org.nz)

– Tips for under 5's

## **Youth and Children**

[www.sparx.org.nz](http://www.sparx.org.nz)

– Online tool for young people sponsored by Ministry of Health

[www.headspace.org.nz](http://www.headspace.org.nz)

– Website for young people for when life gets stressful

<http://reachout.com>

– Australian youth mental health information service that includes a variety of apps and tools for young people

## **Deployments**

<http://afterdeployment.dcoe.mil/>

– US site that provides a range of useful information for those returning from deployments (for military personnel and families)

<http://homebase.mil.nz/>

– HomeBase provides info and support for the NZDF's deployment community, which includes all our deployed personnel, their families and those who work to support them while they are away

## **NZDF Connections**

<http://www.defencecareers.mil.nz/reserves>

– Information about joining the Reserves

<http://www.defencecareers.mil.nz/reenlist-overseas>

– Information about re-enlisting

<http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/personnel-records/nzdf-archives/>

– How to apply for military records and medals

<http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/news/default.htm>

- Keeping connected with what is happening in the NZDF

<http://rsa.org.nz/About-the-RSA>

- Join the RSA to maintain connections and access or contribute community support

<http://fallenheroes.org.nz/about/>

- Trust set up to fund projects that make a real difference to the lives of NZDF Fallen Heroes and their families

## Transition Support

[www.maketheconnection.net](http://www.maketheconnection.net)

- US Army website that provides useful videos from personnel who have transitioned.

## Veterans

[www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz)

- Site for veterans (NZ)

[rsa.org.nz/support](http://rsa.org.nz/support)

- RSA offers a range of support services to current and former service personnel of all ages, and their dependents. RSA support and advocacy is free and you do not need to be a member of the RSA to request assistance. You can find more about the services they provide on their website or call them (04 384 7994) to find out the location of your nearest RSA

<http://at-ease.dva.gov.au>

- Site for veterans (Australia)

<http://maketheconnection.net>

- US Army website that provides useful videos from personnel who have transitioned

[www.noduff.co.nz](http://www.noduff.co.nz)

- No Duff is a volunteer Veterans NGO that provides immediate welfare assistance and support to past and present members of the NZDF. To contact your local NO DUFF NZ volunteer email: [noduff.ngo@gmail.com](mailto:noduff.ngo@gmail.com) Phone No Duff: 022 307 1557



## Appendix 3: Self assessment tools

### Mental Health Continuum Self-Assessment Tool

Rate where you think you are on each of the six dimensions based on the last 2-4 weeks. Remember where we sit changes depending on what is going on in our lives so don't worry if you're not tracking so well at the moment. Be honest as this will help you to understand what you can do to shift back into the green.

#### What should I do?

##### Green

##### Healthy adaptive coping

The same tools we use as buffers in times of challenge will also help us to thrive & perform to our potential every day. Maintain a positive attitude, nurture support systems, focus on the task in hand and break problems into manageable tasks. Continue to strengthen resilience and build peak performance.

##### Yellow

##### Mild, common and reversible distress or impairment

Recognise limits and take breaks. Get adequate rest, food, exercise. Identify and resolve problems early. Use self-management tools and support strategies to build mental health.

##### Orange

##### Severe, persistent injury or impairment

Make self-care a priority, maintain social contacts; don't withdraw. Use self-management tools and support strategies to build mental health. Talk to someone and seek professional help if you are worried.

##### Red

##### Clinical illnesses and disorders requiring more concentrated medical care

Talk to someone you trust and seek help from a mental health professional. Look at Appendix 1 for resources and how to access them.



## Resilience Self-Assessment Tool

Complete and score the assessment below to accurately determine your current resilience levels. This will help you to identify possible areas on which you need to focus to help you through change.

**Score each resilience statement as follows:**

0 = Strongly Disagree

1 = Somewhat Disagree

2 = Somewhat Agree

3 = Strongly Agree

Ser	Resilience Statement	Score
1	I approach new situations with enthusiasm.	
2	I enjoy achieving the goals I have set.	
3	I can apply the organisations values in my work.	
4	I express my feelings appropriately.	
5	I enjoy learning new things.	
6	I take responsibility for my results.	
7	I ask for support when I need it.	
8	I recognise when I am stressed.	
9	I believe I can influence the direction I take in life.	
10	I actively maintain contact with others.	
11	I eat a well balanced diet.	
12	I take time out for myself when needed.	
13	I think challenges offer me some lessons.	
14	I know my own strengths & weaknesses.	
15	I know how to relax under pressure.	
16	I have a positive view of my future.	
17	I have a plan for my work tasks.	
18	I keep myself physically fit.	
19	I am able to retain a positive outlook during change.	
20	I know what the purpose of my job is.	
21	I build strong networks.	
22	I am realistic about what is possible.	
23	I show empathy to others' difficulties and concerns.	
24	I have a strong set of beliefs that I follow.	
25	I am generally optimistic.	
26	I bounce back from difficulties.	
27	I act when opportunities arise.	
28	I act decisively when things are not working.	
29	I undertake activities outside work for my own enjoyment.	
30	I organise my time and prioritise tasks.	
	<b>Total Resilience Score:</b>	
	<b>Match your score against the table on the next page</b>	

## How well am I doing with my resilience?

Score	Resilience Assessment
<b>0-20</b>	You struggle with change and uncertainty and might find things feel stressful at times. You probably prefer life to be a bit more certain and stable so that you can relax and look forward to things. It is possible you find yourself spending a lot of time feeling as though everything is a struggle. You may feel that things “happen” to you and around you because you have no control or influence. You can definitely help yourself by identifying areas where you want to make improvements. You may find it helpful to develop a plan of action. It might help to get someone to support you with it, as a coach or mentor.
<b>21-45</b>	You have some skills and strategies for handling pressure, tough times and difficulties. However, they probably tend to come and go, especially if you feel as though things are mounting up. When this happens, you find it harder to think and act positively. You may have difficulty coping with the demands you feel are being made of you. Think about where you can take some actions to raise your scores and start to increase your personal resilience.
<b>46-70</b>	Many people would probably think that you are quite good at dealing with change, challenge and pressure because you are usually able to use your resources to do so. On balance, you are more positive in the way you view things, and able to handle set-backs without getting too down about life. Being able to do this some of the time does tell you that you could do it more often, and become even more resilient in the face of difficulties. Think about specific elements that might need attention, and plan to start doing something about them.
<b>70-90</b>	You have a number of skills and personal qualities which help you to cope with pressure, from whatever source. In fact, you probably quite enjoy challenge and change and handle yourself confidently. You recognise that you are able to take responsibility for yourself, your thoughts and your feelings. This helps you maintain a resilient attitude and to stay positive and have a strong sense of purpose and direction.

The checklists below are designed to help you reflect on and plan to build your resilience.<sup>5</sup> Research suggests that focusing on these areas will help build your resilience.

Ser	Checklist 1 – Personal	Checklist 2 – In my team at work	Checklist 3 – My work pattern
1	I take short breaks regularly to stay fresh.	I take an interest in the experiences and feelings of colleagues.	I am able to prioritise and re-prioritise activities.
2	I exercise or walk during the day.	I welcome new members of staff, inform them of protocol, and check on how they are settling in.	I can say no to taking on more work.
3	I feel fresh and refreshed.	I participate in social activities associated with the workplace.	I ask for help or support.
4	I express positive comments about my work, my colleagues and my own value.	I practice active listening skills in discussions.	I am responsive to unexpected requests.
5	I laugh or smile frequently.	I am reflective (rather than abrupt) in conversations with peers.	I disclose needs and perspectives or opinions in constructive and open ways.
6	I engage in social and pleasurable activities away from work.	I spend time with colleagues during the day.	I keep lists, update calendars and plan ahead.
7	I spend enough time away from work to be in regular contact with partner, family and friends.	I recognise when colleagues need time to be alone or not disturbed.	I come to work and leave work within standard working hours.
8	I reflect on my feelings regularly.	I respect the privacy of team members.	I am able to complete work schedules without needing to work overtime or take work home.
9	I am planning for a vacation.	I celebrate special events with team members.	I take leave when it is due and disconnect completely from work.
10	I spend quiet time listening to music, reading, in reflection, meditation or in prayer.	I respect and try to understand differences between team members.	I share with my manager how I prefer to be managed.
11		I encourage colleagues to look after themselves.	I reflect on my work practices.
12		I consult with colleagues for their opinions on work issues.	I think about future goals or desired vocational pathways.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Save the Children Fund USA Staff Support Programme Stratos NZ.

## Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

The questions below ask about your alcohol use. When answering the following questions use the guidelines below regarding the size of a standard drink. A standard drink measures the amount of alcohol, not the amount of liquid you are drinking.

1	How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?  If you never drink please answer 'never' then skip to the next section.	Never	1 per month or less	2-4 times per month	2-3 times per week	4 or more time per week
2	How many standard drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?	1 or 2	3 or 4	5 or 6	7 to 9	10+

Thinking of your alcohol consumption:					
Scoring	0	1	2	3	4
	Never	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	Twice a week or more
3	How often do you have six or more standard drinks on one occasion?				
4	How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?				
5	How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?				
6	How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?				
7	How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?				

<b>8</b>	How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?					
<b>9</b>	Have you or someone else been injured because of your drinking?					
<b>10</b>	Has a relative, friend, doctor, or other health care worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?					
<p><b>To assess your current levels of alcohol risk add up the scores from items 3-10. The score of each item is equal to the number in the circle that you selected (e.g., for items 3-8, never = 0, twice a week or more = 4).</b></p> <p><b>See how you rate on the next page.</b></p>						<p><b>Score =</b></p>

## AUDIT Alcohol Use

Score	Risk	Action
<b>0 - 7</b>	Low risk	This is the healthiest level of drinking, but check the additional risks below to make sure you are not at elevated levels of risk taking.
<b>8- 15</b>	Medium	Your drinking has the potential to cause harm, consider low risk drinking, and try the tips below for change.
<b>16 and above</b>	High risk	This level of risk indicates that you are likely damaging your health and wellbeing with your drinking. Seriously consider changing these behaviours. Talk to your doctor or health professional for additional advice.

## **Low risk guidelines**

Low-risk drinking to reduce the lifetime risk of harm from disease or injury for healthy men and women is:

- on any day no more than 2 standard drinks.

Low risk drinking to reduce the harm of injury or death on any one occasion of drinking is:

- no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day (on a special occasion, not regular drinking) – these drinks should be spread out over several hours;
- having regular alcohol-free days.

For women who are planning to become pregnant, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding, no alcohol is the safest option.

## **Additional risks**

### **Caution:**

- Do you have a health condition made worse by alcohol e.g. diabetes, hepatitis, pancreatitis etc.?
- Do you have heart disease, high blood pressure or are gaining weight?
- Are you on medication?
- Do you suffer from depression, anxiety, or PTSD?
- Do you experience mood swings or irritability?
- Do you have trouble sleeping?
- Are you over 65?

Even if you are in the low risk category you may need to drink less if you are in one of the above groups that are more susceptible to the effects of alcohol. Talk to your doctor or other health professional.

## Appendix 4: Tips for Getting and Staying Active

### Tips to help you get active

- Diary exercise like you would any other important meeting.
- Make sure you've got comfortable shoes/clothes and shower gear if you need it
- Build physical activity into your daily life.
- Plan to do more jobs around the garden and house.
- Walk/cycle to work or park further away and walk the last bit of your commute.
- Take the stairs.
- Walk to see a colleague rather than calling or emailing.
- Have walking meetings.
- 'Play' more – with the kids, with the dog, or on your own.
- Create a buddy system with friends, family or colleagues to encourage you to exercise more.
- Set a goal – it might be to walk 3 times next week, or to run the New York Marathon next year!

### Tips to help you stay active

- **Start slowly.** When we become much more active than usual, the risk of injury goes up. If you're just getting into high-intensity aerobic exercise like running, it's important to pace yourself and not overdo it.
- **Add variety.** With consistent training the body will adapt to a particular exercise, which is why it is important to vary the routine. This will also help you stay motivated. Consider cross-training, adding new activities and exercises, or just doing something physical for fun.
- **Fuel your body** to optimize your health and performance. What you eat and drink is just as important as when and how much you eat and drink. Eating

more calories than you burn will increase body weight, but consuming too few calories will likely cause you to feel tired and perform poorly.

- **Minimise the likelihood of Injury.** If you have a health condition or have been injured, talk to your doctor about an appropriate fitness programme for you. Injuries can occur during fitness training, but there are a few easy steps we can take to lower our risk of getting hurt:
  - **Listen to Your Body.** Increasing physical activity levels suddenly (in volume and/or intensity), extending duration and not allowing sufficient time for recovery can all lead to overtraining and injury. Listen to the warning signs your body gives you. If your body is tired or too sore from a previous workout, take a day off, cross-train, or work out at a much lower intensity.
  - **Warm Up and Cool Down.** Every workout should begin with a warm up, which is necessary to prepare the body for exercise by increasing heart rate and blood flow to working muscles. Every workout should end with a cool down. Time spent performing five to 10 minutes of low-intensity cardio activity followed by stretching immediately after the workout will decrease muscle soreness and aid in recovery, both helping to prepare the body for the next workout. Read more about stretching at <https://fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2015/04/24/injury-preventing-exercises.aspx>
- **Stay hydrated.** This means drinking enough water/fluids before, during and after exercising. Experts generally recommend drinking about 6-8 cups (1.5-2L) of water throughout the day. However, if it is hot or you are exercising or playing sport you may need more. A good indicator of your hydration is the colour of your urine – it should be pale yellow; if it is dark yellow you are dehydrated.



**See page 17 for more tips about hydration.**

## What if you haven't got time?

First ask yourself “have you really not got time”, or is something else getting in the way? If work, a dislike of exercise, poor organisation, or family commitments putting you off, take a step back and look for solutions. Sometimes exercise itself can improve your efficiency at work or home. Exercise that clears your head may help you focus so that the time taken to exercise is actually earned back due to greater productivity.

If time is still an issue, exercise while you work or are doing other jobs. Do squats while you brush your teeth, calf raises while you wash up, or prone holds while you watch TV. Any exercise is better than none so do bite size chunks when you can and they'll soon add up.

If time is still an issue, low-volume **High Intensity Interval training or HIIT** is an efficient way to train. Alternating intense bursts of activity with low intensity recovery periods can improve cardio-respiratory fitness and help control blood sugar levels and blood pressure. HIIT has also been shown to reduce injury risk and improve mental health. All camps and bases have Physical Training Instructors and they are a great resource. They can advise if HIIT is right for you and provide you with sessions to suit your fitness and your goals.

**Remember, do not launch into strenuous physical activity if you are unwell or out of condition.**

### What is your “fitness age”?

A recent study of fitness and lifespan suggests that a person's so-called fitness age is a better predictor of longevity than chronological age. And the good news is that unlike your actual age, your fitness age can decrease. Fitness age is determined primarily by your VO<sub>2</sub>max, which is a measure of your body's ability to take in and utilize oxygen. VO<sub>2</sub>max indicates your current cardiovascular endurance.

Getting your VO<sub>2</sub>max accurately assessed can be expensive and time consuming but this online tool estimates your VO<sub>2</sub>max based on factors such as your age, gender, waist circumference and exercise habits. It's not perfect but it will give you an idea. <https://www.worldfitnesslevel.org/#/>

People with a fitness age significantly below their chronological age have a significantly reduced risk of dying prematurely... good incentive to exercise!



## Appendix 5: Nutrition

### Top 10 Tips

1. Include protein in all meals and snacks
  - Examples:
    - lean meat
    - fish
    - chicken
    - eggs
    - yoghurt
    - nuts
    - seeds
    - milk
    - cheese
  - Protein provides a high satiety value (fills you up), is important for muscle growth and repair following physical activity and supports the immune system.
2. Beware liquid calories
  - Examples:
    - fizzy drinks
    - smoothies
    - cordial
    - flavoured milk
    - fruit juice
    - energy drinks
    - milk shakes
    - sports drinks
  - Remove/reduce these drinks from your diet as they contribute a significant amount of sugar and total calories with little other nutrition benefit.
  - Water is the number one choice.
3. Eat a rainbow
  - Eat at least 3-4 servings of non-starchy vegetables each day and 3-4 servings of fruit spread throughout the day.
  - Different coloured fruit and vegetables have different vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals to support health and wellbeing.



#### 4. Focus on carbohydrate quality

- Examples:

- whole fruit and vegetables (including starchy vegetables)
  - wholegrain bread
  - legumes
  - kidney beans
  - oats
  - chickpeas
  - lentils
- Whole and minimally processed carbohydrates are a great source of dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals for optimal health.
  - A high fibre diet improves blood cholesterol, blood sugars, blood pressure and bowel health; and also promotes fullness to assist weight management.

**5. Include healthy fats**

- Examples – avocados, olives, nuts, seeds, fish and all of their oils and butters (e.g. olive oil and peanut butter)
- These foods are important in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, improve blood cholesterol, reduce inflammation, enhance the flavour of food and contribute essential fatty acids (omega 3 and omega 6).

**6. Fight the white**

- Minimise refined and processed carbohydrates high in sugar, such as bakery and confectionary products, white bread, rice, pasta, breakfast cereals and sugar sweetened beverages.
- These foods will give you a quick sugar hit, followed quickly by a drop in energy levels. They also increase your risk of excess weight gain, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and stroke).

**7. Reduce highly processed foods**

- If the label has more than 5-10 ingredients or you can't pronounce the ingredients then avoid as much as possible. Focus on foods that don't have ingredient lists, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, chicken, eggs, nuts and legumes.
- Choose foods that are close to their natural state to avoid consuming excess sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.
- Example:
  - Excellent    Fresh tomatoes
  - Good        Canned whole tomatoes
  - Limit        Tomato sauce

## 8. Choose smart snacks

- Snacks are everyday foods versus treats which are occasional foods. Snacks provide opportunities to improve overall nutrient intake and boost energy and concentration levels.
- Keep healthy snacks handy, such as fresh fruit, nuts, hard boiled eggs, cheese, plain yoghurt, vegetable sticks with hummus/peanut butter/avocado or cottage cheese.

## 9. Eat mindfully

- Be aware of all the food you eat during the day.
- Sit down for meals and snacks and limit distractions, such as computer, TV, tablets, magazines etc.
- Enjoy food with other people.

## 10. The sunshine vitamin

- Vitamin D occurs naturally in very few foods – so it's important to get it from sensible sun exposure.
- Vitamin D is essential for bone health and has been associated with a range of other health benefits including improved immune function to fight colds and infection; improved cardiovascular function; mood; and muscle strength.

For information about the latest research and trends check out:

Ministry of Health 'Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults'

Authority Nutrition (<http://healthline.com/nutrition>) – evidence based nutrition and health information

Diet doctor (<http://www.dietdoctor.com>) – recipes, articles

## Appendix 6: More Sleep Tips

### Falling Asleep

Unfortunately getting to sleep is one of those cases where 'the harder you try, the harder it is.' We all know that concentrating on or worrying about falling asleep makes the achievement even more elusive. Checking the clock only to realise you've been in bed for 45-minutes without nodding off can be frustrating and only serves to make you more alert. Similarly, for many, lying in bed is the first time all day that they have time to think. It can be hard to relax with the barrage of important, but non-urgent thoughts competing for your attention. Worries, responsibilities and to-do lists can all start ruminating in our brain and preventing sleep. It can be hard to stop counterproductive thoughts entering our minds, so instead of simply trying to block them, we can replace them with calming, sleep-inducing alternatives. Thought exercises that occupy sufficient cognitive space to hold off unwanted thoughts may be effective tools. This is where the age-old advice of counting sheep comes in but there are some (arguably more effective) alternatives you can try. Before doing any of these techniques get into the position in which you will fall asleep. Don't worry if your mind wanders just gently bring it back to the activity and pick up where you left off.

- **Imagine a place where you feel relaxed.** What does it feel, look, sound and smell like? It could be your favourite beach, a waterfall in the bush or anywhere you feel calm. It can be real or imagined but try to go into so much detail that you feel as though you really are there.
- **Imagine a process.** It may be a walk you take regularly, a task you do often that has many small steps or a routine you go through. Picture the process in detail, paying attention to minute details and imagine that you are actually going through the motions.

- **Try progressive relaxation.** Imagine your body relaxing one part at a time from your toes to your head. Go slowly and remember to relax even your jaw, eyes and the muscles around your skull. You may find it easiest to contract a muscle as tight as you can and then let go or simply will the muscle to relax. As you let go of tension you may feel as though your body is becoming heavier, this is a sign that it's working. Imagine yourself slowly sinking deeper into your mattress.
- **Try counting backwards.** Start at 1000 and count backwards in 7's. For a slightly easier version try starting at 300 and subtracting in 3's. Along with distracting you the exercise may give you an outlet for your stress.
- **What are you grateful for?** While it may sound like an American holiday tradition, taking the time to consider three things that you are thankful for – be they big or small – can put you into a positive state of mind. If done regularly, this exercise can help you approach sleep with a more positive mindset.
- Focus on your breath with this technique<sup>6</sup>:

### **Rhythmic Circular Breathing for Sleep.**

Feel the breath filling up slowly from the diaphragm through your chest to your mouth, then, as you breathe out, imagine yourself blowing the breath out of your mouth, round in a circle back and through an imaginary hole in your tummy to the diaphragm. Take the rhythm fairly slowly. Now you understand the principle, try it. Breathe in from the diaphragm slowly through the chest to the mouth, counting to four and blow it back to the diaphragm in another count of four. Pick your most comfortable, fairly slow, rhythm. The most important part of this is the full involvement of the mind in the circular process of breathing. Keep a mental picture of the circle in your mind and follow it round at all times, making sure that the mind concentrates on and thinks only of this circular rhythm. Then, as there is nothing more interesting going on, you will fall asleep.

## Tips for waking up

- **Don't hit snooze.** Although it's tempting to stay in bed for as long as possible, sleeping in short intervals until you absolutely have to get up will not do you any favours. Try an alarm app that requires you to solve a problem or take a photo of something before it will turn off. This will force you to wake up fully and give you more time for a low stress morning routine.
- **Get up when you first wake up.** When you first wake up your head is free from clutter and distraction use this to your advantage. Instead of reaching straight for your phone before you get out of bed, get up and think through your day ahead while you get ready.
- **Make your bed.** A simple but effective way to start off a productive and organised day. Getting dressed as soon as you get up has a similar effect.
- **Open the curtains or turn on the lights.** Darkness causes an increase in the hormone melatonin that helps us fall asleep. Light has the opposite effect. Exposing yourself to bright light early in the morning tells your body it's time
- **Talk to someone.** Social contact in the morning can help to break your morning slumber. Alternatively, play some upbeat music.
- **Wash you face with cold water.**
- **Physical activity.** It doesn't have to be much but a brief bout of exercise can speed up the waking process and make you feel more alert.

## Sleep for Ops<sup>7</sup>

Operational environments present unique challenges to personal trying get enough sleep. Lack of a safe environment, worry about distant family, anticipation, fear, loud noises, inability to switch-off, and requirement to be ready to move at all times make achieving a good night's sleep difficult even when time allows it. Additionally, the nature of ops accelerates the development of fatigue making the need for sleep even greater than normal. Three of the main causes of fatigue:

1. Cognitive – emotional strain and mental demands
2. Physical - strenuous or prolonged physical activity
3. Diet - inadequate nutrition and dehydration

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6 Livingston-Booth (1985).

7 Murphy, P. J. (2002).

During operations the consequences of inadequate sleep impair one's ability to perform in a potentially life-threatening environment. This has potentially devastating consequences for individuals and the organisation. For example, one study found that 34% of US soldiers serving in Iraq and Kuwait during 2003 reported having fallen asleep at least once while they were supposed to be awake. Other dangers are micro-sleeps (attentional lapses), low vigilance, poor decision making and ethical judgement.

While you are deployed you may have limited or no control over when and where you sleep but there are things that you can do before deployment to prepare. Developing healthy sleep habits, understanding your own sleep needs, recognising signs that you are sleep deprived and being well-rested prior to deployment is important. Exercises are a good way to practice healthy sleep in an operational environment and develop strategies to help you cope.

**Try to:**

- Get at least 8 hours sleep a night for 7 days before an operation.
- Develop relaxation techniques to help you put stressful thoughts out of your mind at the end of the day.
- Use down time to sleep rather than engaging in time-filling tasks such as playing video games.
- Put the effort in to make your sleeping space as conducive to sleep as possible – this may mean spending an extra few minutes before going to sleep but the quality of your sleep will benefit

## **Sleep & Shift Work**

Behavioural strategies for the management of shift work in the military:

- Maintain healthy sleep habits and keep track of how much sleep you are getting.
- Try to minimise the frequency of shift changes to less than once per month.
- On days off keep to a consistent sleep schedule that, if feasible, allows your sleep times to overlap on both workdays and non-workdays.
- Take a nap before your shift, use bright light at the start of the shift, avoid bright light in the later part of the shift and wear sunglasses if driving home during bright morning hours to trick your body into preparing for sleep.

- After your shift find a quiet place to sleep or wear earplugs so that you do not get disrupted.
- Due to the difficulty of sleeping outside of your circadian rhythm it will take longer to get adequate sleep so allocate 9-10 hours in bed to get the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep

### **Sleep Deprivation and Executive Function<sup>9</sup>**

Sleep deprivation impairs our higher order thinking such as decision making, planning and execution. These functions occur in the brain's pre-frontal cortex. Because of its importance in our daily lives and the role of sleep in recovery from and preparation for wake, this region is thought to be particularly susceptible to sleep deprivation. In a military setting this is particularly dangerous given the nature of our work. Sleep deprivation can lead to:

- Impaired ability to communicate effectively – poor detection of social cues and lower inhibition of inappropriate behaviour
- Lack of innovation
- Inflexibility of thought processes
- Getting side-tracked by distraction
- Over-reliance on previous strategies – sticking with something that has worked before
- Unwillingness to try out novel strategies
- Unreliable memory for when events occurred – better at remembering what happened than when it happened
- Change in mood (loss of empathy with colleagues)
- Inability to deal with surprise
- Poorer appreciation of one's own strengths and weaknesses - may get in over your head
- Impaired risk assessment – underestimation of risk
- Failure to revise strategies following new information – ignoring the significance of new Intel and sticking with plan A.

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8 Murphy, P. J. (2002).

9 Harrison, Y., & Horne, J. A. (2000).

## Countermeasures to Sleep Deprivation<sup>10</sup>

The number one remedy for sleepiness is, without a doubt, sleep. However, especially within the military, this is not always feasible so it is important to know what you can do to effectively improve your ability to function until you can catch up on sleep. There are a number of commonly accepted countermeasures that, despite what we are led to believe, range from briefly or mildly effective to completely ineffective and even counterproductive. In contrast napping and caffeine intake are effective countermeasures. Napping has been shown to boost alertness, productivity and mood in sleep deprived individuals.



### Did you know?

17 – 19 hours of total sleep deprivation has the same impact on reaction time, coordination, vigilance, memory, divided attention as a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.05% – the legal limit for driving in New Zealand.

Williamson, A. M., & Feyer, A. M. (2000).

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<sup>10</sup> Hilditch, C. J., Dorrian, J., & Banks, S. (2016)

## Appendix 7:

### More Mental skills and Resilience Tips

#### Overcoming Fear of Failure

Most of us will stumble and fall in life. Doors will get slammed in our faces, and we might make some bad decisions. Failure can teach us things about ourselves that we would never have learned otherwise.

For instance, failure can help you discover how strong a person you are, help you discover your truest friends, or find unexpected motivation to succeed. Often, valuable insights come only after a failure and help us build our resilience in the face of future challenges. Accepting and learning from those insights is key to succeeding in life.

The fear of failing can be immobilizing – it can cause us to do nothing, and therefore resist moving forward. Fear of failure is when we allow that fear to stop us doing the things that can move us forward to achieve our goals. It's almost impossible to go through life without experiencing some kind of failure. The wonderful thing about failure is that it's entirely up to us to decide how to look at it. We can choose to see failure as “the end of the world,” or as proof of just how inadequate we are. Or, we can look at failure as the incredible learning experience that it often is. Every time we fail at something, we can choose to look for the lesson we're meant to learn. These lessons are very important; they're how we grow, and how we keep from making that same mistake again. Failures stop us only if we let them.

## **Mindfulness Exercises<sup>11</sup>**

### **Being in the moment**

Sit back and feel the weight of the book in your hands, feel the texture of the cover. As you breathe in and out deeply, feel the temperature in the room on your skin. Random thoughts might come to mind. Simply observe and accept them as they pass by, as if they are cars going slowly by. You don't have to stop any of the 'cars' to examine them, just let them pass by. By practicing this type of observing and acceptance, you can detach from your worries and concerns, they can simply drift by, not sticking around long enough to take root. By detaching from your thoughts they become less present in your mind. By being in the moment you can cleanse yourself of the nuisance worries and anxiety about what to do about something in the future that might not even happen. Being present in the moment allows your brain to experience the vibrancy and richness of the now. Maintaining an observing perspective helps you develop a non-judgemental attitude. You delay reacting to the situation until all of the information is put into perspective.

### **Engaging the half knowing smile**

Smile ever so slightly, just enough to lift the outside edges of your lips up. If you like you can think of something mildly funny or someone or something that makes you feel happy. The simple behaviour of smiling ever so quietly cultivates a quiet mind.

### **Power pose**

Stand with your feet a little wider than shoulder-width apart, with your hands on your hips. Then inhale slowly and deeply for four to five seconds. Don't rush it. You want to get your lungs full without holding your breath. Then exhale slowly, for about six seconds, emptying your lungs completely. Continue breathing in this way, as you remain in the pose for 2 minutes (browse the internet for "power poses", to see other options, if this one doesn't work for you). Doing non-verbal power poses for even just 2 minutes can result in huge reductions in the stress hormone cortisol, with associated increases in testosterone, a hormone associated with confident, assertive behaviours. People who practiced power poses briefly prior to an evaluation interview were rated as more confident and assertive (Carney, Cuddy and Yap 2010). Useful during your workday. When you feel stress increasing, lean back in your chair. Open your chest, by moving your hands back and rolling your shoulders back.

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<http://www.pocketmindfulness.com/6-mindfulness-exercises-you-can-try-today/>  
<http://www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/mindfulness-exercises.html>

### **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 many times 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 into longer and longer periods.

### **The Ten Second Count**

In this exercise, rather than focussing on your breath, you just close your eyes and focus your attention on slowly counting to ten. If your concentration wanders off, start back at number one! For most people, it goes something like this...

“One...two...three...do I have to buy milk today or did John say he'd do it? Oh, oops, I'm thinking!”

“One...two...three...four...this isn't so hard after all... Oh no....that's a thought! Start again.”

“One...two...three... now I've got it. I'm really concentrating now...”

### **Drop Anchor**

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

Plant your feet into 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.

## **Notice Five Things**

This exercise will help you centre yourself and engage with your environment. Practice it when you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

Pause for a moment

Look around and notice five things that you can see.

Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear.

Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair).

Finally, do all of the above simultaneously.

## Forming Healthy Habits

Goals give us a direction in which we want to head but in order to get there we need to change our behaviour. Maintaining a change in behaviour consistently and overtime can be difficult which is why many a New Year's resolution fails by mid-January. Instead, if we make the new behaviour a habit it can come almost naturally. A habit is an automatic behavioural response, to a certain environmental cue, that is developed through repetition over time. Essentially, it's what you do without even thinking about it.

Certain habits can have either positive or negative impacts on overall health and performance. Understanding how habits are formed and how they can be broken is an important factor for self-improvement and goal achievement.

Habits can be formed when a behaviour is continually associated with a specific situation. When you pair an action with a context the two will become associated in your brain. Consistently and repeatedly pairing the action with the context will strengthen this neural connection. Eventually, this will lead to automaticity, the ability to do something without thinking about it, and a habit is formed.

Habits are especially important in achieving long-term goals. Outcomes such as losing weight require a long-term commitment to eating healthily and exercising frequently. Without forming healthy habits your ability to stick to your goals for diet and exercise depend on memory, your state of motivation.

At first, a plan will help you stick to your intended behaviour change. Implementation or coping plans are if-then rules that force you to prepare for certain situations. E.g. if X happens I will do Y because I want to achieve Z. Coping plans help us turn intentions into action, and if followed over time, form habits. However, until the habit is formed the action will still be dependent on motivation so it is important that you continue to remind yourself why you are undergoing the behaviour change. Coping plans can make it easier to stick to your intended behaviour. If you have prepared for the situation of smelling your favourite, indulgent food by telling yourself you will do 5 press-ups or eat an apple it will be much easier to avoid falling into old ways by default as you will have a preferred alternative.

A plan may be easier to stick to with some external reminders. Posting notes around your house in certain contexts (e.g. in the fridge to remind yourself to choose milk rather than juice, next to your bed to remind yourself to read a book instead of looking at a screen before bed) can be helpful. Or consider asking a

friend to text you with reminders of the habit you are trying to form or the goal you are trying to achieve. Habit formation does not require extrinsic rewards if you are intrinsically motivated however having someone support your intrinsic motivation with praise and acknowledgement can be beneficial.

The time it takes to form a habit varies with individual factors but a general idea is to expect it to take on average 66 days (between 18-254 days). Contexts in which to perform the new behaviour should be event-based rather than time-based. It is easier to associate a new behaviour with an event such as arriving at work, or going to bed as you will be unlikely to 'miss' these cues. In contrast time-based contexts require you to monitor the clock and offer less unique cues with which to associate the new behaviour.

**Steps to form a new habit:**

**Activity**

If you want to introduce a new habit into your life try this activity. It will help you prepare for unexpected barriers so that you will be able to stay on track to achieving your goal.

<p><b>Action Plan</b></p> <p>What new habit do you want to develop?</p>	<p>I will...</p>	
<p><b>Coping Plan</b></p> <p>What barriers might you face? If they occur, what will you do about them?</p>	<p>If...</p>	<p>I will...</p>
	<p>If...</p>	<p>I will...</p>
	<p>If...</p>	<p>I will...</p>

1. Take note of how your current habits may be impairing your ability to reach your goals.
2. Consider opportunities for improvement – you know best what cues and behaviours would work for you.
3. Decide to make a change – this must be self-driven because you are the one who has to do the mahi, internalising and accepting the need to change creates intrinsic motivation which is much more beneficial extrinsic motivation which is formed when external forces support or demand the change.
4. Close the gap between intention and behaviour – plan how you will do what you want to do.
5. Initiate the new behaviour – choose a behaviour that will make you feel good, if you reap rewards immediately your initial decision to change will be seen as the right call.
6. Repeat the behaviour in a consistent context – e.g. eat fruit at the same time in the same place each day, if you fail to perform the behaviour in response to the cue all is not lost, the behaviour must be performed consistently but not rigidly (missing one opportunity has negligible effects) so if you forget once don't give up.

### **Other strategies to improve habits**

- ✓ Make small and sustainable changes to begin with – these are more likely to stick in the long term.
- ✓ Focus on improving your average over a week rather than focusing on just one day (e.g. Aim to improve average kilometres run per week or number of vegetables eaten).
- ✓ Identify what triggers you to perform a bad habit and replace it with a better alternative.
- ✓ Make the habit rewarding (e.g. listen to music you like while running).
- ✓ Make the desired behaviour easier to do (e.g. packing gym bag the night before, having only healthy food in the house).



## Appendix 8: Common Mental Health Issues

### What is a mental health condition?

A mental health condition occurs when a set of distressing symptoms (thoughts, feelings and behaviours) has a severe impact on our psychological, social (including relationships) and vocational

functioning. It is not always easy to recognise or diagnose a mental health condition, because the nature and severity of symptoms can vary from one person to the next. Our personal characteristics, and the environment in which we are living, influence how we will experience a mental health condition. For example, high-stress environments can trigger symptoms.

None of us are immune to mental health issues. Anxiety is extremely common, often as a result of the pace of life spanning relationship challenges, work pressures, financial stress, poor diet etc. Depression is also extremely common. According to the Ministry of Health one in five New Zealanders will experience mental illness or addiction in any one year, and one in six will report a diagnosis of anxiety or depression in their lifetime. Nearly 10% of adults are reported to be on medication for anxiety or depression. So that probably means that you or someone you know isn't on the top of their game right now.

### You can read more about common mental health issues:

here <http://health.nzdf.mil.nz>

here <http://health.nzdf.mil.nz/mind/some-common-mental-health-issues/>

### Feeling Down

Depression is common in New Zealand, and at least 1 in 5 of us will experience a period of depression in our lifetime. It's also common in veterans and serving members. Depression is a very distressing and disabling condition. Left untreated, periods of depression tend to last longer and happen more often, so it's important to get help.

Being depressed in mood for short periods of time is a normal human reaction to an event or some bad news. This is not depression, which is a mental health condition associated with an almost constant state of low mood, and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that used to be enjoyable. Life becomes flat and grey, and nothing seems fun, exciting, or enjoyable anymore. In more

severe cases, the person may believe that life is no longer worth living. Common symptoms of depression are:

- Feeling low, down in the dumps, miserable
- Feelings of worthlessness, helplessness, and hopelessness
- Lack of energy, easily tired
- Lack of enthusiasm, difficulties with motivation
- Loss of interest and pleasure in normal activities
- Feeling angry and irritable
- Lack of appetite and weight loss
- Loss of interest in sex
- Difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Poor concentration, memory, and decision making
- Thoughts of suicide and/or death.

**Why do I have depression?** There are many situations that can trigger depression, including loss of a loved one, loss of a job, a traumatic event, and relationship difficulties. But most of the time depression isn't caused by just one thing. A history of depression in the family can make it more likely that someone might develop depression, but it doesn't mean they definitely will.

## Anxiety

**Social anxiety** is very common; so don't feel like you are alone here. It's actually the third biggest mental health condition. It is commonly the fear of social situations that involve interaction with other people. You could say social anxiety is the fear and anxiety of being negatively judged and evaluated by other people. There are three parts to social anxiety: physical sensations; actions and avoidance; thoughts and beliefs. Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

**Physical sensations** – When people with social anxiety find themselves in a situation where they are worried they will be judged, their fight-flight-freeze response is triggered, and they might have some or all of these sensations - Racing heart; Blushing; Dizziness or feeling faint; Sweating or hot flushes; Trembling or shaking; Mind going 'blank'; Nausea or butterflies in the stomach.

**Actions and avoidance** – A person with social anxiety might start making up excuses or reasons to avoid situations that make them feel anxious

**Thoughts and beliefs** – People with social anxiety often have unhelpful thoughts about their own behaviour or how they are being judged by others.

Generalised Anxiety is very common. People with (generalised) anxiety tend to worry excessively about lots of things – family, finances, health and issues at work. These feelings last for several months or longer. Other symptoms can be: Feeling constantly on edge; Muscle tension; Difficulty sleeping; Feeling tired or easily exhausted; Trouble concentrating on a task; Feeling angry and irritable.

Anxiety can be triggered by a stressful event such as losing your job, breaking up with your partner or it can be brought about by periods of prolonged stress or, most likely, by a combination of things. Sometimes the reasons can be obvious and dealing with the reasons behind it can be of help, other times the reasons or triggers are not so obvious or may seem relatively minor.

## **Panic**

Approximately one in thirty Kiwis will suffer from panic disorder at some point in their lives, and one in forty will experience agoraphobia. When we are exposed to a physical threat, our bodies automatically gear up for the fight-flight-freeze response. We become more alert, our heart starts racing, our muscles tense up, we sweat more, and breathe more rapidly. These changes are designed to protect us from danger, but sometimes our fight-flight-freeze response is triggered out of the blue when there's no real or immediate danger; this is what's known as a panic attack.

Some people only get panic attacks occasionally, and they can be brought on by stress. Panic disorder is when you have panic attacks quite often, say a couple of times a month or more, and you worry after each panic attack that you might have another one. You may even start having panic attacks about HAVING a panic attack.

It starts when the fight-flight-freeze response is too sensitive, like an overly sensitive car alarm that goes off at the wrong time. You can see there is no outside danger, so you start to assume that your physical symptoms are something more dangerous, a sign that your body isn't working properly. You might start thinking things like, "I'm going crazy", "I'm having a heart attack", or "I'm going to die". This type of thinking leads you to be even more anxious.

Sometimes people get so worried about having a panic attack that they start avoiding certain places or situations. Or they can only go into those situations with someone they trust.

**If you've found yourself avoiding crowds, being home alone, or not using public transport because it might be difficult to escape, you might have agoraphobia.**

## Appendix 9: Finding Your Why\*

### PAST

*“When you shoot an arrow, you have to pull back before you go forward.”*

**What are the proudest / most stellar moments of your life so far?  
And Why?**

Goal	Why?	Why?	Why?
<i>E.g. Traveling Seas</i>	<i>Saw different places</i>	<i>Learned about other cultures</i>	<i>Gained confidence to help others</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			

### FUTURE

*“Your passions and desires come from your goals and dreams.”*

**What are Dreams/Goals for your life? Would like to be remembered by?  
What are you striving to accomplish? And Why?**

Goal	Why?	Why?	Why?
<i>E.g. Masters Degree</i>	<i>Increase knowledge</i>	<i>Attain greater teaching ability</i>	<i>To help others learn</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			

Thank you to Chaplain Russel Bone for the material in Appendix 9.

## PRESENT

Take some time in this stage to really think, to reflect, on your current situation. What do you do? What are some “verbs” that describe what you currently do?

Why do you work where you work? What is the real reason or the root cause? Ask yourself the 5 whys. Each answer to why forms the basis of the next why question. Try to make your answers more precise as you go deeper and deeper without jumping to any conclusions.

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

What do you love to do? If there are a lot of things that come up for you when you ask yourself this question, try to narrow it down by asking yourself this question: What do I feel qualified to teach other people? Try to narrow it down to one or two words.

Please be aware the process of diving deep into your past, your present, and your future, could be an emotional journey for some. Take your time reflecting and do not rush the process.

## **YOUR WHY STATEMENT**

Once you boil down your **PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE** Themes for your “**WHY**” will come through.

Take your time, this is a process. Think about the meaning behind the words themselves. If you feel emotional about your **WHY** statement, you are in the right place and you have discovered your cause, your belief, your purpose.

**TO** \_\_\_\_\_ **SO THAT** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Contribution) (Impact)

Your unique **WHY** statement will guide you as you seek to make an impactful contribution. Your impact reflects the difference you want to make in the world and your contribution is the primary action you take.

## Appendix 10:

# Maintaining Support Networks, Building Sense of Belonging and Overcoming Loneliness

## Feeling Lonely?

Researchers at the University of Chicago have found that extreme loneliness increases a person's chances of premature death by 14%<sup>12</sup>. The researchers found that feeling isolated from others can disrupt sleep, elevate blood pressure, increase morning rises in the stress hormone cortisol, alter gene expression in immune cells, increase depression, and lower overall subjective well-being. The researchers identified three core dimensions of connectedness linked to healthy relationships that people of all ages can focus on to improve social connectivity and negate feelings of loneliness:

- **Intimate Connectedness:** having someone in your life you feel affirms who you are;
- **Relational Connectedness:** having face-to-face contacts that are mutually rewarding; and,
- **Collective Connectedness:** feeling that you're part of a group or collective beyond individual existence.

You can reduce feelings of loneliness by staying socially engaged, consciously tapping into the three dimensions of social connectedness, and making a daily effort to nurture healthy relationships.

## Support Networks

Social contact and support systems have been proven beneficial for maintaining physical and mental health. Scientists believe these benefits stem from a combination of increased mental activity, physical challenge and reduction in stress. Social support can help you work out problems and relieve stress. Regardless of what you're experiencing, chances are others are dealing with similar issues or have in the past, and may be able to provide you with useful strategies. Even if you're not looking to a supportive network to help you resolve specific issues, interacting with others helps you stay mentally sharp.

In thinking about your support network, consider who you want to include in your network. It's to include people who are trustworthy and non-judgmental vs overly critical or who may make you feel anxious.

If you don't currently have a strong social network, it's never too late to start. Look for opportunities to stay engaged in the lives of others, and to include others in your life. Consider joining or increasing your involvement in recreational, leisure or faith-based groups formed around activities you enjoy. Volunteering or taking a class are other ways to get out there and interact; from these friendships and relationships are likely to grow.

You may also want to explore networking opportunities on the internet. There are hundreds of social networking sites that cater to virtually every need, interest and age group. While socializing via computer is one option to consider, this type of communication should be balanced with face-to-face connections.

### **Sense of Belonging**

People have a need to feel as though they are valued by others and that they 'fit in' with people around them. When you don't feel a sense of belonging this can contribute to feeling badly about yourself, questioning your abilities, feeling alone or isolated, feeling different from others, feeling lonely, or feeling sad or anxious. Sometimes we can feel a sense of belonging with some people or groups and not others (for example, family, friends, co-workers, community and at home or at work).

When people feel out of place they may isolate themselves from others (closing off opportunities to increase belonging) or act out on negative ways (because feel different) which only increases the differences. Other feelings and behaviours may arise as well, for example, blaming yourself, questioning your value and worth, and feeling lonely. You may also begin to feel hopeless about being able to fit in or start questioning your skills and likeability.

You are not always able to control your surroundings or who is around you but you can choose how you react in these situations. You can actively work to increase your sense of belonging. This will help you to feel better about yourself, increase your motivation and energy and lift your mood. New environments are often a bit scary because you don't know what to expect, but new starts can be exciting and fulfilling. To increase your feeling of belonging, you must think it is important and devote energy to connecting with others.

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12 "Rewarding Social Connections Promote Successful Aging" at a seminar on "The Science of Resilient Ageing" February 16, 2014 – American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual meeting in Chicago.



**Practical Tips:**

Learn about others or the situation to help you belong in new environments. Remember everyone has personal skills, experiences and characteristics that can be used to help build belonging. Ask yourself:

- What past experiences do you have that can help you to belong?
- What are your strengths?
- How can you use these to create a sense of being valued and fitting in?

