

just for you!

WITH CARERS NZ | ISSUE 45

FamilyCARE

NEW ZEALAND

Help others, help yourself

Do nothing *Master the art!*

COVID-19

UPDATES

Stay Prepared

Vaccination News

Advice for Carers



YOUR WELLBEING

Check your self

BREATHE!

For good health

HAMSTER ALERT

Carer preservation

KINTSUGI

Fixing what's broken

LAURA BRADBURY

Memoir kickstart

GIFTS GALORE
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Plus...

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gardening, useful
things, reader
stories, gifts
+ more!



SHARE!

Pandemic
memories



HEARTY

Julie and Ilaria
Biuso share
the kitchen
bench



TE HUNGA TŪAO
STUDENT
VOLUNTEER
ARMY

NEED A RIDE TO GET YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

If you are in 'Group 3' (over 65 and/or with a relevant underlying health condition) and have no way to travel to your local vaccination centre - contact SVA and a volunteer will be arranged to drive you there, wait with you, and drive you home for free.

CALL 0800 005 902 OR EMAIL
COORDINATION@SVA.ORG.NZ



Kia tūao, e tū ki te ao.
sva.org.nz



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One Entry for All Gift Draws!

Just complete and return this form and you will be entered into every draw!
One entry per person please.

We'd love to know more about what you like. Please tell us about yourself (tick any that apply!)

I am a family carer for another/other

I am a 'self carer' managing my own health and disability needs

I care for a child or young person with a disability

I have (or assist) someone who has these conditions or health issues.

I work in health and disability

I work for a community organisation

I share my magazine with others (if so, how many others see your copy of Family CARE _____)

I would most like to win these reader gifts:

- _____
- _____
- _____

One entry, all draws

Complete and return our easy entry form and you will be entered into every reader gift draw!

One entry per person please.

Just return your form to us and you're in to win!

SEE OUR GIFT ENTRY FORM ON PAGE 8



Beer, cookies, candles, cleaning products - exciting social enterprises!

Supporting family carers every day!

Can you help?

Carers NZ provides advice, information, support and advocacy for anyone caring for friends or family members. All of our services and information are free to carers and those who support them. Please help to keep our 0800 helpline, email hotline, web and printed resources, and other services available to New Zealand's carers at no cost. Thank you for helping us care for family carers!



Your Details

Name _____ Email _____
 Physical Address _____ Phone _____
 Postal Address (If Different) _____ Mobile Phone _____
 Town/City _____
 Post Code _____

I'd like to support family carers

- One Off Donation (Donations over \$5 are tax deductible)
 Monthly Donation (I authorise Carers NZ to make automatic deductions every month from my credit card until further notice)
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 My Choice \$ _____

All donations will be used to keep Carers NZ services and information free for family carers and those they support: infopacks, *Family Care* magazine, e-newsletters, 0800 helpline, email hotline, advocacy, and keeping carers connected via social media and in-person meetings and events.

Payment method

By credit card: Visa Mastercard Card number

Name on card (please print) _____ Expiry ____/____

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Or by bank deposit/internet banking

Account name Carers New Zealand Trust
 Account no 12-3096-0298326-02
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Would you like a copy of your receipt by email? Yes No

Please scan and email your completed form to centre@carers.net.nz or post it to Carers NZ, Freepost # 256234, PO Box 47-385, Ponsonby Auckland 1144 (no stamp required). Alternatively, phone us and we can process your credit card donation in person: 0800 777 797.

Finding time for nothing



Through the months of COVID-19 I watched my 20 year old deal with disruptions to study, work, and life. Her way of coping? Filling every minute with social media, music, group chats, and watching stuff on Netflix and the internet. I'm not judging - I did those things myself. But I've been feeling a bit disconnected. I wonder if you do, too? While life has been fairly 'normal' in New Zealand, we've got out less, worried more, and 2021 has an uncertain feel despite the wonderful vaccine breakthroughs. I find I am craving nature, silence, and peace. I live in an apartment in the middle of Auckland so have to plan for such things. Or do I? Our cover theme got me thinking about ways to get what I need in micro ways every day. Ways to just *stop* (if only for moments) to breathe, pause, and do nothing. Modern life has wired us to stay constantly busy, and I know many of you have little option, as you're dealing with the realities of work, health concerns or supporting others. But we can all find snippets of time each day to calm our revving brains. Not finding those bits of time has real impacts, as Tricia Irving points out in her wellbeing article *We Are Not Machines* (page 26). And we need to consider the impacts on those for whom burnout feels inescapable (see Ursula Christel's article on page 33). Often there are no easy answers when life is tricky. That's why finding moments for self-care is important. We hope you enjoy Angelique Kasmara's suggestions about doing nothing on page 18. Angelique is Carers NZ's communications magician. She maintains our website, manages our social media, and writes lovely articles like those in *Family Care*. Later this year Angelique's debut novel, *Isobar Precinct*, will be published by The Cuba Press. We'll be showcasing *Isobar Precinct* in the next issue. Congratulations Angelique! After reading her article I'm prioritising micro-moments of doing nothing: watching the birds ... sitting in the park ... or closing my eyes for some mindless peace. Years after caring for my partner, when I didn't prioritise having breaks and developed an anxiety disorder, the effects still take me by surprise. It happened recently when I spoke at a dementia conference. I felt the usual symptoms thinking oh dear, after all these years and helpful therapy, an anxiety attack can still take me by surprise; it happens when I care about whatever I'm talking about. Luckily I finished the presentation and could sit down with a glass of water. After our months of pandemic isolation, I reckon I'm just not used to being around so many people anymore, or giving public presentations. The experience reminded me to be kind to myself and to use my experience to encourage others to look after themselves, too. An outcome of the pandemic is acceptance that my anxiety disorder is now just part of who I am, like a scar that traces how I got here. One that reminds me - as Tricia says - that we are not machines.

Laurie

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Joe Belanger, shutterstock.com

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You'll find our entry form for all reader gifts on page 8!

Thank you for supporting this issue



FAMILY CARE FRIENDS



Bike repair shop has the answer

You can't get a greener, more sustainable scheme than the Bike Project, run by the bike repair guys at Mersey Street, Invercargill.

The team at the IDEA Services' bike repair shop collect old bikes, fix them up and pass them on to the people who need them.

They recycle and reuse bikes that would otherwise go to the landfill, encouraging people to use pedal power rather than motor vehicles. They are also gaining skills they hope will lead to future employment.

Service Manager Jo Fredericks-Rizzi says the Bike Project started in 2011 as a joint venture between IDEA Services – part of IHC – Bike Doctor Tony Tresidder, who operated a voluntary bike repair and hire service in town, and the Invercargill Environment Centre. They made their latest donation of 17 bicycles to pupils at Fernworth Primary School just before Christmas last year.

Since 2011, around 450 bikes have been restored and donated to school children, local charities and support services, community groups, church groups, Workbridge clients and refugee families.

"IDEA Services developed the project as an opportunity for the people we support to learn to repair and maintain bikes with a view to using these skills to earn a wage," Jo says. "The project aims to build technical ability, teamwork skills and work confidence and to provide free recycled bikes to the local community."

They operate one day a week, with up to six people working on the bikes.

One of the team, Mark Cook, says he enjoys taking the bikes apart and has become expert at stripping them down.

Tony says there are many tasks for people to get involved in.

"They learn to use tools, strip bicycles, sand down bikes and paint them back up. We accept everything from wee bikes for kindy kids."

If a donated bicycle is too far gone, they cannibalise them to repair other bikes.

"We have got plenty of boxes of parts and tyres and tubes and reflectors. I have got too many parts," he says.

Tony often puts on the finishing touches.

"I have done it all my life. I have done bikes ever since I was a wee kid," he says.

Tony has plans for even bigger and better things this year, starting with a new name – Ride Again Cycles – and to launch a website.

"It's got to be done. Cycling is a big part of everything now – the way the world has gone."

Jo says as more schools become involved in Learn to Ride a Bike programmes, they get in touch to see if IDEA Services can provide bikes for the children to use at school.

"We have been approached by agencies such as Work and Income, Red Cross, Workbridge, local Māori support service



Bike repair man Mark Cook has become expert at stripping down old bicycles so the team can get to work on them.

providers, Family Works, Women's Refuge on behalf of their clients, and also directly by some individuals who are experiencing periods of hardship and would benefit from a bike to get to work or a job interview.

Support worker Hayden Anderson-Brown says after the Fernworth Primary School made the local newspaper, four people got in touch offering bikes and another four asking for bikes.

IDEA Services enables people with intellectual disabilities to enjoy great lives as part of their communities.

Read more at www.idea.org.nz

idea
services

your say



WE'D LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU!

Share your thoughts, or ask other readers for advice. Send your comments to centre@carers.net.nz, or post them to PO Box 47-385, Ponsonby 1144.

Meal options

Your hassle free meals guide in the last issue was awesome as I have been trying to think about how to help my aging parents from afar with meal options that work for them. We appreciated some of these suppliers ourselves during COVID-19 when we had to be extra cautious because of my husband's vulnerability (just prior to the liver transplant he has now had). Thank you for all the amazing information and encouragement you provide.

CG

Caring changes

Recently my Mum moved into my small two bedroom unit. Lockdown was very hard because her cognitive ability is somewhat compromised from stress, trauma, and not eating properly. Since she has been living with me I have ensured she eats three meals a day and am trying to get her socially involved with friends. We have little to do with family and I basically carry the world on my shoulders. We recently had a medical certificate prepared through our doctor and are waiting to get the results so we can move forward with power of attorney and other paperwork. This is new territory for me, as my mother was always the strong capable one and now she mainly just reads. It's somewhat hard to deal with at times and I ask God for strength to bless my acts of love for Mum. I am trying to get her into an elderly care group held once a week in our town. She has a dear friend who

It's nice to have an easy no fuss recipe that isn't too sweet (as so many no-cook condensed milk recipes are).

When ability and energy are in short supply, shortcuts to do things are fantastic.

I look forward to the day when I can make this with grandkids even though the oldest is only 18 months old.

Thank you for a fabulous practical magazine full of resources of where to go and services available.

CAROL DALEY

Last Minute NO BAKE Cookies

¾ cup sugar
3½ oz shredded coconut
2 slightly beaten eggs
2 cups crushed cornflakes

attends and they're a lovely bunch. Also we have been looking at accommodation options for Mum such as buying a house, a unit or a rest home villa. It has been interesting doing the sums and researching her choices. My reason for writing is to ask if you could please send me your magazine. I struggle with the realities of anxiety, Mum's

health, her two large storage units and her son, who has stolen a substantial amount of money from her. We have a lawyer and accountant who are trying to sort out her financial mess. I'm sure it will all work out, but would appreciate some extra support and advice about what help is available for Mum and for me.

ELAINE

Quick cookies



1½ cups chopped dates
2 tsp grated lemon peel
½ cup walnuts
1 tsp lemon juice

Butter sides and bottom of a heavy frying pan.

Gently stir together eggs, sugar, dates, nuts, and lemon juice and cook over low heat for 10 minutes.

Stir constantly, but don't beat.

Remove from stove and blend in lemon peel and crushed cornflakes.

Drop by tablespoons into a bowl of coconut.

Shape into balls and coat all surfaces with coconut.

Should make 30 cookies.

Thank you Elaine, we will send you each new edition of Family Care and wish you all the best in your journey with your Mum. For specific advice about available help in your area, call Carers NZ during business hours on 0800 777 797 or email centre@carers.net.nz

Share your stories and advice with other readers!
We'll send a surprise gift for every letter we publish.

Email your letters to info@carers.net.nz or post them to PO Box 47385, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144.



One Entry for All Gift Draws!

Just complete and return this form and you will be entered into every draw!
One entry per person please.

We'd love to know more about what you like. Please tell us about yourself (tick any that apply)!

- I am a family carer for another/others
- I am a 'self carer' managing my own health and disability needs
- I care for a child or young person with a disability
- I have (or assist someone who has) these conditions or health issues:

- I work in health and disability
- I work for a community organisation
- I share my magazine with others (if so, how many others see your copy of *Family Care*: _____)

I would most like to win these reader gifts:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name _____

Physical Address _____

Mailing Address (if different) _____

_____ **Post Code** _____

Update your details! Every form with an email address will go in the draw for a mystery prize.

Email* _____

Mobile _____ **Phone** _____

* Please provide this information if you would like to receive our bulletins, offers, and other resources.

Email to supportteam@carers.net.nz or post to PO Box 47385, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144

Information and planning

Congratulations on a vital resource you have provided for so many years. I have benefited from your magazine since the beginning.

When my son was young – he is now 38 – I used to long for some sort of summary of all the things we needed to know to survive this different life we were expecting.

During my son's school years I was involved in mainstreaming and supporting other families.

One of our best tools was information sharing and knowing other families where the things we experienced were their normal too.

We always experienced a full and often very interesting life. Now I am in my retirement years and still providing a family home and most of James's care. We are of course organising and planning this new phase of life and I have come across what I call 'the market' approach.

All the agencies and service providers now have to compete for their clients – plus information sharing is definitely hard to find.

I miss my umbrella structure we had with CCS.

I know choice is good but I see so much choice, with everyone set up with an office, cars, staff, computers - there is little left to resource clients.

What I would like to finish with is that your magazine fills a vital role. I know there are miles and miles and miles of online information but unless you are confident in computer use it can be very daunting. So keep up the good work.

GLENIS AND JAMES HARKE, NGARUAWAHIA



Capturing COVID memories

You asked for our experiences and thoughts about our time of COVID-19 lockdown. I have been adding to my journal for many years now, but with lockdown time on my hands added so much more. It helped to make the days go quickly with hardly a dull moment! I have not yet shown my folder to my family. I hope when they discover it they will enjoy it as much as I did compiling it. Congratulations for a great magazine. It is so useful and resourceful.

MRS JOAN LEONARD, AUCKLAND

My Lockdown Days

Don't delay writing down or recording your earliest memories. What you have said about your early life to your grandchildren while they grow up is easily lost.

When my parents died, I always regretted not knowing much about their early life.

I decided I'd write a few things down, so my family will know a little about my life. I am 95 years old now.

I started off with a notebook to record a 'few snippets'.

I now have a 2 1/2 inch folder crammed full of incidents and memories, all handwritten as I have not joined the internet world.

I keep a notebook close at hand, and when I think of something, maybe a long ago incident, I jot it down.

This keeps my brain active as well as my fingers. Writing is so therapeutic for mind and body. So start writing!

You'll do it because you enjoy it. So will your grandchildren. As adults, if they want to know something, it may be 'too late' to ask you (said to be the saddest phrase in the English language).

Earliest memories seem to be freshest and liveliest: life when you were very young living with your parents and family. The school days – what fun! The WW2 days. Lots of children now do not know much about the War their grandfathers fought in, and what their grandmothers did for the war effort.

We are too busy living our lives to perhaps be capturing these memories, so lots of vital stuff may slip through the cracks or end up in the tip e.g. photos of cousins that went off to Australia and were never heard of again. An uncle James who was never seen in any of the family photos. Family outings. The games you played.

I'm hoping my family journal will be enjoyed by my family to bring to life for them the happenings of long ago.

Don't delay – you may create a treasure!

Hoping for answers

I am struggling with a few issues at the moment and thought I would share them with you and other readers to see if they need answers too. My first query is about claiming Carer Support and the availability for this to be completed online and then payments being made in a more timely manner. I live rurally and find the current process cumbersome. During lockdown (when I couldn't use Carer Support), I understand claims could be emailed and wonder why this process has not been continued. This shows there are different ways of working and looking to the future. Why is there not the availability of RealMe and a client management system, which a lot of funders and other government departments are using, to make the process more customer centric with easy access, more efficiency and quicker results? I am sure there are repeat claims being made from the same customers (of which I am one) over a number of years which would assure a high trust model. My second issue is that I receive respite care (Carer Support through Ministry of Health) for my child, who has a disability, to pay a carer so I can have a regular break. Is this payment subject to income tax? The carer we use does not receive a Work and Income benefit. I have spoken to IRD three times but they do not seem to have any idea. One person I spoke to said no tax is payable if the respite takes place in the home of the person who is doing the respite care. There is no clear information on the MOH site. Hope you can help as all of this is causing stress.

MICHELLE

Thanks Michelle. We've asked MoH for answers - please phone 0800 777 797 so we can keep you informed.

Fun for Olivia

The parcel with our reader gift arrived today. Olivia was so excited. Thank you so much for the extra items. She LOVED the lunchbox book. She helps me make her lunch every morning and chooses what I put in there. She also is always getting the cookbooks out and showing me the recipes she wants me to make, mostly cakes and muffins, the first being banana muffins (her favourite fruit). Olivia is 33. I support her full-time and have not had the ability to have a full-time job (part-time only or volunteering). I feel forgotten and quite frankly unappreciated for my actual economic worth as part of the unpaid workforce of parents with intellectually and physically disabled children, so to get this parcel was such a delight. Olivia put the cookbook in her bag and has gone off to her IHC day programme to show it off to everyone. Thank you so much.

LYNDA



Are you coping with bladder and bowel issues, or supporting someone who is? We're here for you.

Our helpline is available
Monday to Friday **0800 650 659**



For more information and our latest video, go to [continence.org.nz](https://www.continence.org.nz)



Our expert Janet Thackray answers your calls from 9am to 5pm Mondays and Tuesdays. One of our friendly team is able to help during the remainder of the week.

Whether you are caring for someone with incontinence in these trying times, or your own symptoms have been worsened by stress and anxiety about COVID-19, we can help.

Continence issues can easily slip to the bottom of the heap when you are dealing with so many other worries.

Please give our friendly nurse Janet a call. She can help with advice about accessing product, steps you can take from home to help your symptoms and how you can get further support if you need it.

Call us on 0800 650 659

You can also email info@continence.org.nz with any questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing from you. We're in this together.

A caring respite system

Thank you so much for the current issue of *Family Care*. Reading the letter from Wendy K (Women's Work) brought a range of issues to mind. The days of respite Wendy referred to is a key issue. The needs of the one being cared for are sorted, but there is nothing left for the caregiver except an empty home, cupboards and the cleaning up and then preparing for the loved one's return. Nothing to use as a night out. I couldn't afford cosmetics for myself for a year. My son liked to see me wearing lipstick. It was part of the Mum he loved. It would be lovely if each year carers could receive a grant that would allow them to go away with costs covered. Sadly many families splinter due to caring pressures. The expectation that there are family members to play host to carers while they have a break is not a reality for most. Parents that supervised their children via the Correspondence School at one time received a couple of hundred dollars for themselves each year. For carers to have respite time with the means for a good break would be fantastic.

JH, NAPIER



Working together

Thank you for the information you posted to us about COVID-19. We are two elderly people living on our own. We do not have email or a computer, just a landline and mobile phone. We have been married for 65 years and are now in our 80s - retired dairy farmers who are fit and healthy for our age, and equal partners in our farming business since

1955. We have downsized to a small home, keep a good vegetable garden and a berry garden, and have reservoirs for water, solar panels, and a wetback for heating. We chop all of our wood, mow the lawns, do our own maintenance, and still drive (we use mobility scooters around town). We shop for ourselves though during the lockdown we relied on grandchildren for basics like

bread, butter, meat, flour and sugar (keeping everything to a minimum). We make rolled oats for breakfast and have regular light meals made from our garden veges. We maintain a holiday home at Waihau Bay on the East Coast with its 1.5 acre hill section beside the ocean, the Waihau store and the 100 year old hotel. We grow bananas, babacos, peaches, apples, figs, citrus, mandarins, and oranges, traveling around each month to maintain it all (now a 'trust' for family who love fishing). Doing this provides exercise though at a slower pace than years past!

CB AND HA WADE

Hobbies

I just love your magazine. I rush through it, then backtrack to read the items (and the adverts too). I am a cancer patient and diabetic and the two don't like each other. If I starve to solve diabetes and eat only healthy foods, 'BOB the Bag' (bowel) doesn't cope. No one is able to sort it out so I just plod on and do my own thing (cake is good). I use the hydro pool and

gave up worrying if anyone can see BOB stuck to my stomach. My dear friend has had lots of woes with a plumber ripping her off, thinking she is deaf so won't know what he is telling his workers. He forgot that she lip reads! Luckily her insurance helped her out, and didn't have troubles with her speech. All small things that don't help some of us out here in the community. I do enjoy other people's mail and recipes in your magazine, and would like some hobbies covered too. Mine is family history, mostly online, and free at most local libraries. Good to learn about social history, medical history and why I followed the career I chose.

SANDRA GREIG

"FOR CARERS TO HAVE RESPITE TIME WITH THE MEANS FOR A GOOD BREAK WOULD BE FANTASTIC."



OUR PICKS!

Watch, listen, read, share, learn!



SOME KIND OF HEAVEN

A peek behind the curtain of the self-proclaimed Disneyland for Retirees, first-time director Lance Oppenheim's humorous and bittersweet documentary follows four recent arrivals as they search for the American Dream. Welcome to The Villages in central Florida, the largest retirement community in the world, pitched as a literal fountain of youth complete with precision golf cart drills, pickleball rallies and singles mixers. It's a chance for retirees to live their dreams in their golden years, but debut director Lance Oppenheim picks beneath the surface to find that one person's paradise can be another's burden.

Watch it online as part of the NZ Film Festival at www.nziff.co.nz

JESSIE AND THE MONSTER

*A Battle with Anxiety.
A Story of Courage and Hope.*
Author Mark Stevenson
Illustrator Deborah Hinde



Jessie and the Monster is written with the compassionate insights of a father and educator whose daughter suffered from acute anxiety for many years.

Mark Stevenson wrote this story to help other parents of young people suffering from anxiety, and to offer the children themselves a hopeful future.

The story is about how Jessie's safe and secure life is overturned when, out of the blue, the most ominous of creatures, Wisper and his horde of followers, invade her world.

When dealing to these monsters, Jessie's anxiety nearly overwhelms her, but help comes in unexpected ways from the strangest of places and people.

Written primarily for young people who feel weighed down with anxiety and depression, parents, counsellors and psychologists will also find *Jessie and the Monster* a useful resource.

Calico Publishing, \$19.95 or www.calicopublishing.co.nz

WIN 1 OF 3 COPIES

BLOOD ON VINES

A page-turning read set in Martinborough's lush wine country, by Madeleine Eskedahl

Four friends, a shared past, a common enemy. An ex-wine maker is murdered in Martinborough, while north of Auckland in Matakana, the long, hot summer is over and the tourists have left. A tranquil atmosphere descends, the harvest about to begin as grapes sit bursting upon the manicured vines. Within this calm vista, a deadly rampage is about to rock the local community. Will the four be able to rescue themselves? RRP \$34.95 from booksellers or at www.madeleineeskedahlauthor.com

WIN 2 TO BE WON!

As Rudd walked towards the car, he scowled and turned to Bill.

"Orewa's dealing with multiple inquiries and I'm short staffed. You will have to handle some of this case from here, if that's not too much to ask," Rudd said, looking down his nose.

"We'll do our best," Bill said, slightly bemused at the decision.

"Good, that's settled then," Rudd said and turned on his heels and walked towards the car.

Turning to Niko, Bill wondered what he'd agreed to.

Returning his attention to this morning's event, he walked over to let Lexi and Avery know that they were leaving. Bill could see that Lexi was exhausted so suggested that if they thought of anything else to pop in to see him at the station later today. Lexi gave him a look of relief. He could see that she needed a reprieve and to catch her breath.

"That sounds good," she said, managing a weak smile. "I need to check on the children anyway."

She walked towards the house with her faithful companion Beau in tow.

"It's been quite a shock for her," Avery said. "If we're all done here I'd better go inside as well."

"ESR will stay on for a while. Once they leave you can have the electrician come around," Bill said.

"Thanks mate," Avery said, gratitude in his eyes.

Avery made his way up the stairs and into the kitchen where Lexi was staring out the window.

"Are you okay darling?", he said.

"No, I'm not okay. Someone's bloody hand is under our house!" Tears welled up in her eyes. "And it doesn't help you making eyes at every pretty girl you meet, either."

She bit her lip, looking down at the floor.

"We'll be fine," Avery said and took a step closer, opening his arms. Grudgingly at first, she melted into his chest, and for a few seconds, she let go.



FAVOURITE

We love psychiatrist Dr Hinemoa Elder's beautiful book *Aroha* with its thoughtful themes of Māori wisdom for a contented life lived in harmony with our planet. Discover traditional Māori philosophy through 52 whakataukī (proverbs) - simple, powerful life lessons, one for each week to show how we can live a kinder, less stressful daily life.

We thank Hinemoa for letting us share *E ngaki ana a mua, e tōtō mai ana a muri*: first clear the weeds, then plant; make time for mind-weeding.

Enter our gift draw or buy your own copy, \$30 from booksellers or online at www.penguin.co.nz

AROHA

Wairua is the Māori concept of being connected to everything in the universe, also translated sometimes as spirituality.

Just like the māra (garden), the mind-body-wairua (spirit) system requires regular weeding.

No one actually teaches us to gently and kindly examine the thoughts and feelings that we internalise that are not really ours. But it is such an important practice, because otherwise we can unwittingly internalise these thoughts and feelings and they can become integrated into our consciousness.

For me this whakataukī is so poignant because I have been taking time to clear out the detritus in my own head, reflecting on what is most important, what my legacy is as a parent, as whānau, what I want to contribute to the world around me.

When I finished medical school I did a kind of full mind-body-wairua scan in order to shed values and ideas that were not healthy for me. Things like, 'Māori doctors are not as good as non-Māori doctors', 'Māori services are less skilled', 'Because you are Māori you will never be a success'.

While these values and ideas were not explicitly expressed to me during my training, marginalising and racist ideas were implicitly conveyed to me and my peers. One of the things I witnessed as a byproduct of this implicit messaging was Māori putting down other Māori. It's a brilliant colonising tool used throughout history – to get the colonised to bring themselves down. It has a name, lateral violence, and it does just that, it violates and hurts others.

Regular weeding of such damaging ideas is essential if we are



to remain healthy and clear in our vision of a resourceful, self-determined future for our whānau.

Whenever I think of this whakataukī I am also mindful of the phases of the moon.

For our ancestors, timing according to the moon was vital.

Every night, every moon phase has its own name. There is a specific time for planting, a time for harvesting, and a time for weeding.

There are periods of the lunar cycle where the impact on people's energy and mood is anticipated. For example, you need energy for weeding and you need to be sure you are focused, otherwise you can end up pulling out everything, not only weeds. So you need to pick the right times of the month, literally.

Our minds inherently require a clearing of space to prepare for the planting of new seeds.

These ideas are not new. It is ancient, time-honoured wisdom that kept our ancestors healthy and in tune with the natural world.

We need now, more than ever, to stay grounded and to stay connected to the wisdom of the past.

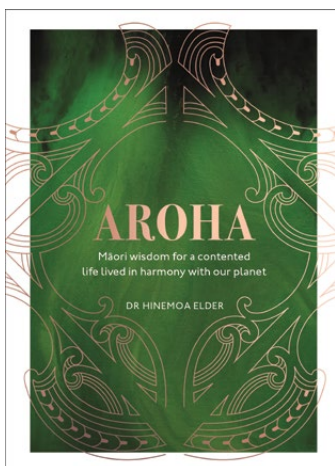
Uproot your mind weeds and plant that positive knowledge legacy. You might ask how to start doing this.

Recognise the times of the day and the month when you feel at your best, energised.

Look up at the moon.

How do you feel?

Schedule in some time when you feel ready to get a little mind-weeding done.



WIN 1 OF 3 COPIES! [Entry form, page 8.](#)



LITTLE WAYS TO LOVE YOURSELF

Soothe

Still your mind. Live in the moment.

Facial yoga

Spend a few minutes to increase blood circulation and help oxygen and nutrients reach the cells of the skin.

Step 1 Press your middle fingers on the inner corner of your eyebrows, and your index fingers on the outer corners of your eyebrows.

Step 2 Look upwards, squint, then relax.

Step 3 Repeat six times. Finish by squeezing eyes tightly shut for 10 seconds.



Happy scents

Light a candle with an aroma that reminds you of a time that made you feel comforted or looked after.



SLEEP ON YOUR LEFT SIDE

This may be better for digestion, our backs, and even our hearts, due to the position of different organs. It may help take some pressure off the heart and spine, filter lymph fluid and waste more efficiently, and help the body process waste materials from the brain. *If you have a health condition(s), it's always a good idea to consult a health professional first!*

NATURE BOUQUET

Wildflowers are plentiful at this time of year. Go for a walk and pick the blooms that catch your eye. Wildflowers make such beautiful bouquets!



ACCEPT A COMPLIMENT

Every time you reject a compliment, you are filling your head with excuses and negative feelings. Practise a bit of self-love with a simple 'thank you'!

“I can live for two months on a good compliment.”

Mark Twain

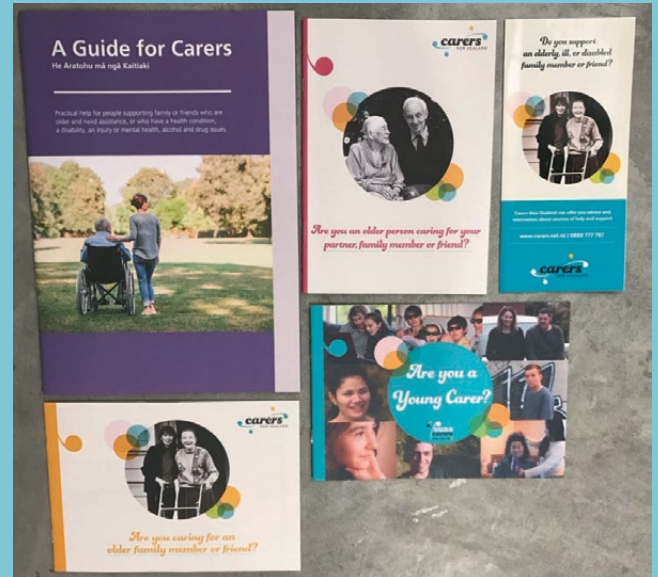


Help if you care for a friend or family member

Carers NZ produces many free resources. You can find them at www.carers.net.nz or phone 0800 777 797 to order copies for yourself, or bulk copies for carers in your network.

Many carers feel isolated and aren't sure what help is out there for them.

Our resources are designed specially for all carers including those supporting an older person, older carers, and young carers aged under 24.



Contact Carers NZ if you need advice, have a question, or to request any of our resources.

0800 777 797

centre@carers.net.nz

www.carers.net.nz

facebook.com/CarersNZ

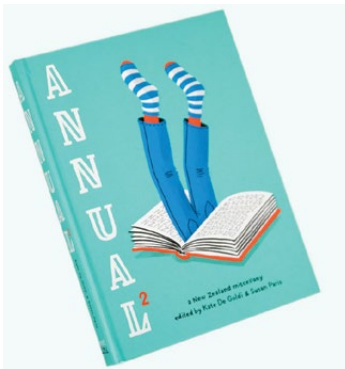
facebook.com/YoungCarersNZ

TASTY PRIZE!

Here's a witty take on traditional New Zealand baking! Ginger crunch and afghans sit alongside Cameo Crèmes and the contentious sultana pastie in an iconic tea towel (\$25) designed by Wellington artist Giselle Clarkson and screen printed by hand in Wellington's Shelly Bay by Thomas Lynch of Artisan Screen Prints. Our gift draw includes a tea towel, a tea towel poster (from \$40 depending on size), and a copy of the delightful *Annual 2* book for young people (\$32). All items can be purchased from Annual Annual.

www.annualannual.com/shop

WIN! 1 poster, 1 book, and a tea towel!



MYTREAT

This monthly subscription box company's philosophy is to put women's self-care first. MyTreat believes that every woman deserves to treat herself with quality products at an affordable price. Try a *Build Your Own Box*, where you can add items such as hand creams, cleansers and serums. They also offer *Body Box* and *Mini Box* monthly subscriptions. These beautiful, carefully selected products include body treats, skincare, beauty essentials, health products and tasty treats. MyTreat products are 100% natural, cruelty free and sourced from Kiwi businesses. This is a lovely gift for yourself or someone who could use a pick-me-up. Find out more at www.mytreat.co.nz

WIN! TWO 3 MONTH SUBSCRIPTIONS TO BE WON!



Useful things

Use your dollars to buy great products from great NZ social enterprises!

CRAFT BEERS: THE INDEPENDENCE COLLECTIVE

Despite all that COVID could throw at them, 2020 was one of the best yet for IHC's Independence Collective and its life-affirming range of Change Maker craft beers. Four friends with an intellectual disability, Janie Tutton, Nathan Martin, Cameron Stichbury and Neville Pugh, were looking for real jobs and better lives. After two years of dreaming, planning and hard work, their Change Maker beer hit a milestone – it became available nationwide through Glengarry Wines and selected Liquorland and New World stores. At Beervana 2020 the team introduced two new beers – an IPA and a Pilsner – with a crisp apple cider and non-alcoholic ginger beer rounding out the range. The Independence Collective's manager and key supporter, Gordon Cumming, won the Outstanding Community Contribution Award at the Frances Clarke Memorial Awards 2020 and the team were finalists in the 2020 Attitude Awards. The team continues to meet amazing new business mentors, new brewers and gain business knowledge.

www.facebook.com/changemakerbeer

www.changemakerbeer.com



The Independence Collective (from left) Nathan Martin, Cameron Stichbury, Janie Tutton and Neville Pugh.

CONSCIOUS CLEANING

Will & Able is a New Zealand social enterprise on a mission! Its vision is simple: every Kiwi with an intellectual disability should have an equal opportunity to work, so Will & Able aims to create 100+ jobs for people with disabilities by mid-2021, providing eco friendly cleaning products packaged in 100% recycled NZ milk bottles. Starter Packs are available from \$33.95 offering a great selection of options. You can find out more about Will & Able at www.willandable.co.nz Will & Able starter packs (RRP\$33.95) come with a great selection of their fantastic products.

WIN! 6 STARTER PACKS TO BE WON!



THE ENTRY FORM FOR FAMILY CARE GIVEAWAYS IS ON PAGE 8!

DELIGHTFUL DOWNLIGHTS

Downlights is a NZ owned, certified social enterprise and accredited Living Wage employer which manufactures simply gorgeous luxury candles, diffusers and other fragranced products. Employing young adults with Down syndrome and intellectual or learning disabilities, Downlights supports their learning and development with a variety of workplace skills. Their candles are made by hand with bespoke fragrances, using soy wax and wicks that contain no lead or zinc. Every Downlights candle is 100% biodegradable, nontoxic and GMO free. \$1 from every candle sold is donated via the Downlights Charitable Trust. Learn more at www.downlightsnz.org.nz

You can buy Downlights products in heady scents such as Persian Rose, Gardenia & Sweet Pea, or White Peony at www.downlightsnz.com

WIN! 1 OF 2 LUXURY GIFT SETS (\$150)



COOKIES WITH HEART

The Cookie Project is a social enterprise that employs Kiwis with disabilities to make delicious cookies. Founded in 2018 by Graeme and Eric, the project helps Kiwis with disabilities understand their own value to themselves and to society. The Cookie Project is committed to paying employees at least the minimum wage, and its inclusive employment framework includes a pan-disability recruitment policy - those seeking work are never asked for a resume, or to have interviews. Handmade at the Eat My Lunch kitchen, with no additives, preservatives or colouring, and using only the finest Kiwi ingredients like Lewis Road Creamery butter, Trade Aid chocolate and Pic's peanut butter, it's no wonder cookies from The Cookie Project have won awards! Use your cookie budget to buy yummy products from The Cookie Project at www.thecookieprojectnz.com You'll find it hard to choose - there are even premix cookies to bake yourself at home. Or you might buy a range of flavours to share. The Cookie Project Package Deal includes:

1 x Signature Butter Cookies 1 x Chocolate Chip Cookies
 1 x Peanut Butter Cookies 1 x Matcha Butter Cookies
 3 x Salted Caramel Popcorn 3 x tickets to Win My Cookie Challenge baking experience

WIN! 1 COOKIE PROJECT PACKAGE WORTH \$270 - PLUS ALL GIFT ENTRANTS WILL RECEIVE A SMALL GIFT VOUCHER TO SAY THANK YOU FROM THE COOKIE PROJECT!



Doing NOTHING

When was the last time that you did absolutely nothing? Can't remember? You're not alone, but being able to completely switch off - to still our minds and hands and just be - can have wonderful benefits.

By Angelique Kasmara

"Just Be"

Practicing doing nothing can be as simple as hanging around in a park, gazing at whatever is around you while sitting on a bus, listening to music, or having an idle ramble through your garden: as long as it's done with no goal in mind or in order to be productive.

It isn't talking on the phone, watching TV, or browsing social media. These fun activities matter too, but for a different purpose.

All of this might sound like something everyone does in one way or another, however, in reality it's a challenge, especially for those of us who are overburdened and feel odd doing nothing.



**"DOING NOTHING OFTEN LEADS TO
THE VERY BEST OF SOMETHING"**

Winnie the Pooh

STAY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

Many of us are overburdened with responsibilities, and are used to taking on too much.

A quick sit down may take the weight off our feet, but often does little to rest our thoughts.

Often it only serves to overwhelm us more, as our attention goes to the dust gathering in the corners, or a pile of dishes growing in the sink.

Having a real rest feels like a luxury that many of us can't afford.

Yet evidence is mounting that the art of simply doing nothing is beneficial in ways that we can't afford to ignore.

More important than ever

In this age where distraction is only a smartphone away, it's important to recognise that inaction is good for our minds.

Filling up the gaps by scrolling through Instagram or TikTok has its time and place, but creating space to do nothing has some very real benefits. And science supports this!

Stress and its subsequent health impacts, such as unhealthy eating habits and increased alcohol consumption, is on the rise.

A recent New Zealand study found that ongoing work-related stress may lead to mental health problems while current research reveals that some benefits of slowing down include reducing anxiety, slowing the aging process, and strengthening your immune system.

In other words, these potential health effects may buy us wellbeing and longevity in the long run.

PURPOSELY PURPOSELESS

The Dutch even have a word for it - Niksen.

Precise definitions vary, but at its core, Niksen is doing something without a purpose, whether it's staring out the window, sitting and soaking up the sun, or kicking back and listening to music.

The Chinese have a similar concept, called Wu Wei, which can be roughly translated as, 'without effort'.

According to Taoist philosopher Lao Tzu, the ultimate expression of Wu Wei is found in how we live in and engage with the world, not just in retreating from it.

The Italians embrace a similar concept in the lovely phrase *dolce far niente* ('it is sweet to do nothing').

DOING NOTHING VS MINDFULNESS OR MEDITATION

Mindfulness / meditation has the purpose of being completely present, with the focus on keeping your mind coming back to the present whenever your thoughts wander.

A concept like Niksen allows you to let your mind wander, with no requirement to be aware of your body, breath, the present moment, or your thoughts. Instead, you use it to do the opposite: to escape into your head and get lost for a while.

It's classic 'goofing off': the kind of thing that may have got us a reprimand at school from a teacher.



A GREAT STRESS BUSTER

Once your stress response is activated, it takes a while for it to calm down.

What's worse is that too many of us are living in a state of chronic stress, in which our bodies and brains are on a permanent state of high alert, leading to anxiety, insomnia, irritability and lowered immune systems.

Just a few minutes of Niksen a day can lower those peaks of stress and create longer, deeper troughs between them.

When there is nothing demanding your attention, you can feel the stress seep away.

And remember, even a few minutes of taking time out is enough.

WHY WOMEN NEED TO DO MORE 'NOTHING'

Studies show that men don't just have more free time than women, they are also better at carving out time for it.

If that's not enough, global statistics show that in general, men do more paid work, while women do more unpaid work.

Most women would benefit from embracing the idea of doing less.

Ultimately, all of us want to lead a happy and fulfilling life, and we need to realise that consciously slowing is part of this.

So take some time to stare into space!

Daydreaming is productive!

Daydreaming can help us come up with new ideas, with research supporting the notion that allowing your mind to wander can foster creative problem solving, gain clarity about actions needing to be taken, and gather inspiration.

It's not laziness, which implies an unwillingness to act.

For example, the concept around Wu Wei means allowing outside forces to work through you without pushing back against them.

Try two minutes of doing nothing - can you do it?

donothingfor2minutes.com



i-Volunteer

i-Volunteer provides a friend on the line for family carers

IHC has expanded its volunteer programme to connect online and by phone with people with intellectual disabilities and family carers.

Through i-Volunteer IHC can support people who may find it difficult to leave the house because of their disability or because they are caring for someone with a disability. It also means volunteers can reach those in more remote areas where IHC doesn't have local volunteer coordinators.

National Manager of Volunteering and Community Development Sue Kobar says IHC learned a lot about online support during last year's COVID-19 lockdowns. The decision to expand the programme to family carers was the result of a partnership with Carers NZ and an online resource called wecare.kiwi.

"It was through wecare.kiwi that we saw how significant the gap was in the support available for family carers in New Zealand," says Sue.

"Caring for a family/whānau member or a friend, can really affect a person's ability to socialise, limiting their connections to support. Having a friend to chat to regularly can have a positive impact on a carer's life."

During this time, Sue also saw friendships established as part of the IHC Volunteer Programme effortlessly adapt as people chatted over Zoom or on Facebook messenger.

"Distance and a lack of physical presence did not get in the way of their friendships thriving."

Sue says nearly half of the people they are in contact with want phone or email support, "someone just to check in with them".

The i-Volunteer programme is led by Volunteer Coordinator Belinda Donaldson.

She says it is closely aligned to IHC's One-to-One Friendship Programme.

That means all volunteers will be matched with people based on shared interests and trained and police vetted in the same way. Volunteers will be a friendly ear, someone to listen and who won't judge you.

"If you have someone in your family that you are caring for, you might not be able to get out and meet friends."

Belinda says i-Volunteer may well appeal to a different group of volunteers – people who might be busy but have time to connect out of hours, or younger people who are very comfortable connecting online.

If you would like to find out more about i-Volunteer – to find a friend or be a friend – please contact Belinda on Belinda.Donaldson@ihc.org.nz or 022 015 7166, or visit

www.ihc.org.nz/volunteer

ihc
IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Ideas to free up your mind

Remember that doing chores, living with the impacts of an illness or disability, or caring for others is work. Therefore, you are entitled to having work breaks.

◆
Swap out some of your social media scrolling time for a few minutes of doing nothing.

◆
Having trouble getting to sleep? Often this happens when we're feeling particularly anxious about the day ahead. Get up, write down what you're worried about, then put it aside. Go back to bed, stretch out and remind yourself that lying in a darkened room is quality time, giving your eyes a rest from staring at a screen or the glare of the sun, and your body from the jumble and noise of the day. It may help to observe the shadows, test your pillows to work out which is your favourite, or stare at the ceiling.

◆
When you're standing in a queue, accept that tapping your feet or willing the queue to move faster isn't going to make it do so. Refrain from pulling out your phone: instead take it as a chance to quietly observe your surroundings.

◆
Wander without purpose, with no music or podcast as accompaniment.

◆
Lie in a field and watch the clouds shift across the sky.

◆
Sit somewhere comfortable and look out the window .

◆
Let go of how it's supposed to look. There are always going to be elements of our life that we consciously plan for, however every step towards our goals will come with booby traps, false openings, and dead ends. Remind yourself that carefully laid out plans gone astray aren't necessarily a bad thing, and can often bring welcome surprises.

◆
A carefully cultivated vegetable garden can yield an unplanned pumpkin patch or the bright blooms of hollyhocks, sprung from nowhere. Create the conditions for life to flourish, then step back and breathe. **FC**



Help for Carers!

Do you support a friend or family member who is ill, has disabilities, or a chronic condition?

Carers NZ offers useful information, and advice about available help around the country!

We are a national not for profit that works with many other community, government, and charitable organisations to support those in caring situations.

Carers NZ assists carers directly via its 0800 and email services, and acts as Secretariat for the New Zealand Carers Alliance of 50+ national not for profits who are working in unity to give carers public visibility and a voice in decision-making that affects them.

Phone our National Resource Centre to request a free carer infopack or for a referral to a carer support network in your area. It's free to join our network (just call our 0800 helpline) or email centre@carers.net.nz

You'll receive regular e-newsletters, email and posted updates, and we'll keep you informed about important news all carers should know about.

We'll also let you know about learning and social events you might like to attend in your area, or online!

You might also like to check out our web space that's just for carers. Visit the site regularly to see new articles, blog posts, and helpful information to support you in your role!

Visit www.carers.net.nz

Email centre@carers.net.nz

Facebook www.facebook.com/carersnz

Twitter [#carersnz](https://twitter.com/carersnz) Pinterest [CarersAir](https://www.pinterest.com/CarersAir)

Phone Carers NZ's National Resource Centre Monday to Friday during business hours: 0800 777 797



KINTSUGI

The art of honouring what is broken. **By Angelique Kasmara**

A growing number of people are seeking to live more sustainably, in part by repairing and restoring household items instead of throwing them out in favour of the latest model.

In this age of mass production, however, it's easier said than done.

Why spend the time and money to mend something when the allure of the new and shiny remains hard to resist (and is so easily and cheaply obtained)?

Kintsugi, the Japanese art of putting broken pottery pieces back together with lacquer and gold, addresses the dilemma in the most elegant of ways.

"Kintsugi has a beautiful wabi-sabi (the acceptance of transience and imperfection) philosophy behind the technique," says Yuka O'Shannessy, director of Public Record, a retail and gallery space devoted to one-off functional pieces.

She tutors Kintsugi, Ikebana and Omotenashi workshops around New Zealand, and says that Kintsugi offers objects an even longer life, where their break becomes part of their story, not the end of their use.

"It answers a need. People are starting to realise that chasing after the money, the new thing, is a very temporary thrill, and that cheap mass production items won't fulfil you. People are wanting more to shop wisely, with consideration for the next generation, consuming less, surrounding themselves with less items, but beautiful ones that they can keep for a long time. If something is made sustainably, it ages well and when these precious, sentimental pieces are broken, you can keep and mend them,



**RING THE BELLS THAT STILL CAN RING
FORGET YOUR PERFECT OFFERING
THERE IS A CRACK ... IN EVERYTHING
THAT'S HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN**

Leonard Cohen

and pour your character into them. The result can often be more beautiful than the original.”

Kintsugi workshops are growing in popularity.

More people are keen to learn how to preserve their favourite items, and the associated memories.

The trend may also be tied to the ongoing interest in ceramic craft (with its additional social element of communal clay studios).

Contemporary artists are also introducing new twists to the medium.

UNIQUE AND PRECIOUS

But the Kintsugi technique itself has generated interest all on its own.

There are indications that Kintsugi started off as just a practical means of repair.

As the technique evolved, along with the philosophy behind it which suggests that the broken parts of us are the exact experiences that make each person unique and precious, the process has become a metaphor for embracing our flaws and imperfections.

The practice became commonplace in Japan during the late 16th or early 17th centuries.

The glue traditionally used is urushi lacquer, sourced for thousands of years from the *Rhus verniciflua* plant, and used by both the Chinese and Japanese - the latter in items dating back to the Jomon period about 5,000 years ago. Initially, this sap was used for its adhesive qualities to create war and hunting weapons.

Historically, the technique was only practiced in Japan; its current international reach is a modern phenomenon.

KINTSUGI TRADITIONAL REPAIR METHOD

The traditional method of Kintsugi repair is as much about the process as the end result, and authentic binding materials such as urushi lacquer can be difficult to source.

However, you do end up with a durable piece which is also food safe. Search YouTube for how-to videos before trying your first Kintsugi traditional method repair.

YouTube is also a good source of other repair methods which take less time and use easily found materials. Hunt for tips and materials that appeal. [FC](#)

Try your own Kintsugi repair! Ready to give this practical craft a go?

What you'll need

Gloves, old towel, epoxy glue, plastic cup or tray, gold mica powder, stir stick, razor blade

Variation

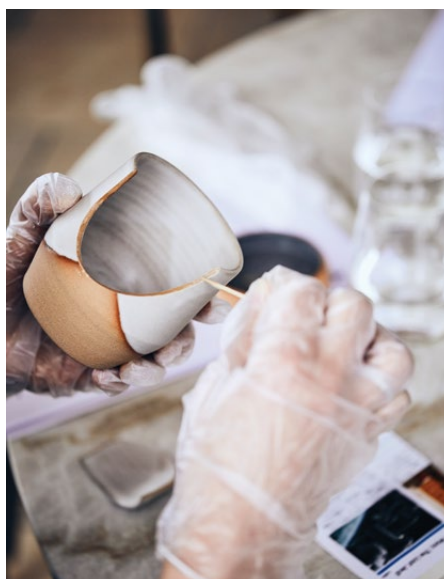
There are kintsugi repair kits which come with everything you need, which you can order online. Try searching on [etsy.com](#)

Method

Protect your hands with gloves. Clean your broken pieces and lay out on the towel.

Squirt a dollop (no more than a teaspoon) of both epoxies into a disposable plastic cup or tray. One of these epoxies is a resin, while the other tube has a hardening agent. Mix the mica powder into the epoxy, then combine the two epoxies. At this stage it will start to bind and dry.

Apply the epoxy / mica powder combo to a small section of a broken piece, line up its matching piece and attach. Lightly squeeze these two pieces for 2 – 3 minutes. Given the fast acting nature of the epoxy, do one small section at a time. Although the epoxy mixture will take 12 – 24 hours to cure, the pieces will stick tightly



after a few minutes. Scrape any excess solution off with a razor blade.

Wait 12 – 24 hours for the epoxy mixture to cure before adding the next piece. Your repair job will be stronger and pieces are less likely to come unstuck in the process. Repeat the steps until your lovely item is whole again.

Epoxy glue is not food safe, so use this method only on items that you don't intend to eat or drink out of.



Chapter ONE

Or, how **Laura Bradbury** ended up starting a memoir (now the bestselling *Grape* series).

Let me tell you a story.

It's about a young-ish woman who is on the cusp of turning 40.

She's happily married to a French guy and together they have three lovely daughters.

She has no idea the curve ball life is about to lob at her head.

Yup. That woman is me, and that curve ball was horrific.

It is also what finally made me get serious about my lifelong dream of being a writer.

I was going along quite happily.

My girls were all healthy and busy.

My family had just moved back to Canada after five years spent renovating vacation rentals in the vineyards of Burgundy, France.

My French husband was adjusting to life on our island in the Pacific.

We were getting into the swing of the healthy West Coast lifestyle after several years of French decadence.

We were running 10km races and growing kale in our backyard for our morning green juice.

Good God, we must have been tedious.

The only area of lingering dissatisfaction was my writing, or rather the lack thereof.

I'd dreamed of being a writer ever since I was a child, but the previous decade had been littered with manuscripts to about 70% completion, with nothing finished.

I was terrified of failing at the one thing I truly wanted to do.

So much so that I couldn't finish or share anything.

In short, I was a ninja master at self-sabotage, and I was getting nowhere with my dream.

One fine day, Franck (the French husband) and I decided we were being so healthy and virtuous that we should apply for extra life and disability insurance.

We'd had a third child, after all.

Besides, we'd become so virtuous that we would pass the medical exams with flying colours.

You know ... all that green juice.

A nurse came and took our blood pressure and a few vials of our blood, then went on her way as we waited blithely for our approval.

For me, it never came.

Instead, as I was running out the door to take my youngest to a gymnastic lesson, I answered a phone call from our insurance agent.

"You've been turned down for your insurance," she said.

"There's something very wrong with your blood work. They've recommended that you make an appointment with your doctor immediately."

There it was.

One of those moments when your life swings on its axis and becomes something utterly different than what was before.

The weeks that followed were horrendous.



My liver function tests were sky high, so of course doctors at first thought I had a drinking problem.

I didn't and never have - I have an internal switch that shuts off after two drinks or so.

I was tested for hepatitis. Negative.

Pancreatic or bile duct cancer (both with very poor prognoses) were floated.

I had to have a liver biopsy from a doctor who yelled at me to hold still or else die of internal bleeding when I was shaking from fear.

I experienced my first MRI and CT scans.

So many vials of my blood were taken that I was sure my veins must be like the Sahara Desert.

I was drowning in uncertainty.

Finally, I had my specialist appointment on May 1, 2012.

"Laura," he said without preamble, "unfortunately your test results have shown that you have *primary sclerosing cholangitis*, called PSC for short."

Uh oh.

From my late night Googling I had learned that besides cancer, PSC was one of the worst case scenarios based on my symptoms.

My doctor confirmed this.

PSC is a rare auto-immune disease of the bile ducts and liver, he told Franck and me as we sat on our vinyl doctor's office chairs, numb with fear.

There is no treatment. There is no cure. It is usually terminal unless the PSC patient can get a liver transplant, but transplants are hard to come by, and you have to get one before being killed off by liver disease and PSC first. Waiting lists are massive, and many people die while waiting, or become so sick they are delisted, which amounts to the same thing.

You can only get a transplant if you are a few months away from death.

I would likely be an unwilling participant in a game of medical Russian Roulette.

I walked out of that appointment a sick person with a terminal disease.

The next morning, I woke up suffocated by a lead blanket of grief and terror. It was the first day of my new life—my 'after'.

This new life came with the sword of death hanging over my head.

I had no idea how much time I had left - I couldn't afford to mess around anymore.

Still in shock over the harsh realities of my new existence, I got out of bed.

I had three daughters, aged 4, 10, and 12. What would I leave behind for them if PSC took me far, far earlier than planned?

My laptop was sitting on the dining room table.

I sat down in front of it.

There was a pad of post-its and a pen I'd been using the day before sitting to the right of my keyboard.

I grabbed the pen and scribbled 'F-ck You. I'm not dead yet'.

Except I filled in the blank letter.

In a split second, all those fears of failure were replaced by the fear of dying with my words still left inside me.

I opened a new Word document and typed the first line of *My Grape Escape*. **FC**



**THERE IT WAS.
"YOU'VE BEEN TURNED DOWN FOR
INSURANCE. THERE'S SOMETHING VERY
WRONG WITH YOUR BLOOD WORK.
THEY'VE RECOMMENDED THAT YOU
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR
DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY."**



Laura's books have many fans in New Zealand. You can buy her Grape series, based on her adventures in France and Canada, on Amazon. Recently she published her first cookbook, *Bisous and Brioche*, and a new title, *How To Write a Beloved (and Bestselling) Memoir*. Laura has had a liver transplant and is now the author of more than 10 books. Follow her journey and sign up for her newsletter at www.laurabradbury.com



WE are not MACHINES

Understanding carer burnout, what helps prevent it and ways to recover. **By Tricia Irving**

Every family, whānau, and aiga carer knows their role can be rewarding, but they also know it can be uniquely demanding. Most carers have other responsibilities too and juggling these with providing care can be hugely challenging. Caregiver stress is inevitable at times. However, when it starts to gradually build up, and up, and up, and up, it can become harder to cope with.

We're quick to recharge our cell phones but much slower to recharge ourselves

While we focus on the needs and wellbeing of others, our own needs and wellbeing are often given little thought. Carers work hard. Tiredness can become our 'normal'. In fact, we might not even realise just how weary we are. However, we are not machines. We have human limits and human reactions. We can't simply keep going and going and going without consequences - however much we wish we could.

Research is clear that living with a constantly high level of stress is likely to affect a person's physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. It can put carers at greater risk of having accidents. It commonly affects our mood and attitude. Too much stress can steal joy and pleasure from us. It can put extra pressure on our relationships and even affect our decision making. And how do you think a carer's high stress levels might affect the person or persons they assist?

**"LITTLE BY LITTLE,
A LITTLE CAN BECOME A LOT."**

Tanzanian proverb

What is “carer burnout”?

Burnout occurs when a carer experiences ongoing physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by the unrelieved high stress levels of their caregiving role.

It can become a debilitating condition. By the time a caregiver realises they are on the road to burnout, they are likely to already be experiencing a range of its symptoms.

The good news is that with proactive, daily self-care, burnout can be prevented or turned around.

Here are burnout indicators commonly experienced by carers:

- ⚡ Exhaustion and a lack of energy, or feeling wired, agitated, restless and unable to stop
- ⚡ High levels of worry and anxiety
- ⚡ Often emotionally overwhelmed
- ⚡ Difficulty coping with even everyday matters – it’s hard getting through a day
- ⚡ Brain fog – difficulty concentrating and focusing – forgetful

- ⚡ Strong emotions, including irritation, impatience, anger, rage as well as:
 - Sadness and grief
 - Negativity, low mood – just not enjoying things as before
 - Feeling stuck and without motivation
 - Feeling things are out of control
 - Guilt
 - Resentment
 - Low self-esteem – not feeling good enough
- ⚡ More likely to overreact to arising situations
- ⚡ Social isolation – feeling left out of things, lonely and unsupported, or choosing to socially withdraw
- ⚡ Relationship tensions
- ⚡ Tearfulness, mood swings, anxiety issues, panic attacks, depression
- ⚡ Reactions to traumatic, frightening situations experienced personally or by the person cared for (e.g. replaying events, nightmares, on alert for more threats, avoidance of triggers)
- ⚡ A sense of hopelessness – in extreme cases, suicidal thinking

- ⚡ Sleep difficulties – too little or too much
- ⚡ Changes in eating habits – losing or gaining weight, or a poor diet
- ⚡ Lack of exercise
- ⚡ Increase in headaches, stomach aches, muscle aches and lowered resistance to illness, or existing conditions flaring up or worsening
- ⚡ Overuse of alcohol, drugs, prescribed medications, smoking or other risk behaviours to distract from the stress
- ⚡ Loss of compassion – in extreme cases, neglectful
- ⚡ Constant concerns about money
- ⚡ Feeling uncertain about the future

If reactions become extreme, and if a carer continues to be in crisis without support, the carer, those who rely on them, and others around them can potentially be at risk of serious harm. Tragedies can occur when a burned-out caregiver has become overwhelmed, violent or mentally unwell.

“WE TAKE OUR CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY BUT WHEN LOTS OF STRESS GETS US OUT OF BALANCE, WE CAN START TO LOSE PERSPECTIVE. EXCEPT WE DON’T ALWAYS REALISE IT. WE’VE ALL GOT HUMAN LIMITS. OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING DON’T MATTER LESS THAN ANYONE ELSE’S, DO THEY?”

Helen

Self-care is how we take our power back

When we know what to look for, we can make wiser choices to help prevent burnout or recover from it. Getting your life into a good balance requires learning to take good care of yourself as a priority – not as an optional extra. Remember the airplane requirement to put on our own oxygen mask before assisting anyone else?

This increases the chance that you'll both be able to cope in a tough situation. In other words, the carer and the person they assist benefit from the carer's self-care. Carer self-care is always a positive choice. It is very practical. It's a burnout-buster!

One way to think about self-care is that it shows we have some self-respect. It builds up our resilience to cope with whatever life brings along. It helps us keep a positive attitude, a sense of humour, good relationships with others and the ability to persevere and adapt as circumstances change.

Self-care can lift our spirits and improve our mood. It certainly isn't just about having treats on bad days. And it's not just for use

**"CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT
SELF-INDULGENCE.
IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION."**

Audre Lorde

in a crisis. Sometimes it will involve making choices to do things we might prefer to avoid such as seeing our GP, organising respite care, accepting help from others, or improving our diet.

All of us can sometimes feel stuck and locked into routines, habits and attitudes that get in our own way. It can help to look for circuit breakers and try something new to move forwards.

Try the following strategies!



10 self-care strategies to use for burnout prevention and recovery

1 Check in with yourself regularly. Ask yourself some honest questions, such as... How am I doing right now? How's my health? My mental health? What do I have some control over? What can I change? What are my limits? What are my early warning signs? What things stop me from prioritising self-care and why? This keeps you aware of what you're needing to be sustainable.

(You might like to see Carers NZ's article *Wellbeing WOF: Check yourself out* - search for it at www.carers.net.nz)

2 Focus on getting the basics right each day. Eat a healthy diet. Drink enough water. Exercise. Get enough sleep and rest. See a doctor if you're unwell or struggling – don't miss those appointments for yourself. Do something every day that lifts your spirit.

3 Ask for help and share the load. We all have limits.

- ⚡ Talk with family, whānau, aiga, close friends and support professionals (GP, social workers, community workers etc) honestly about what care is needed and what support options they can offer. Say yes if someone offers assistance, even if it's not always done how you'd prefer it to be done.
- ⚡ Carers NZ can help you to know your rights and entitlements and also offer support. See www.carers.net.nz, phone 0800 777 797 or email centre@carers.net.nz for advice.
- ⚡ Make an appointment with a counsellor. Talking things through can help.
- ⚡ In times of acute stress or crisis, call or text 1737, available 24/7, to speak to a counsellor for some immediate support.

4 Take short breaks through your day. Think of them as mini vacations! Maybe sit outside. Phone someone. Get out of the house for a while. Visit family or friends. Have a long shower. Spend time with a pet. Read a book. Listen to music. Walk round the block. Use a progressive relaxation technique. Do some slow, deep breathing. See our *Weekly Time Out Planner* at the end of this story.

5 And use longer time out / respite care. From a regular few hours to a few weeks, respite breaks can make a big difference for carers. If you are experiencing burnout, it is absolutely essential. Studies show that using longer respite care at least once or twice a year improves a carer's wellbeing and resiliency. Put the dates in your diary. Stick to your plan. See Carers NZ's *Time Out Guide* at its website, and be sure to ask your doctor or NASC about your respite funding and planning options.

6 Get out your strong thoughts and feelings. It helps. You could talk to someone you trust about what you're going through. Write it down in a journal. Cry if you need to. Shout into a pillow. Walk, run, dance or exercise it out. Use art. Use music. Make something. Get away into nature. See what works for you.

7 Talk to other carers. You can share your frustrations, encourage each other, laugh about the realities others don't understand, swap useful information, short cuts and tips, and celebrate the good times. Phone 0800 777 797 to find out what's in your area. Why not also join Carers NZ's large Facebook's community to stay informed and connect with other carers – www.facebook.com/carersnz

8 Don't let caregiving take over your life completely. Give regular time and attention to other things you find meaningful, interesting and enjoyable. Keep up with friends. Treat yourself to something. Enjoy a hobby. Join a team or a group. Try to talk to someone outside of your carer world every day. This kind of approach helps your life to keep in balance.

9 Keep a positive outlook. Celebrate even small victories. Look out for silver linings in situations. Notice things to be grateful for. Keep hopeful. Look for things that inspire and encourage you.

10 Make room for laughter and fun. Use your sense of humour. Laughter lowers stress! Share a joke. Call or visit people who make you laugh. Watch a comedy. Read something funny. Try to find the humour in even everyday situations.

WAIHO I TE TOIPOTO, KAUA I TE TOIROA.
LET US KEEP CLOSE TOGETHER
NOT FAR APART.

It could be time for a tough question.

If you think you are burned out and regularly overwhelmed by your situation and role, consider if now is the time to think about the future of your carer situation, cutting back significantly, or immediately finding more help. You don't want to put yourself or your family member at an increasing risk of harm. **We all have limits, even when we're giving our best to caring. We carers can find ourselves in situations that are just too demanding to manage.**

Find some people you trust to talk this through with, including of course your family member if possible. Decide on the steps that need to be taken and take them. You can still be caring, but possibly in a new way. Maybe you and your family member can now focus more on the quality of your relationship while you rebalance and become healthy and well yourself.

“TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. IT'S SO EASY TO SURRENDER TO YOUR ROLE MORE OF YOUR LIFE THAN YOU SHOULD. YOUR LIFE STILL NEEDS TO ALSO BE ABOUT YOU.”

John Shore

Next steps?

Self-care is far from being selfish. Carers are not machines. We are humans. So, self-care is wise and healthy. What will your next self-care steps be? **FC**

Tricia Irving has authored many books, toolkits, and grief and loss resources. She has written many of Carers NZ's resources including our upcoming updated booklet, When Caring Is Changing or Ending. Request your free copy by phoning 0800 777 77 or email centre@carers.net.nz



Weekly Planner

Get in the habit of asking yourself 2 questions each day
When you get up:
 What am I going to do today for me?
Before you go to bed:
 What did I do today for me?

WHEN CAN YOU MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF THIS WEEK?

exercise
physical activity

Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Look at your typical daily routines; you may already be getting more exercise than you think (vacuuming counts!)

other
time out

What other 'me time' can you fit in? A break can be anything that keeps you strong and well – anything that makes you feel good!

	REGULAR ACTIVITIES	SOMETHING DIFFERENT	REGULAR ACTIVITIES	SOMETHING DIFFERENT	TOTAL MINUTES
M					
T					
W					
Th					
F					
Sa					
Su					
TOTAL ME TIME					

Nationwide Counselling Services

A range of advisory and counselling services are available in New Zealand. Many of these can be accessed by phone, text, or email. Don't feel alone if you're struggling – reach out for help.

1737	Free call or text 1737 to speak with a trained professional counsellor at any time 24/7. Free counselling service: depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, feeling down or overwhelmed. Highly recommended as first point of contact for callers seeking help.
Alcohol Drug Helpline	0800 787 797 or text 8681 (24/7); online chat at www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz If you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking or drug taking, the Alcohol and Drug Helpline can assist with information, insight and support.
Anxiety New Zealand	Helpline 0800 269 4389. Online therapy and Covid-19 help resources available. www.anxiety.org.nz
Depression Helpline	0800 111 757 or free text 4202 to talk to a trained counsellor for support or to ask any questions. www.depression.org.nz/contact-us
EAP Services	Employee Assistance Programme – providing practical assistance to employees when personal or work issues arise that may impact on their ability to do their job or affect their wellbeing (confidential counselling services across NZ and internationally). Freephone: 0800 327 669 www.eapservices.co.nz
Gambling Helpline	24-hour Freephone: 0800 654 655 www.gamblinghelpline.co.nz
Kidslines	0800 543 754 (0800 KIDSLINE). For young people up to 18 years of age 24/7. www.kidslines.org.nz
Lifeline	0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE). Lifeline trained counsellors deal with many kinds of issues including psychological and emotional distress, financial and work issues, marriage and family/whanau problems and with callers who are lonely, ill, depressed or the victims of violence or abuse. Text 'Help' to 4357 www.lifeline.org.nz
Rural Support Trust	Helpline 800 787 254. Chat to someone who understands, because they've been there. www.rural-support.org.nz
Salvation Army	0800 53 00 00. Supporting families and individuals in need with budgeting advice, food and clothing assistance, life skills programmes and other comfort and support. www.salvationarmy.org.nz
Samaritans	0800 726 666. Confidential, non-religious and non-judgmental support to anyone who may be feeling depressed, lonely, or may be contemplating suicide. www.samaritans.org.nz
SPARX	An interactive self-help online tool for young people with mild to moderate depression and anxiety: www.sparx.org.nz 0508 477 279 or free text to 3110
Suicide Crisis Helpline	0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
Supporting Families in Mental Illness	Northern Region, 0800 732 825; Central North Island, 0800 555 434; South Island, 0800 876 682. Information and support for families/whanau.
The Lowdown	Free text 5626. Support and information for young people experiencing depression or anxiety. www.thelowdown.co.nz
Victim Support	0800 842 846. Free 24/7 support. nationaloffice@victimsupport.org.nz www.victimsupport.org.nz
What's Up	0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) For 5 - 18 year olds. Available 12.00pm – 11.00pm M-F or 3.00pm – 11.00pm weekends. Online chat is available from 5.00pm – 10.00pm daily at: www.whatsup.co.nz
Youthline	Mental Health and Addictions Service. Youthline works with young people, their families and those supporting young people. Call 0800 376 633; Free text 234; Email: talk@youthline.co.nz or online chat at www.youthline.co.nz

In emergencies always phone 111

0800 777 797 centre@carers.net.nz

Sensitive content:
 article refers to
 homicide and abuse



WELLBEING ALERT!

Ursula Christel worries about the urgent need to improve things for family carers, who can feel trapped on the 'hamster wheel' of intensive caring with inadequate support to stay well themselves.

After hesitantly agreeing to write an opinion piece on *Why do you think family carers snap - and what can make a difference?*, my research opened up a Pandora's box of far too many devastating family tragedies.

Spouses, children, siblings, parents - all carers responsible for a dependent family member who had been either infirm, chronically ill, or severely disabled, all resorting to end either one or both of their lives as a final solution to unbearable circumstances.

When I asked a close friend why she thought some family carers snap, her response was "is that even a question"?

The reality is that care incurs many costs – not just financial.

Family carers are 'on duty' 24/7, forfeiting their own health and mental wellbeing on a daily basis, frequently working in the most challenging conditions in a society that is not well structured for inclusion. Combinations of sleep deprivation, isolation, financial strain, PTSD, grief, guilt, depression and anxiety inevitably manifest into physical burnout and mental breakdowns. Add the

personal costs of forgoing dreams, careers and social circles; the ongoing frustration of grappling with medical issues and dealing with the medical sector, and then having to navigate a dysfunctional 'support system'. Double all that for single parents and sole carers and you have a recipe for tragedy.

Then there are the equally horrifying reports of mistreatment of service users at respite and residential facilities for the disabled and the elderly. Stories of historical abuse cases, extreme neglect and substandard care, plus numerous reported deaths all heighten the protective instincts of family carers.

The risks of abuse or neglect by others is very high, especially when the vulnerable person has challenging behaviours, complex needs, is nonverbal, or is experiencing a medical crisis.

For parent carers, the thought of 'what happens when I'm gone?' triggers extreme anxiety.

Even handing over the care role just to take short respite breaks can require immense courage and trust.

It is purely credit to this workforce's extreme resilience that we don't have a flood of horror stories hitting the headlines.

A 2014 Infometrics report states: "Our central estimate of the value of unpaid family care is \$10.8 billion or 5% of GDP in 2013. The number of unpaid carers represented is 12.8% of the adult population of New Zealand." ¹

It would be reasonable to assume that in order to keep this large economic asset sustainable, it should be well protected by

the Government. Yet the informal carer workforce remains exempt from compliance with the Health and Safety Act and basic human rights simply due to 'the family bond'.

And current policies that prop up this invisible workforce have so far presented as wordy illusions in a deadly cycle of deception.

Casey Albury, a 17 year old with severe behavioural problems associated with autism, was killed by her mother in 1997.

The defense was that her mother had been driven to desperation trying to get respite care for her daughter. ²

Shortly after this shocking event, the National Health Committee (NHC) produced an extensive report highlighting the needs of informal carers, stating that "time away from caring is critical for carers' physical and mental wellbeing". ³ Ten years later, a follow-up report states "the NHC is concerned that the needs raised in that [1998] report, now a decade old, are essentially the same issues facing informal carers today." ⁴

It was just a matter of time... The tragic death of Ruby Knox, killed by her mother in 2016, rocked the nation again, setting in motion yet another review process that not surprisingly arrived at the very same conclusions.

It was noted that the suggestions in Dr Rosemary Marks' report appear to "mirror those contained in a review released 20 years ago". ⁵

This repeat-cycle conjures up the apt visual metaphor of a hamster running on a spinning wheel, seemingly working very hard to get somewhere but actually stuck in the exact same spot: the familiar ineffective cycles of bureaucracy.

Dr Marks' review of New Zealand's disability services warns "there will be more Rubys" unless services improve. ⁶

So why has no urgent action been taken?

In 2018, I watched in utter horror and disbelief as my own desperate emails - sent to appropriate services during a crisis, requesting urgent respite support for my adult son - were forwarded straight into the giant hamster wheel, where they circled for months. I believe they are still in there somewhere.

I dragged myself out of that deep hole by my fingernails while anxiously awaiting the draft *Mahi Aroha Carers' Strategy Action Plan 2019-2023*. This is the third 'Action Plan' to support The NZ Carers' Strategy that was initially launched in 2008.

Coming in at No.10 on the bullet point list is "help carers to take breaks when needed. This includes looking at respite services across New Zealand." ⁷ With additional bureaucratic layers, the "development of the new Action Plan is supported by a wellbeing framework, which will inform how we prioritise and develop actions for the Action Plan." ⁸

Note the cyclic word repetition, lack of urgency, and no timeline for implementation. Another Action Plan, missing in action.

In response to the final question - "what are some answers that can make a difference?" - well, it's quite simple really. As the slogan says, let's do this! Let's get rid of the hamster and get out of this unproductive cycle.

The Ministry of Health has all the reports and feedback it needs; the NASC services have the necessary data; and local business and community groups are sure to embrace and support respite projects for our most vulnerable.

Let's appoint someone to implement the actions – with urgency!

Let's follow those decades-old recommendations and create 'shovel-ready' respite options in all regions.

Let's provide instant practical support for carers in crisis.

With the recent closure of a large Auckland respite facility (Laura Fergusson) and stress levels escalating during the 2020



I WATCHED IN HORROR AND DISBELIEF AS MY OWN DESPERATE EMAILS - SENT TO APPROPRIATE SERVICES DURING A CRISIS - WERE FORWARDED STRAIGHT INTO THE GIANT HAMSTER WHEEL.

lockdowns, we simply can't afford to lose more decades trialling 'pilot programmes' in smaller regions, while carers nationwide remain isolated and unravelling.

Vulnerable lives are at stake, and the clock is ticking.

Perhaps 2021 will finally be The Year of Action? **FC**

Ursula Christel has three sons, one of whom has a rare condition called Angelman Syndrome. Due to the lack of resources on the Syndrome, Ursula co-founded The Angelman Network Trust in 2009 and remained as a trustee for 10 years. Being personally involved in the disability sector in New Zealand for over 24 years – the last 7+ as a single parent - has made her acutely aware of disability as a social construct that still causes many to remain alienated every single day of their lives. Now based in Warkworth, Ursula remains actively involved in disability-related organisations, and is an advocate for inclusion and basic human rights. Ursula focuses on issues of accessibility, Universal Design, recognition of family carers, person-centred planning, and an autonomous voice for non-speakers (using Augmentative and Alternative Communication/AAC).

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Purposeful Breathing

Simple breathing skills can rapidly reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, and increase feelings of strength and relaxation. Try **Dr Greg Smith's** practical suggestions - and be in to win a copy of his book!

The breath is a remarkably powerful mind-body connection.

Anxiety, anger, deep calm or steady concentration each have their own patterns of breathing, and we move between different styles of breathing every day without usually realising it.

Purposeful breathing helps you recognise your patterns and consciously change them, which in turn can produce positive emotional change.

Breathing to overcome anxiety and panic

The world has become a much more anxious place.

Unfortunately, the Black Dog Institute has noted that common consequences of disease outbreaks such as COVID-19 include anxiety and panic, with estimates of between 25% to 33% of the community experiencing high levels of worry.

Many people may also have developed an anxiety disorder for the first time, and may not know how or what can help.

Dr Greg Smith has worked with hundreds of people suffering from anxiety conditions over the years and knows just how important breathing, mental and physiological techniques are for the very anxious.

This is something Greg has refined over 35 years as a psychologist, yoga teacher and educator.

He has developed powerful techniques for using breathing as a tool to help rapidly reduce states you don't want (such as stress, anxiety, agitation, or depression) and increase states you do want (feeling calmer, stronger, more energised or inspired).

If you're feeling anxious, we hope you enjoy our extract from Greg's new book, *Purposeful Breathing*.

Discover skills that blend Eastern traditions and Western science to give you access to the life changing power of breathing and mental health exercises to help drop your anxiety levels.

"There are common breathing changes that happen to almost everyone when they are very anxious," he says. "Breathing becomes sharper and high in the chest, and either the person then holds their breath, or their breathing rate escalates."

"These are distinct patterns without any depth of exhalation, and both keep the person stuck in the fight or flight anxiety state."

"I think this happens for almost everyone when they become anxious and it is certainly true for me. I notice if I feel stressed and anxious, I often have a high breath and shallow exhalation."

To manage anxiety, it really helps to focus on exhalation, he says.

"If you can take a slow, deep, extended exhalation, you quickly begin to lower the anxiety level."

'Quickly' is a tricky word here, because when people are anxious, they want to take rapid steps to fix their anxiety and remove the threat.

The rapid calm of breathing comes from breathing slowly and exhaling fully. It is rapid because in one or two breaths you can drop your anxiety level by 20% to 30%.

"I say that because in working with people suffering anxiety I often ask them to rate their anxiety on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is totally relaxed, like being at the beach on a warm summer's day, and 10 is feeling totally overwhelmed by anxiety," Greg says.

"It takes a few minutes to teach the technique but typically people will go from 7 to 5; 6 to 4; or occasionally 8 to 4. The amount of reduction averages about 30% on the scale."

"I find almost everyone can drop their anxiety rate by 2 points within a few breaths."

The key, he says, is to breathe with your diaphragm, slowly.

"If you are in an anxious state it is often easiest to learn belly breathing first."

Belly breathing

This is often the quickest and easiest way for people to use their diaphragm, producing a sense of being calm and centred.

Sit with a straight back and with your feet on the floor, and place one hand on your chest and one hand over the navel. As you breathe, notice which hand moves more: with your inhalation or exhalation?

Many people typically 'chest breathe', so that during an inhalation the hand on the chest moves outward more than the other hand. For belly breathing the simple guideline is: breathing in, the belly goes out; breathing out, the belly goes in.

To get the feeling of this, it helps to actively use the muscles of your abdomen on the exhalation, squeezing in the belly to squeeze the air out.

It can also help to gently push in on the belly with the hand when breathing out—this focuses attention there and helps you get used to the movement.

The main movement should be felt in the belly rather than the chest.

Belly breathing is relatively easily learned, even when people are highly anxious, and has a calming effect.

Once you are more practised at belly breathing, the focus will move to the diaphragm.

The belly should gently and passively move out on the inhalation as the diaphragm contracts and pulls down.

The emphasis in belly breathing is on the exhalation, which can be extended by drawing in the abdominal muscles.

Belly breathing is great for relaxing at night, and Greg has taught it to many people who have difficulty with sleep.

Lying down on your back, put one hand on your belly; breathing in, your hand goes gently up, and breathing out it goes

gently down. Breathing like this can help sleep because it has a physically relaxing effect (by switching on the rest and relax response) and because it gives the mind a gentle focus—many people have trouble sleeping because their minds are racing or churning over worries, so this helps to shift out of the talking and thinking mode into gentle body-awareness sensing mode.

Just keep breathing

It may sound a bit dumb to say it, but often the most important thing to do is just keep breathing.

The more you focus on breathing, the more you can become aware of it as a simple source of joy, he says.

"Even a single breath, when given our full attention, is a powerful reminder that we are alive, and what a remarkable thing that is. It directs attention to the drawing in of life energy. It allows our physicality to be felt as an active thing, interlinked with emotions and ways of thinking."

"Just stopping now and again and taking a few purposeful breaths feels good, grounds you in your body and, depending on the style of the breath, can be calming, centering, or energising."

FC

Purposeful Breathing

Available from booksellers, or at www.exislepublishing.com \$34.99

WIN! 1 of 5 copies of Purposeful Breathing. Entry form, page 8.



Breathing to stop panic attacks

Panic attacks can be terrifying. They are an extreme, powerful surge of anxiety.

Typically in a panic attack, the person feels extreme anxiety and hyperventilates, breathing very fast and shallow. Often people worry that they are going to die, fearing heart attacks or complete collapse.

Using the breath is a powerful way to control and stop panic attacks.

As a first step, it helps to recognise a panic attack for what it is.

After you have one it is good to get a medical check to make sure that, for example, fear of having a heart attack is not because you are actually at risk of a heart attack.

Once medical issues are ruled out, you can learn to recognise a panic attack when it happens and to know that it will pass.

This acts to stop a common vicious cycle in which the initial anxiety kicks

off a feeling of being anxious about being anxious, and panicking about the panic, so that everything worsens. Recognising it means you can know it is unpleasant but not ultimately harmful, and this helps it to pass more quickly.

One of the frightening things about panic attacks is that hyperventilation produces very strong effects.

Because you are breathing so fast, you breathe out way too much carbon dioxide, which results in less oxygen to the brain.

This can lead to dizziness, trouble thinking clearly, and a host of other symptoms.

In the middle of a panic attack, slow, deep breathing will have a profound and positive effect, but generally you have to have a well-established breathing practice to be able to do it in the middle of a panic attack because the tendency to be caught in hyperventilation is very strong.

It takes some muscular effort to control the breathing at a time like this.

"I can testify it works, but it is much better if you can you try to recognise the build-up to the panic attack," Greg says.

"Then, using slow, deep diaphragmatic breathing will be calming and prevent escalation."

Once you practice enough, you can control it even with an attack.

One of Greg's clients, Penny, who had a history of panic attacks, found that she could develop control over her breathing, and that it worked best for her to breathe in for a count off four then breathe out for a count of eight.

She could stop the attacks within a minute.

Another option is to pause after exhaling.

"This brings the carbon dioxide balance back up," Greg says.

"This isn't always easy to do if you are panicking but it brings your system back into balance."

Loneliness is solvable

If you are feeling lonely, we know that's really tough, but we're really glad that you're looking for information.

Feeling lonely is a normal human experience but is also a sign that you want to connect with others. There are lots of things that you can do yourself that can help you to feel less lonely. Sometimes the best way to move out of loneliness is to talk to someone else or get a little help.

If your feelings or situation are overwhelming, there are many organisations and people ready to listen.

There are also organisations that offer support and opportunities to connect with other people.

Visit the website to find out how you can become involved in the movement to end loneliness:

- Learn about loneliness and how to tackle it
- Sign up for our newsletter
- Join the coalition
- Share your stories
- Donate to support our work

Join the coalition today!

Together we can end loneliness one person, one community, one workplace at a time.

www.letsendloneliness.co.nz



SHARED Kitchen

Julie Biuso shares the kitchen bench with her daughter Ilaria for recipes in their book *Shared Kitchen: Real Food from Scratch*.

Easy family meals sit alongside more complex ones, and there are inspiring ideas for turning leftovers into scrumptious new dishes, plus unique ways of preparing fruit and vegetables and a great section on home baking and desserts.

There's great satisfaction to be had in turning out meals such as a white peach and nectarine salsa or a sensational coconut cashew nut curry.

The recipes in *Shared Kitchen* will inspire you to get in the kitchen and have fun in the process!

Available from booksellers or buy from www.batemanbooks.co.nz
Photography by Manja Wachsmuth

ILIARA'S CASHEW KUMARA SAG

Serves 4-8

Teamed with a big bowl of steaming rice or spicy lentils, this will feed a family of four with plenty for lunch the next day. It's a deliciously cheap whack of goodness.

INGREDIENTS

3 biggish (roughly 1kg) red or gold kumara

3½ tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

Small piece ginger (as big as your thumb) peeled and grated

1 tbsp garam masala

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1kg frozen spinach, thawed

100g raw cashew nuts



Toasted dessicated coconut for garnish

1 cup plain unsweetened yoghurt for swirling through at the end, and extra for serving

Sliced red chilli (optional)

METHOD

Heat oven to 200°C. Peel kumara, cut into large cubes, place in a shallow roasting tin lined with baking paper and toss with 1½ tablespoons of oil.

Sprinkle with salt and grind over black pepper, then bang in the oven until tender and a little crispy. This will take around half an hour or so, and you might like to turn the kumara with tongs after about 20 minutes just to make sure they are behaving.

While kumara is roasting, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large pot and add onion.

Cook on a medium heat for about 10 minutes until tender, stirring often. If the onion starts catching, add a splash of water to help it soften and stop it from charring.

Once onion is softened and lightly

Recipe Notes

You'd be mad to use a mountain of pricey fresh spinach in a dish like this as it wilts down to nearly nothing. Frozen spinach is a lot cheaper.

Making smart decisions about what to eat over winter can help keep you full and satisfied and save some coin.

While we need protein, substituting it for a hearty vegetable dish with lentils every now and then never did any harm, especially to the bank account.

browned, add garlic, ginger, garam masala and cinnamon (warming up the spices like this opens up their full aroma and flavour).

Add about 1¼ teaspoons of salt and stir for a minute until fragrant.

Next, add the thawed spinach and stab it with a wooden spoon, breaking it apart until it's a big wilted mess. Give it a good stir then add the cashews.

Bring everything to a gentle bubble, then simmer this all down on a super low heat for about 15 minutes. If it seems dry, add a little water.

Add the kumara chunks.

Stir and simmer a little more until the excess water from the spinach has reduced and the mixture is thick and somewhat creamy. Check seasoning and adjust if necessary.

Whip out a mini pan and, over a very low heat, toast the desiccated coconut. Agitate it with a spoon constantly as the fat in the coconut makes it burn very quickly. You want to take it off the heat when it is lightly golden as residual heat will keep it cooking awhile after removing from the heat.

Upon serving, add a generous dollop or three of yoghurt and loosely mix through the curry.

Sprinkle the toasted coconut over the top and add a few slices of red chilli if you want to spice things up.

MIDWEEK SAUSAGE PASTA

Serves 4 as a main course

Here's a great standard Italian pasta dish — with extras! It's an excellent way of making a tasty pasta sauce without all the faffing around required to make a traditional ragù. Don't attempt to make this with cheap sausages with high fat or lots of additives. Use pure meat sausages.

INGREDIENTS

300g (10–11 oz) quality pork and fennel sausages or pork and fennel sausage mince

4 tbsp (60 ml) olive oil

1 tsp chopped rosemary

3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

2 x 400g cans crushed Italian tomatoes

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

500g penne, rigatoni or spiral pasta

Coarse sea or rock salt for cooking pasta

Freshly grated parmesan cheese for serving



METHOD

Snip skin on sausages, then peel off skin and chop the flesh.

Heat 1 teaspoon of oil in a medium frying pan (skillet) over medium-high heat. Add sausage meat, increasing heat to high. Cook for 5–7 minutes until lightly golden, stirring from time to time. Turn off the heat, tilt the pan and leave sausage meat to drain.

Put the rest of the olive oil in a heavy-based saucepan and set pan over a low heat. Add the rosemary and garlic

and cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, until the garlic turns a pale biscuit colour. Carefully pour in tomatoes.

Season sauce with a quarter of a teaspoon of salt and black pepper. Add drained sausage meat. Bring sauce to a gentle boil, then lower the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 25 minutes, or until sauce is nice and pulpy.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in plenty of gently boiling well-salted water until al dente. Drain briefly and turn it into a heated serving bowl. Quickly toss through three-quarters of the sauce, then pour the rest on top. Serve immediately with parmesan cheese. **FC**

Recipe Notes

Fleshy tomatoes ripened by the sun make an exquisite pasta sauce, but canned tomatoes come a close second, producing a deeply coloured pulpy sauce. They also contain plenty of Vitamin C and lycopene. For pasta sauces, use canned tomatoes in thick juice; I opt for Italian (or Spanish) canned tomatoes. If you can only get whole tomatoes, transfer them to a deep bowl and squish them to a pulp with your hands. If the sausages set in large clumps, use a potato masher to break them up. *Al dente* is an Italian cooking term, literally meaning 'to the tooth' (in other words, cooked but still firm to the bite), used to describe perfectly cooked pasta.

**Shared Kitchen:
Real Food from
Scratch**

Bateman, \$39.99

WIN! 3 copies to
be won!

Entry form, page 8.



IS YOUR WORKPLACE CARER FRIENDLY? CARERS NZ CAN HELP!



IF YOU'RE A CARER, ASK YOUR EMPLOYER TO BE CAREWISE

www.carewise.net.nz



EASY STEPS
TO CREATE A
CARER FRIENDLY
WORKPLACE

- 1** *Employers commit to being CareWise*
- 2** *They can test how carer friendly they currently are using our Self-Review tool*
- 3** *They will learn how to be more carer friendly in five priority areas*
- 4** *Our Action Plan template helps employers tailor steps to ensure a carer friendly workplace*
- 5** *Workplaces receive a CareWise welcome pack and recognition certificate*
- 6** *Carers NZ provides free resources, updates, and fun things for CareWise workplaces*
- 7** *NZ and global research and news are regularly shared with CareWise employers*
- 8** *Carers NZ supports working carers and their employers at an early stage, to help carers keep working and earning!*



CAREWISE

490,000+ New Zealanders care for friends and family members who are unwell or have an ongoing condition or disability. Almost 90% of carers are workforce age. They can struggle to juggle employment and caring for loved ones. CareWise can help.

CareWise Spotlight



Laura Fergusson Brain Injury Trust CEO Kathryn Jones
"Five things I learned from our focus group for caring staff"

Based in Canterbury, the Laura Fergusson Brain Injury Trust employs more than 200 staff providing community based rehabilitation for brain injury and residential services for people with disabilities and their families.

CEO Kathryn Jones was one of the first employers to commit to being a CareWise carer friendly workplace when the free programme, supported by the Ministry of Social Development, was launched by national not for profit Carers NZ in May 2020. Dozens of New Zealand organisations have since made the commitment to being carer friendly employers.

LFBIT committed to the principles of CareWise through leadership by Kathryn and the organisation's HR manager, who are joint project owners and quickly developed an Action Plan based on the five CareWise elements of supporting carers through awareness at work, recognition of their needs, providing information and support, being flexible in work policies, and ensuring 'care aware' human resource practices.

The Trust completed the CareWise self-review to assess how carer friendly it already was, then developed an Action Plan to build its performance across the five CareWise areas, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement along the way.

An early action implemented by LFBIT was hosting a get together of employees who have caring roles for family members. The aim of the focus group was to gather information about the 'real' issues faced by carers working in different roles for the Trust. Three carers participated in the focus group; their work roles span administration (office-based Monday to Friday), residential care (24 hour rostered shift work), and community rehabilitation.

The informal two hour meeting included lunch and was facilitated by Kathryn.

She says the carers shared their stories and identified some challenges they face at work while juggling work and care.

"They were very positive about the current support that LFBIT does offer, but assisted during our meeting to identify areas where we can do better."

Kathryn made use of the tools available to CareWise employers, such as the staff survey template, when planning the focus group, then welcomed free flowing feedback from the carers. Their suggestions have helped to shape the LFBIT's planning as a CareWise employer.

As part of its work to be carer friendly, the Trust also asked Carers NZ to review some of its staff policies and suggest how these can be improved to better support caring staff.

Carers NZ congratulates the Trust for its leadership as one of the first healthcare sector employers to commit to being CareWise!

To learn about the Laura Fergusson Brain Injury Trust, visit www.lfbit.co.nz



Kathryn and her team are using feedback from carers to shape the organisation's CareWise Action Plan.

"Other employers on the CareWise journey might be interested in what we have learned," she says.

- Additional fatigue, stress and worry affect carers whilst at work if their family member is unwell or a situation arises that needs an urgent response.
- Carers tend to use annual leave to 'care' rather than have a break themselves.
- Effective flexible working policies mean a lot to carers.
- Carers would highly value places of work that provide access to carer resources and information, like those freely shared with CareWise employers by Carers NZ - including *Family Care!*
- Training and educating managers and colleagues is key to building a culture of understanding and support for carers in their workplaces.

Become CareWise - be a carer friendly employer

Carers NZ will keep you informed about issues important to family carers, and provide practical one to one support for caring staff. We can also help you lead carer focus groups in your workplace!

Contact us on 0800 777 797 or email centre@carers.net.nz

“Carers like me appreciate flexibility so much and will go above and beyond in return”

Jasmine Watson, Marketing and Communications Manager

Jasmine Watson is “extremely pleased” that her workplace – the Laura Fergusson Brain Injury Trust Canterbury - is now CareWise.

“For me it gives accreditation to something my workplace was already doing, but provides structure to make sure they are doing it as well as they possibly can.”

Jasmine, the Trust’s marketing and communications manager, has been able to thrive in her varied and busy role at work in part because of her employer’s supportive attitude.

“At home I have two delightful young children one of whom has autism and the other dyspraxia and anxiety. Carers like me appreciate flexibility so much and will go above and beyond in return.”

Like most working parents, juggling family life can be difficult, she says,

“but for us and families like ours, appointments and meetings most often occur during working hours.”

“When children who have autism are young, it is especially important to access early intervention support, which we were lucky enough to receive from the Champion Centre in Christchurch. This involved occupational therapy, play therapy, speech therapy, music therapy, and more. However, this weekly support meant regular time off work for either myself or my husband.”

It made a huge difference to be given the flexibility by her employer to attend appointments for her children without guilt, knowing Jasmine could make the time up.

Her advice for other employers?

“Offer as much flexibility for staff as you can. It can be difficult for people



in caring situations to approach their employers about time off but I have been so fortunate that my workplace has been extremely accommodating to my needs. I felt comfortable enough to mention it at my job interview so they knew in advance that I was a carer.”



There are now dozens of CareWise workplaces in New Zealand!
Ask your employer to be carer friendly by joining free at carewise.net.nz



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING



TALK & LISTEN,
BE THERE,
FEEL CONNECTED



Your time,
your words,
your presence



REMEMBER THE
SIMPLE THINGS
THAT GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW
EXPERIENCES,
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
SURPRISE YOURSELF



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

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

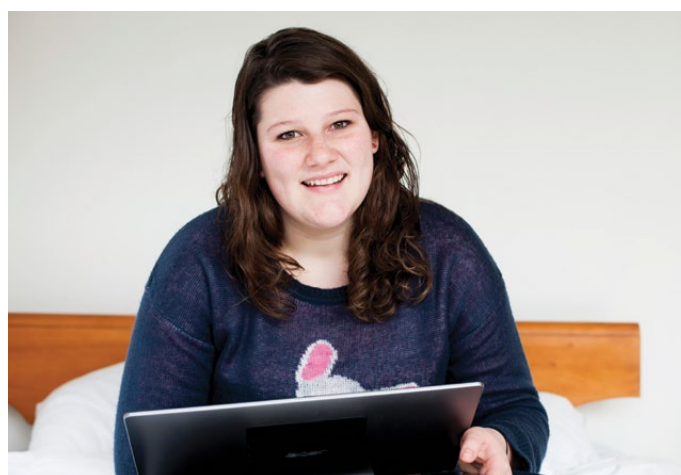




Help and information if you're aged up to 24 and help to support someone in your family or whānau

Young Carers NZ was established in 2005 by children and young people in caring roles for loved ones. Over the years it has grown into a community of 2000+ young carers and supporters, mainly interacting on social media.

A number of leadership groups led by young carers under the age of 24 advanced the work of Young Carers NZ and a new group will meet for the first time in July 2021 - young carers from across the country who will help to shape new supports for those currently helping members of their families, whānau, or aiga.



Young caring is still too invisible in New Zealand – help us to make young carers aware of support, and to know that there is a network just for them. You can do this by:

- Telling a young carer in your life about YCNZ's Facebook community where they can receive support, updates, and learn about activities that might be of interest:
www.facebook.com/youngcarersnz
- Asking them to click on the link to the short survey for young carers at the top of the Facebook page. This survey will help New Zealand know more about young carers: how old they are, who they help to care for, what they do, where they live, their ethnicity, and how they feel about their role. So far we have had more than 500 responses to the survey and we hope for 2,000 to build a picture about our country's young carers. It takes just a minute to complete the survey. If the young carer in your life is very young, help them complete the survey!
- When completing the survey the young carer can provide their contact details to join Young Carers NZ – the free network that exists just for them. They will receive regular e-updates, and have opportunities to connect with other young carers, and sources of advice and help. Or, young carers can join the network by phoning 0800 777 797 or emailing centre@carers.net.nz
- Schools, youth networks, counsellors, community organisations, and families/whānau can make sure young carers know about the Student Volunteer Army's Service Award recognition programme. It recognises and celebrates the volunteering of secondary students including the mahi aroha of young carers. YCNZ has worked with the Army for several years to build the programme at schools around the country. Learn more at **www.service.sva.org.nz/students/**
- Request Young Carers NZ's free resources for adults working with young carers, and to help young carers. Phone 0800 777 797 or email centre@carers.net.nz
- Community, professional, and education networks that want to learn more about Young Carers NZ and help to ensure better support for them can request a Young Carers NZ presentation – or just have a conversation. Contact us to arrange this.

If you or someone you know is a young carer who would like advice or has questions about what help is available for you, get in touch. We can answer questions, connect you to other help, or just listen.

0800 777 797 | www.facebook.com/youngcarersnz | centre@carers.net.nz

IMPORTANT UPDATE



Abuse in Care

Royal Commission of Inquiry

In 2019 the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry began hearing from survivors of abuse in state and faith-based care.

The Royal Commission is investigating abuse that has happened across several state care settings including:

- Care and protection residences, child welfare placements, children's homes, borstals or similar
- Psychiatric hospitals or facilities, disability support and facilities, health camps
- State school and education including boarding schools, residential special schools, teen parent units
- Transitional / law enforcement settings, police cells, police custody, court cells

All care provided by a church or faith-based organisations is in scope and is not limited to any particular faith, religion or denomination.

The Royal Commission is investigating, why people were taken into care, what abuse and neglect happen, why is happened and the ongoing impacts of that abuse.

Their mission is: To acknowledge and respond to survivors of abuse in State and faith-based care, and to produce robust and effective recommendations for transformative change to the way New Zealand looks after those in care.

Due to the disproportionate number of Māori, Pacific People, and people with disabilities in care the Inquiry, is particularly interested from hearing from survivors and witnesses that are part of these communities.

For people with a learning disability, neurodiversity or and cognitive impairment, the Inquiry has specialist supports available to ensure you can engage in an accessible, safe and confidential way. The team at the Royal Commission is organising hui and events around Aotearoa for Deaf and disabled people, including people who are part of the learning disability, neurodiversite and cognitive impairment community, and people connected to the disability sector.

If you are interested in attending any of the hui, please contact the engagement team disability@abuseincare.org.nz

When survivors or witnesses of abuse, such as whānau members or support workers, come forward to share their experiences with the Royal Commission, they will have the ability to access wellbeing supports to assist them with this process.

Unfortunately, there have been many survivors, particularly in institutional care that have passed away before having the opportunity to share their experiences.

This is why it is important that the Royal Commission also hears from people who witnessed the abuse. Just as with survivors your privacy will be protected, and you have the option of being anonymous through this process.

People can share their experiences in a range of different ways. All interaction below with the Royal Commission can be anonymous, unless you give expressed permission for them to use your name.

There are different ways you can share your story.

Private session is where you will meet with a Commissioner to share your experiences in a private and confidential manner. The Royal Commission will let you know when they are going to be in your area and have a time when a Commissioner can meet with you.

Written account is when the Royal Commission will send you a booklet with questions for you to complete in your own time. Support is available to help you write your account.

Witness statements occur when you meet with someone from the Investigation team. They will work with you to construct a written statement that could be used as part of the investigation. You will be asked more questions than you would in a private session, but the final product will be able to be used as evidence.

Public hearings occur on a topic of investigation. If your experience is relevant to a particular hearing topic then you may be asked to speak at the hearing. It will not be possible for the thousands of survivors and other participants who contact the Royal Commission over the next few years to be witnesses at public hearings. To participate, a witness must first give a formal witness statement. Then, the Inquiry will ask some of the witnesses who have given a witness statement to also give their evidence about their experiences to the Commissioners in a public hearing.

At the end of the Inquiry, the Royal Commission will create a report for government giving them recommendations on how to stop this abuse and neglect from happening in the future.

If you feel comfortable with sharing your experiences with the Royal Commission, please contact them by email contact@abuseincare.org.nz or Freephone 0800 222 727. (8am-6pm Monday to Friday)

The Inquiry welcomes questions, feedback and opportunities to engage with the sector. Please contact loren.savage@abuseincare.org.nz or 027 301 2714.

COVID-19: Information for family, whānau, and āiga carers

21 April 2021

Links to this and more information

The information in this print carers resource from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development is available online with links to more on each topic at the following sites:

Health - health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers; and MSD - msd.govt.nz/carers-covid-info

The main COVID-19 information sites continue to be covid19.govt.nz; and health.govt.nz

Carers are important and working hard during COVID-19

Carers are important and make a significant contribution to the quality of the lives of the friends, family, whānau and āiga members they support. Caring is at the heart of a compassionate community and underpins who we are and what we value. Carers' work is of huge social and economic value to New Zealand.

The role of a carer becomes even more challenging during New Zealand's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. You are performing a key frontline role in keeping things together in your families, whānau and āiga and we acknowledge and value you.

There's lots of helpful information for carers

We know that you may be doing more than usual, so we are thinking of you in how we provide information, funding and how you access services. Some of the answers are evolving and we will work with Carers NZ, members of the Carers Alliance, service providers and other partners to keep you informed.

This information has been brought together to make it easy for you to find the support and advice carers need at this time. While we will revise this resource as required, things do change, so please regularly check the carers online resource sites and COVID-19 sites at the top of this resource.

COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 vaccines will play a critical role in protecting our health and wellbeing. The COVID-19 vaccine programme is the biggest logistical exercise our health system has ever tackled. There will be enough vaccine for the entire population to be vaccinated - no one will miss out. The vaccine is free.

From March 2021, the priority group for vaccine have been the border frontline health workforce. The focus is now on the sequence for vaccine delivery to other frontline health workforce, including carers, and people at higher risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

Before general public vaccinations begin from July 2021, DHBs and all other providers will use a whānau-centred approach to vaccinate whānau members of older people, disabled people and people with relevant underlying health conditions when they accompany them to the appointment. DHBs and providers will consider whether:

- the whānau member/s are carers of the person to be vaccinated;
- vaccine supply is sufficient to meet demand;
- the whānau or family member has difficulties accessing the health system (including Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, rainbow communities, ethnic minorities and people in remote regions);
- there are other risk factors in the household, such as overcrowding or a multi-generational living arrangement.

More information on how and when vaccines will be ready, vaccine types, safety and approval, and vaccine updates and resources is available at covid19.govt.nz/vaccines and health.govt.nz/covid-vaccine and through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

COVID-19 Alert Levels

COVID-19 is likely to be with the world for some time. We must be aware and manage the risks for ourselves and the people we care for. In New Zealand, our Alert Level system is used to describe the level of risk and the restrictions that must be followed at each level. Stay informed about New Zealand's current alert levels and what this means for you and those you support through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Health and disability

How to protect yourself and the people you care for

Some people are more vulnerable to illnesses. This can include both the people you care for and some of you who are carers. There are simple steps that can be taken to protect you and your family, whānau and āiga.

Good hygiene is very important – regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands, and cough and sneeze into your elbow. It's also important to regularly clean high-touch objects, items and surfaces; and stay home and seek medical advice if unwell and get a test where necessary. Physical distance from other people who we don't know or see regularly is also important. Use face masks or coverings on public transport and when you can't physically distance from others you don't know.

The 'bubble of protection' around vulnerable people, and those they have contact with, is vital in preventing and managing the risk both of COVID-19 infection and its complications and other infectious diseases. We need to manage our bubbles so that those who are more vulnerable can be protected. More information about how to protect yourself and others is available through health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Assessment and testing for COVID-19

People with any COVID-19 symptoms should get assessed and may need to be tested. Most of the time, a COVID-19 test is free of charge.

The nurse may wear personal protective equipment (such as a mask, gown, face shield and gloves) and will ask you questions about your symptoms, general health, where you live and who you live with.

Testing is done by swabbing the back of your nose or throat. A swab is like a small cotton-bud with a longer stick. The sample goes to a laboratory to be analysed. You will be told when and how you will get your results and what to do while you are waiting for the results.

More information on who should get assessed for a test for COVID-19, how testing works, and where to get tested can be found through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Contact tracing and remembering where you've been

If someone has COVID-19, the local public health unit will find out if anyone else may have been in contact with them, to see if they have also been infected. This is called contact tracing.

If you are called by our contact tracers, please take or return the call. The public health unit, Ministry or Healthline will provide you with advice on self-isolation and check on your health and wellbeing.

Contact tracing allows for testing, isolation and treatment if required and is a key part of our COVID-19 elimination strategy.

An important part of contact tracing is remembering where you've been and who you've seen. You can use the NZ COVID Tracer 'app' that creates a digital diary, or the NZ COVID Tracer diary booklet to help.

More information on contact tracing and keeping track of where you have been can be found through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

What to do if you or the person you care for tests positive for COVID-19

If you test positive, you will have a 'case interview' and be asked to move into a quarantine facility as quickly as possible, unless other suitable arrangements are approved by the Medical Officer of Health. Moving to a quarantine facility is to ensure your health and welfare needs are met and to stop risk of infection to your family, whānau, āiga and wider community.

It is recognised that this approach may be challenging for the people you might care for and for their families, whānau and āiga. People's individual circumstances will be carefully considered in any decision made by the Medical Officer of Health. More information on testing positive and moving to a quarantine facility can be found through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Face masks and coverings

Wearing a face mask or face covering helps reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 when there are cases in the community. This is one of a range of important actions along with hand hygiene; physical distancing; coughing and sneezing into your elbow; regular cleaning of high touch objects, items and surfaces; and staying home and seeking medical advice if unwell and getting a test where necessary.

All households should have a supply of masks for each household member. Face coverings such as a bandana or a scarf can also be used if you do not have a mask.

Face masks or coverings are mandatory on public transport from Alert Level 1 and above.

The Government has advised that children under 12 years and people with a disability or physical or mental health condition which makes it difficult to wear a face mask or covering will be exempt.

It is also important to trust that others are doing the right thing. If someone does not wear a mask, they may have a legitimate reason. When near others you do not know who are not wearing a mask, keep a distance.

More information on face masks and coverings, and how to wear them correctly and safely, can be found through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

People at higher risk

Information for people considered at higher risk of the effects of COVID-19 and for their family, whānau and āiga is available through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Caring for older people

You can find information specifically for older people and their families, whānau and āiga during the COVID-19 response through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Supporting a person with dementia

You may experience extra pressure in supporting someone with dementia during the COVID-19 response. More information for family, whānau, āiga carers and supporters of people with dementia who are living at home under different Alert Levels is available through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Caring for disabled people

Information for disabled people and their families, whānau, āiga and carers during the COVID-19 response, as well as links to accessible information in alternate formats, is available at through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Getting disability support during COVID-19

Information and guidelines for disabled people, and their families, whānau, āiga and carers about health and disability support services at different Alert Levels is available through health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Hospice patients and end-of-life care

Guidance and information for people who receive hospice care in home and community settings to reduce the impact and spread of COVID-19 is available through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Parents

A wide range of information and links to help you care for your tamariki, rangatahi and whānau (including explaining COVID-19, Well Child Tamariki Ora, parents with babies, whānau Māori, advice, support and resources) is available through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Wellbeing

It's important to remember that, when you are caring for someone else, you also need to take care of yourself. A free national mental health and addiction support service is available 24/7 – call or text 1737. Information on other places where you can find mental health and wellbeing support is available through this resource at health.govt.nz/covid-19-carers

Welfare and social sector support

Links to this and more information

The welfare and social sector support information in this section of the print carers resource is available online, with links to more on each topic at the following site, msd.govt.nz/carers-covid-info

Access to food and other essentials

Accessing financial assistance to get food

You may be able to get help through Work and Income. You don't need to be an existing Work and Income client to get this help. To learn more, call 0800 559 009 or go to the MSD carers webpage above.

If you can't leave your home to get food

Support may be available to get food delivered if you can't leave your home.

- You can make online orders and arrangements through local supermarkets; or make arrangements with family and friends to pick up food.
- If this is not possible, you can also seek assistance through community groups, food banks, or social service or health providers. You can find contact details for these groups on the Family Services Directory at familyservices.govt.nz/directory

General Financial Support

You may be eligible for financial help from Work and Income for urgent costs like:

- accommodation (rent, board, emergency housing)
- repairing or replacing appliances
- emergency dental treatment
- emergency medical treatment
- health travel costs

You don't need to be on a benefit to get help. You can find out more information about financial support at workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19 or check what else you might be eligible for at check.msd.govt.nz

If you're not sure what you might be eligible for, or you'd like to talk to someone about your situation, you can call Work and Income on **0800 559 009**.

Work and Income clients

You can use MyMSD at my.msd.govt.nz to update your personal details, check your payments and apply for help with things like one-off costs for food. If you still need help, you can call Work and Income on 0800 559 009. More information related to COVID-19 support and changes is available at workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19

Help for carers

Information on carer focused support available from Work and Income can be found at workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/carers

Please check the webpage regularly for the most up to date information.

Help for carers in paid employment (including self-employed)

Leave Support Scheme

If you can't work from home and are required to self-isolate because you meet certain health criteria, your employer may be eligible for the Leave Support Scheme to help keep paying you. You can also get the Leave Support Scheme if you're self-employed.

The health criteria for the scheme includes situations where:

- You are the caregiver of a dependant who has been told to self-isolate for a period by a doctor or health official through the National Contact Tracing process, and the dependant needs support to do so safely
- You have household members who are considered "higher risk" if they contract COVID-19 and a doctor has told you to self-isolate (this is to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to vulnerable household members)

More information on criteria for the Leave Support Scheme can be found at workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19

Talk to your employer about your situation and whether they may be able to apply for the Leave Support Scheme to help keep paying you.

Short-Term Absence Payment

The COVID-19 Short-Term Absence Payment is available for employers and self-employed people to help pay their employees who can't work from home while they wait for a COVID-19 test result, or who are a parent or caregiver of a dependant who is staying home while waiting for their COVID-19 test results.

Talk to your employer about your situation and whether they may be able to apply for the Short-Term Absence Payment to help keep paying you.

More information can be found at workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19

COVID-19 Wage Subsidies

Over the past year the Government has made several COVID-19 wage subsidies available to support employers and self-employed people, so they can continue to pay employees, including casuals, and protect jobs. The most recent was the two-week COVID-19 Wage Subsidy March 2021. This has now closed.

The Government has said a COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme will be in place if there is an escalation to Alert Levels 3 or 4 anywhere in New Zealand for 7 days or more.

More information can be found by going to workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19 and selecting the webpage "COVID-19 payments that have ended".

Keeping up to date

Please keep checking the key government sites for more information on the COVID response: covid19.govt.nz and health.govt.nz

What other information do you need?

If you have questions or other information you would like to see as a carer please use the links and numbers throughout this resource or get in touch with:

- centre@carers.net.nz
- Carers NZ free on 0800 777 797
- Continence NZ – Free Incontinence Help on 0800 650 659
- Work and Income call free on 0800 559 009
- Carers.strategy@msd.govt.nz
- disability@health.govt.nz
- Healthline COVID-19 enquiries – call free on 0800 358 5453.

For guidance on any health issues, call Healthline free on 0800 611 116 or contact your local general practice.

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