

# Minimising and managing workplace stress



**WORKING WELL**

 **Mental Health Foundation**  
mauri tū, mauri ora OF NEW ZEALAND

# Contents

<b>1.</b> Introduction to minimising and managing workplace stress	3
<b>2.</b> Stress in the workplace	6
<b>3.</b> Understanding the stress response	9
<b>4.</b> Reducing the impact of stress – The Three Rs	11
<b>5.</b> Tank on empty?	14
<b>6.</b> Refuelling the tank – fuel in, fuel out	17
<b>7.</b> Workplace fuel consumption	20
<b>8.</b> Finding balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā (Individual)	23
<b>9.</b> Finding balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā (Workplace)	25
<b>10.</b> Identifying your challenges & practising balanced thinking	27
<b>11.</b> Acceptance and change	32
<b>12.</b> Working backwards to a solution	34
<b>13.</b> Switching on your relaxation response	36
<b>14.</b> Getting help and advice	39
<b>15.</b> Reference list	43

# Minimising and managing workplace stress

## An introduction to using this resource

This resource is designed to support understanding around workplace stress, including how work impacts stress, how stress impacts individuals and what works to minimise and manage stress. Because stress is triggered by both what is happening around us and by our own personal experiences, this resource helps you explore what organisations can do to minimise and help manage stress, as well as what individuals can do.

### The *Minimising and Managing Workplace Stress Resource*:

- Focuses on the impact of stress on mental wellbeing
- Supports more proactive conversations about how workplaces, teams and individuals can work with each other to:
  - Keep people **safe** from the harmful effects of stress
  - **Support** those experiencing harmful stress
  - **Strengthen** coping and resiliency to the stress we all experience in our lives
- Can be used alone or as an additional resource to support the with the [Working Well suite of resources](#)

### It focuses on minimising and managing stress through three main strategies – the Three Rs:



#### Refuel Whakatipu

Looking after wellbeing and cultivating energy to refuel.



#### Resolve Whakatika

Identifying stressors and finding solutions that help resolve the causes of stress.



#### Relax Whakatā

Switching on the relaxation response to restore and rest.

### Supporting workplaces to:

#### Assess

What are (or could be) risks and what protective factors exist

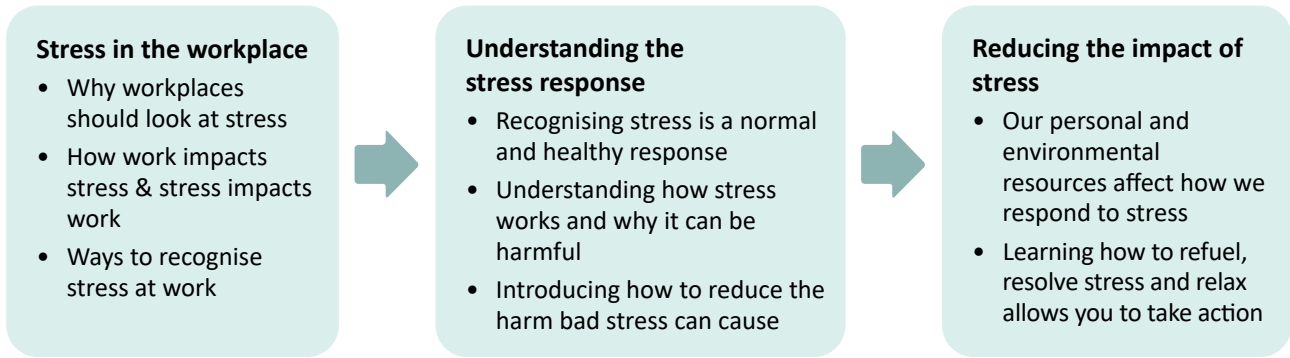
#### Plan

What are the best options to minimise or eliminate risks

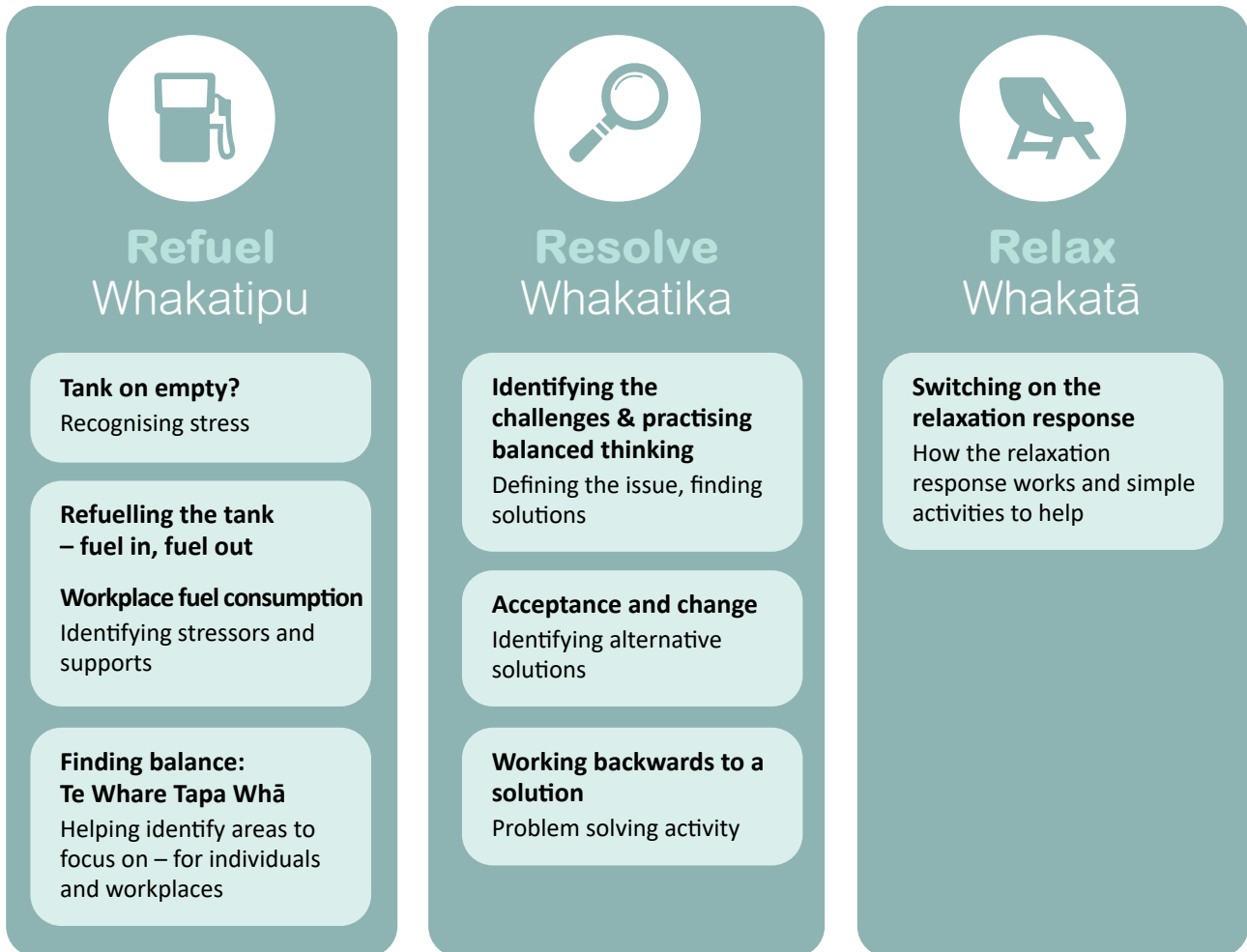
#### Do

What can be put in place (agreed plans) to take action and review effectiveness

## Fact sheets help understanding



## Worksheets help action



The *Minimising and Managing Workplace Stress Resource* is part of the **Working Well** suite and follows on from two resources which introduce core information about what mental health and wellbeing is and how workplaces can support good mental health and strengthen wellbeing.

**Creating positive work environments – the what, why and how**

**Enhancing mental wellbeing – Five Ways to Wellbeing at Work**

## We know that there will be people experiencing high levels of stress right now

The information in this resource is best used when you have fuel in your own tank. If you're running on empty it's harder to take in new information and respond well to stress in others.

The information is not designed to treat individuals who may be experiencing the extreme outcomes of chronic or traumatic stress (such as high anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or burnout). We hope that these resources can help create an environment that will prevent extreme stress and identify what supports are available to help.

### If you are concerned about yourself

We recommend talking to someone you trust. This can be someone at work, or in your community, a person who can help guide you such as a kuia or kaumatua, mentor, or trusted friend. You can also get advice from a GP, or other health professional.

### If you are concerned about someone else at work

You may find our [Open Minds resources](#) useful to help you to have conversations about what is going on for them. It can support you to have a conversation with someone who is experiencing mental distress.

Remember to consider the supports you have available through your workplace and in your community. We list some of these in [Getting help and advice](#).

# Fact sheet

## Stress in the workplace

- Employers need to consider the impact of stress on their people. Job stress is a significant occupational hazard
- Being proactive in managing job stress benefits both your people and your workplace
- Not all stress is bad – it can be motivating and helpful
- Manageable challenges at work can see increases in productivity and creativity

### What is job stress? <sup>1,2,3,4,5,6</sup>

Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional response resulting from a situation where the demands of a job are not matched by the resources provided to get the job done. Job stress is now recognised as a significant occupational hazard (psychosocial risk/hazard). The NZ Wellness in the Workplace 2022 survey found 49.7% of organisations had seen an increase in stress compared to previous years<sup>7</sup>.

Business NZ's Workplace Wellbeing Report 2023 found that the top three causes of poor mental health in the workplace were high workloads, long hours, and change at work.

Healthify notes that, in general, stress at work is increasing. High workloads are cited as the main cause of the increase, but is not the only reason. Job insecurity, possible redundancy and long hours cause stress as well. Harassment, bullying and conflict are additional factors alongside poor work/life balance and low social supports.

### Minimising/Managing job stress – a proactive and organisational approach <sup>5,8,9</sup>

Being proactive in managing job stress benefits both your people and your workplace. Workplaces have a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to manage risks to mental health and wellbeing just like they do any other health and safety risk. This requires an integrated approach where both the work conditions creating stress and the impacts of stress on individuals are addressed. This approach should:

1. Aim to prevent workplace stress or minimise the impact through **creating a psychologically healthy and safe environment**.
2. Have systems to support staff who have been impacted by stress.
3. Provide opportunities for staff to strengthen their skills and resiliency.

Is it **safe**?



Is it **supportive**?



Will it **strengthen** wellbeing?



To reduce the impact of stress, workplaces should consider processes and ways of working that enhance the Three Rs:



## Refuel

Whakatipu

Looking after wellbeing and cultivating energy to refuel.



## Resolve

Whakatika

Identifying stressors and finding solutions that help resolve the causes of stress.



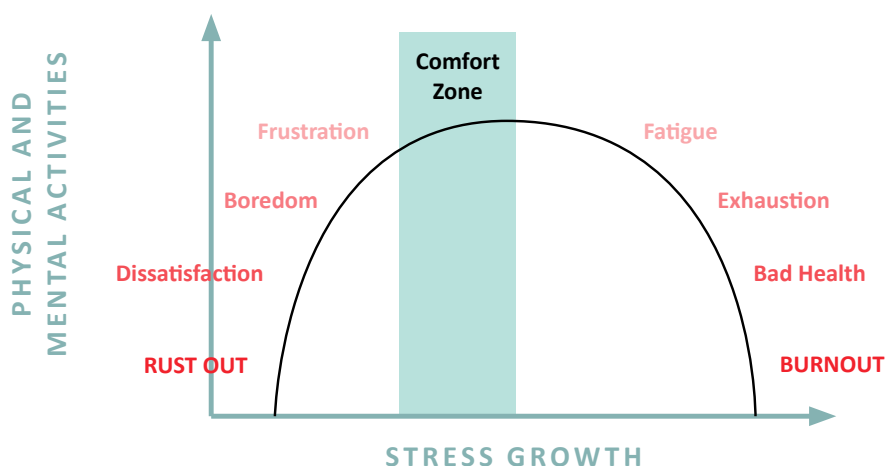
## Relax

Whakatā

Switching on the relaxation response to restore and rest.

### Stress and productivity <sup>9</sup>

Stress and anxiety can lift performance and ability and help us respond to immediate issues, so in small doses experiencing stress can increase productivity and creativity. Researchers Nixon, Yerkes and Dodson<sup>11</sup> showed that there is an optimal point where we are given enough challenge to work at our peak. But if stress continues to increase, or if people don't have the opportunity to recover and recharge, the benefit is quickly lost and productivity decreases, illness, accidents and injuries increase and it has a negative impact on the organisation's culture.



#### Good stress:

- Motivates us and focuses our energy, helping us improve our performance
- Lasts only a short time
- Is within our coping abilities
- Makes us feel excited

#### Distress, or bad stress:

- Causes anxiety or concern and generally decreases job performance
- Can be short or long term
- Feels beyond our coping abilities
- Feels unpleasant



For more on [How work impacts mental health](#)

## Common causes of stress at work

1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9

**Workload** – Physical, mental and emotional demands

**Control** – Control over work, clarity of role

**Reward & recognition** – Perceived balance of effort and rewards, feeling valued

**Job and social support** – Workplace, supervisor, co-worker and whānau

**Workplace fairness** – How people are treated and rewarded, how decisions are made

**Values, ideals and motivations** – are values, motivations or expectations in conflict

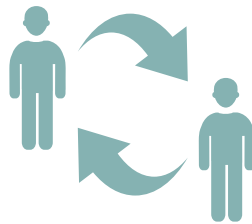
**Physical environment** – hazards or demands the environment creates

## Signs for stress at work

If individuals or teams are experiencing stress in the workplace, you may see:



**Arguments**



**Higher staff turnover**



**More reports of stress**



**More sickness absence**



**Decreased performance**



**More complaints and grievances**

When these signs are present or when staff raise concerns about stress, workplaces have a role and responsibility to assess the impact work may be having on their people's health and to take action to minimise, eliminate or manage.

# Fact sheet

## Understanding the stress response

- Stress is normal. Everyone experiences it. It is our bodies' response to help us prepare for challenges
- In today's world we face many situations that can trigger our stress response <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>, so we need to make sure we turn off and recover
- There is good stress and bad stress and too much bad stress can be harmful
- In small doses, experiencing stress can help us to perform
- If we think about feelings of stress as our bodies' way of helping us to cope, we can minimise the negative health impacts of stress
- Workplace processes and systems can support minimising, managing and recovering from stress

Stress is normal. Everyone experiences it. How intense stress feels and what we find stressful is different for all of us. We all have a hardwired stress response which is switched on by different stressors for different people.

### Fight, flight or freeze

Stress is the response our body has to help us prepare for challenges. When we're faced with a challenge, we get a rush of natural chemicals that amplify physical strength and our senses. It is a helpful automatic physical response that can sharpen our senses and physical abilities to deal with immediate challenges.

Too much stress can be harmful. When our stress response is turned on repeatedly for either real or perceived threats, it puts unnecessary strain on our bodies.

If we don't have the opportunity to recover and calm our body down or turn off the stress response, stress can stay for an extended period of time and may build, so your body never completely unwinds.

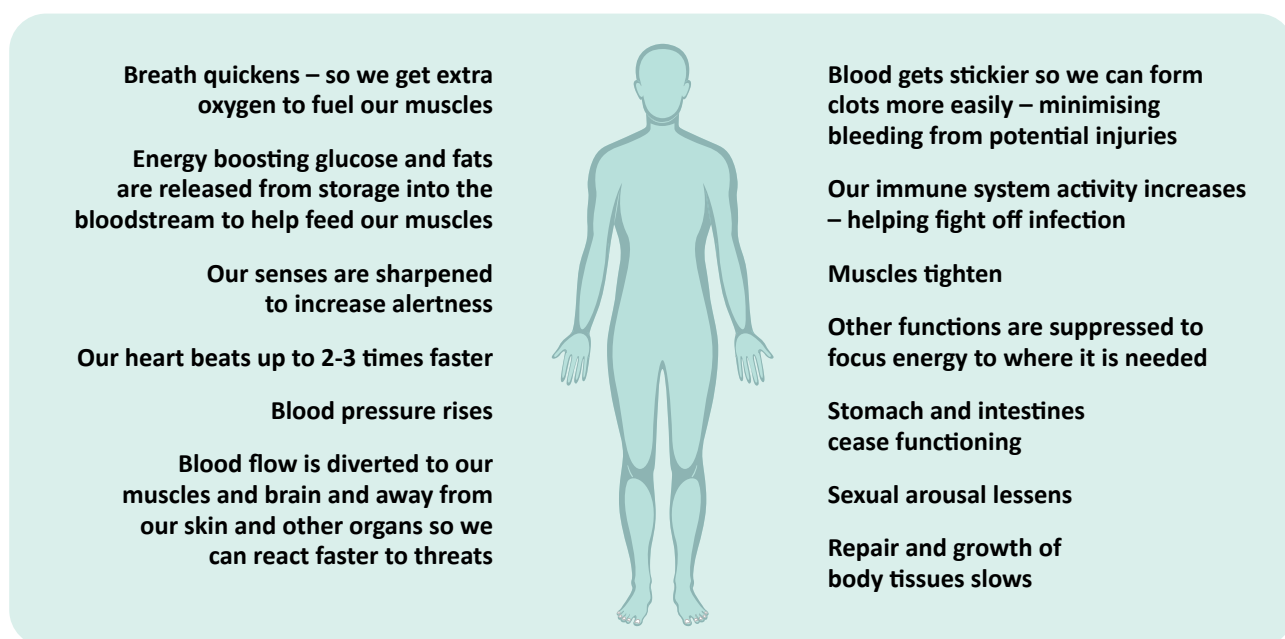
Each of us faces many situations that can trigger our stress responses. It's not just physical dangers that can trigger them. Our bodies do a poor job of recognising the difference between life-threatening events and day-to-day stressors. Anger or anxiety caused by day-to-day events, and even anticipated potential problems, can build up over the day. Without even realising it, we can make assumptions about what these potential problems may mean and set off a series of automatic physiological responses that most of us know as 'feeling stressed'.

## Another way of looking at stress <sup>6,7</sup>

Stress and anxiety can lift our performance and ability and help us respond to immediate issues, so, in small doses, experiencing stress can help us to perform and respond well to challenges. It's important to keep this in mind because if we view all experiences of stress as harmful, we can worsen the negative effects on our bodies. When we view stressors as a challenge and the response as our bodies' way of helping us cope, we can minimise negative health impacts and recover faster from stress.

## What happens when your body perceives danger? The stress response<sup>2</sup>

When we perceive something as a threat or difficulty, especially if we believe we don't have the resources to cope, our bodies will trigger the stress response. Our bodies prepare us to be ready to take action to protect ourselves – this is often known as a 'fight or flight' response:



These responses are very useful when we are in physical danger that mean we have to move or respond urgently. Once the danger has passed, our relaxation response (the parasympathetic nervous system) can be turned on to calm the body down. However, for most of us today, stress isn't often triggered by physical danger, so we don't get an opportunity to burn up that energy and switch off our stress response. **This means we need to consciously manage our levels of stress.**

## The Three Rs

Learning the **Three Rs** and practising them will help you to minimise, manage and recover from stress. Workplace processes and systems can support the Three Rs too.

The Three Rs are:



**Refuel | Whakatipu** – looking after wellbeing and cultivating energy to refuel.



**Resolve | Whakatika** – identifying stressors and finding solutions that help resolve the causes of stress.



**Relax | Whakatā** – switching on the relaxation response to restore and rest.

# Fact sheet

## Reducing the impact of stress – The Three Rs

- The way we look at threats or stressors, as well as personal resources and environmental factors, affect how we respond to stress
- A combination of the Three Rs: **Refuel** | Whakatipu, **Resolve** | Whakatika, and **Relax** | Whakatā can help us reduce the impact of stress <sup>1,2,3</sup>

We all respond differently to situations and events depending on our own views and experiences. What one person finds thrilling, another person may find terrifying.

Stress is not always caused by an event or situation. Sometimes stress can be caused by our own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Often, how we feel and think about a situation can change how we react. While we may not be able to control the situation that triggers our **stress response**, we can learn how we can change the situation, rethink the problem, or accept what has happened.

To help reduce the impact of stress, use the Three Rs:



**Refuel | Whakatipu** – looking after wellbeing and cultivating energy to refuel.



**Resolve | Whakatika** – identifying stressors and finding solutions that help resolve the causes of stress.



**Relax | Whakatā** – switching on the relaxation response to restore and rest.

### Refuel | Whakatipu <sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

We all face multiple demands on our time and energy. To keep moving, we need to have enough fuel to manage these demands. It's important to recognise the areas in your world that help you refuel and make time for these. Regular exercise, eating healthy food, doing activities that bring you joy and making time for relaxing, socialising and connecting with others are all important ways we can look after ourselves. The **Refuelling the tank** worksheet helps you recognise what tops you up and what drains you.

Trying to balance all aspects of our lives is important. Recognising what areas of our physical, mental, spiritual and whānau wellbeing need support helps focus what parts of our life need the most fuel. The Finding Balance worksheets (**individual** and **workplace**) help you identify different things you can do to keep you and your workplace well.

Workplaces need to be proactive in keeping their people's tanks full, planning for busy times and knowing how and when their people need more fuel. There will be times when the amount of fuel we use needs to be reduced, so choosing to reduce demands for a time can keep us going until we are able to top up our tanks.



**For worksheets to help you refuel:**

[Finding Balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā \(individual\)](#)

[Finding Balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā \(workplace\)](#)

[Tank on empty](#)

[Refuelling the tank – Fuel in, Fuel out](#)

[Workplace fuel consumption](#)

The **Five Ways to Wellbeing** are simple and proven actions you can introduce into your life, at home and at work, to help build resilience and boost mental health and wellbeing. There's also a **Five Ways to Wellbeing at Work Toolkit**.

## Resolve | Whakatika <sup>5,6,7</sup>

How we experience the world helps shape what we perceive to be a threat and how well we can cope with what is happening. The world around us, including our culture, beliefs, economic situation, physical health, relationships and our place in communities all provide protective and risk factors for our wellbeing.

Risk factors impact our stress levels and our protective factors help us manage. These can change over time as we learn new things and as our environment changes.

We may not be able to control the situation that triggers our **stress response**, or we may have multiple causes of stress. When the situation is out of our control, dangerous or has a traumatic impact, support and help from others is often needed. Find someone you feel safe to talk to or look at some of the supports available on the [Getting help and advice fact sheet](#).

For other stressors, we can explore what options we have to: change the situation, rethink the problem, or accept what has happened. This can involve:

- Identifying our stressors and our stress reactions
- Looking at protective factors and resources
- Finding possible solutions and choosing the right ones for us
- Planning, practicing and reviewing our success

At work there can be a range of situations teams and individuals find stressful, as well as external impacts on workers. Identifying what the issues and situations are that are impacting on stress levels and recognising the impacts will support effective problem solving.



**For worksheets to help you resolve the causes of stress:**

[Identifying the challenges and practicing balanced thinking](#)

[Acceptance and change](#)

[Working backwards to a solution](#)

## Relax | Whakatā 1,2

No matter where our stress comes from, it is important to regularly 'switch on' our relaxation response so we can minimise the harm that long term stress can cause. We need to trigger this relaxation response to let our body recover.

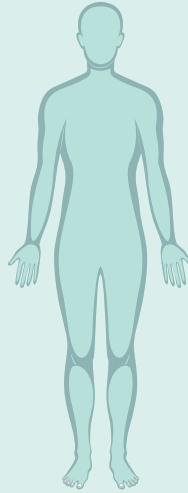
### When our relaxation response is switched on, our:

**Heartbeat and breathing slow down**

**Bodies use less oxygen**

**Blood flows more easily through our circulatory system**

**Blood lactate levels decline (high levels have been associated with anxiety attacks)**



**Genes associated with chronic inflammatory responses (which contribute to things like heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease and diabetes) are switched off**

**Genes linked to the use of energy in the body are switched on and help regulate blood sugar levels and protect our cells from the damage of stress**

To get long-term benefits we need to regularly turn on our relaxation response. There are many ways to switch it on and these can often be practised anywhere, without special equipment or training.

Workplaces can offer opportunities throughout the workday and week for staff to take a minute or five to practice relaxation. Providing information, reminders and opportunities regularly to your people can help build and sustain these practices.



### Activities to help you switch on the relaxation response



# Worksheet

## Tank on empty?

- This worksheet will help you identify what stress looks like for you and the warning signs to look out for
- Stress can come in small or large doses and can resolve quickly or build up over time. Understanding how much impact stress is having on you is important so you can get the right supports to minimise any harmful effects on the health of your mind, body, relationships and wairua
- We all have different reactions to situations, and what it looks like when we are experiencing stress can range widely
- Understanding your reactions to stress helps you know what the right response will be

Our reactions to stress can be obvious – a pounding heart, sweating, racing thoughts.

However, sometimes when the things that cause us stress are compounded over time, or are lots of small things, we may miss these warning signs. Sometimes, we have been experiencing the signs of stress for so long we see them as normal.

### Recognising stress early <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

Recognising how you experience stress early helps you take steps to reduce the negative effects of the stress response. Identifying what is causing you to feel stressed helps you work out what you need to do to take the most effective steps in those situations.

#### What are some of the warning signs of stress?

Worries, overthinking issues,  
being stuck on issues

Losing your zest for life; losing  
interest in family, friends or work

Changes in your sleeping patterns

Nervous 'twitches' or muscle spasms

Indigestion, stomach upsets

Pains in lower back, chest, shoulders,  
joints or other parts of the body

Skin itches or rashes for  
no apparent reason



Frequent colds or flu

Shortness of breath or  
shallow breathing

Memory or concentration problems

Feeling anxious and tense  
for no obvious reason

Finding it hard to make decisions

Tearfulness for no apparent reason

Feeling impatient or irritable

Losing confidence

## Running on empty?

The cause of the stress is already draining your tank and often the symptoms take more fuel to manage. Getting support to help you refuel, resolve issues and have time to recover (by turning on your relaxation response) will help reduce the signs of stress and minimise the harm.

Any persistent symptoms should be checked by a health professional.

Chronic, extreme or traumatic stress may result in severe impacts such as:

- Burnout or fatigue
- Insomnia – not being able to sleep
- Hypertension – high blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Self-harm or harmful behaviour
- Lashing out at others in emotionally or physically violent outbursts
- Feeling powerless and/or lack of meaning in life and pursuits
- Taking illegal or unsafe drugs

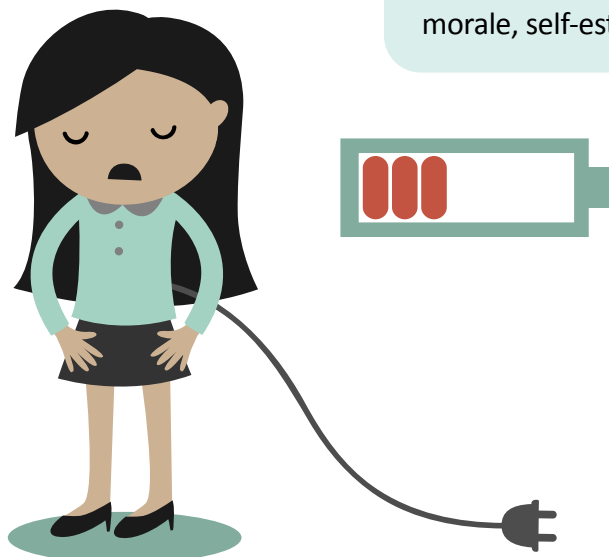
**These are signs your tank is running very low. It is very important that you get appropriate support and advice with any of the issues above. Support can help you minimise the negative impacts and support recovery to happen faster than doing it on your own. [Getting help and advice fact sheet](#)**

### Chronic job stress / 'burnout' <sup>6,7,8,9</sup>

Chronic job stress over time can lead to physical, mental and emotional fatigue and eventually 'burnout' due to the effort of coping with and managing increasing demands. It can negatively affect people's feelings, attitudes, motivations and expectations. Fatigue and burnout impact people's physical and mental health and are linked to increased absences, injury and lower productivity.

**Fatigue** = a state of physical and/or mental exhaustion that temporarily causes inability or decreased ability to respond to a situation from being over extended, either mentally, emotionally or physically.

**Burnout** = Exhaustion (emotional and physical fatigue) + cynicism (loss of feeling or concern for others or increased irritability) + reduced sense of accomplishment (low morale, self-esteem, lower coping ability).





# Worksheet (individual)

## Refuelling the tank – fuel in, fuel out



This worksheet will help you recognise what tops you up and what drains you. It will help you assess your levels of stress and understand when to take action.

We all face multiple demands on our time and energy. Keeping track of how full our wellbeing tank is allows us to manage these demands and have space for enjoyment.

Sometimes, unexpected stressors can drain our tanks, leaving us out of fuel for our day-to-day activities. There are also times when we can plan ahead, knowing that soon we will need more fuel to get through.

Recognising what is happening that empties our tank and what fills it can help us manage our journeys.

We interact everyday with places, people, technology, ideas and systems. Some offer support and opportunities; others can be frustrated and act as barriers to our goals.

The following frameworks help highlight the different aspects of life we all experience. Consider which ones impact your life, topping up or draining your tank.

### Taha whānau – social wellbeing

- Social support, social cohesion
- Participation in community and public affairs
- Family connection, whakapapa
- Communication networks
- Safety
- Health of family
- Changes in family members

### Taha tinana – physical wellbeing

- Housing conditions and location
- Working conditions
- Quality of air, water and soil (including pollution)
- Noise, temperature, weather, seasons
- Health, injuries
- Public safety
- Transmission of infectious disease

### Taha wairua – spiritual wellbeing

- Cultural participation
- Expression of cultural values and practices
- Racism and discrimination
- Access to marae and cultural resources
- Perception of safety
- Attitudes to disability
- Sites of cultural significance

### Taha hinengaro – mental wellbeing

- Employment
- Education and opportunities
- Creation and distribution of wealth
- Income and finances
- Affordable, quality, housing
- Public transport/traffic
- Urban design
- Change in roles

## FUEL IN



## FUEL OUT

Fun activities, achieving goals, interests/hobbies, involvement in groups and community, cultural activities



### PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFORT



Doing too much or too little, intense efforts or efforts that go on for a long time

Feeling valued and trusted, having a purpose, feeling capable, finding enjoyment



### EMOTIONAL

Conflicts, worries or responsibilities



Good sleep, rest and relaxation, healthy eating and exercise, access to support, managing injuries or illness well



### HEALTH

Injuries, illness, pain, poor sleep, poor nutrition, not enough exercise



Supportive relationships with friends, whānau & colleagues, being valued and having others to talk with. Feeling connected. Belonging to a group, whanaungatanga, cultural connections



### RELATIONSHIPS

Conflict, isolation, violence, not feeling valued or included, loneliness, experiencing racism and other forms of discrimination



Healthy, pleasant environments that you enjoy and support you to do activities and connect with people and nature



### ENVIRONMENT

Unhealthy, hazards, unpleasant, noisy, too hot, cold or damp, uncomfortable or difficult living or working environments



Work that is stimulating and rewarding, meets your financial needs, provides a good balance of hours/flexible hours, supportive relationships



### WORK

Shift work, uncertain work, long hours, too short hours, low support, under-resourced to do the job, no work



### GLOBAL

Don't forget to consider the national and global things that can impact our wellbeing such as news and events, international conflict, natural disasters, discrimination, colonisation, climate change, global economics, environmental issues, government policies.

## Activity – checking your fuel tank level

1. Think about the last week – what things happened and what things did you do?
2. Note down what was fuel in and what was fuel out.

### Fuel in:

These are thoughts and activities that relaxed you, gave you enjoyment, reinvigorated or strengthened your body, taught you new skills and connected you to people who refuel your tank. Time spent thinking or remembering pleasant memories or noticing skills and growth also help top you up.

### Fuel out:

The thoughts and activities that used your physical, mental or emotional effort drain your fuel tank. Issues that caused you worry, made you upset or angry drain the tank too – this might even be time spent thinking about problems coming up or that had happened in the past.

3. Have you got more going out than coming in?

If you are running low, think about what you can do to top up your tank and reduce the things using up your energy.

Think about:

- How you can increase rest, relaxation and recovery
- How you can reprioritise and leave non-urgent things for later
- What supports are available
- Looking after your physical and mental health

4. Note down the supports you can call on to help top you up and reduce emptying your tank.

### Fuel in:

ACTIVITY

WHAT, WHERE OR WHO  
TOPS YOU UP?

*e.g. coffee with friend*

### Fuel out:

ACTIVITY

WHAT, WHERE OR WHO  
SUPPORTS YOU?

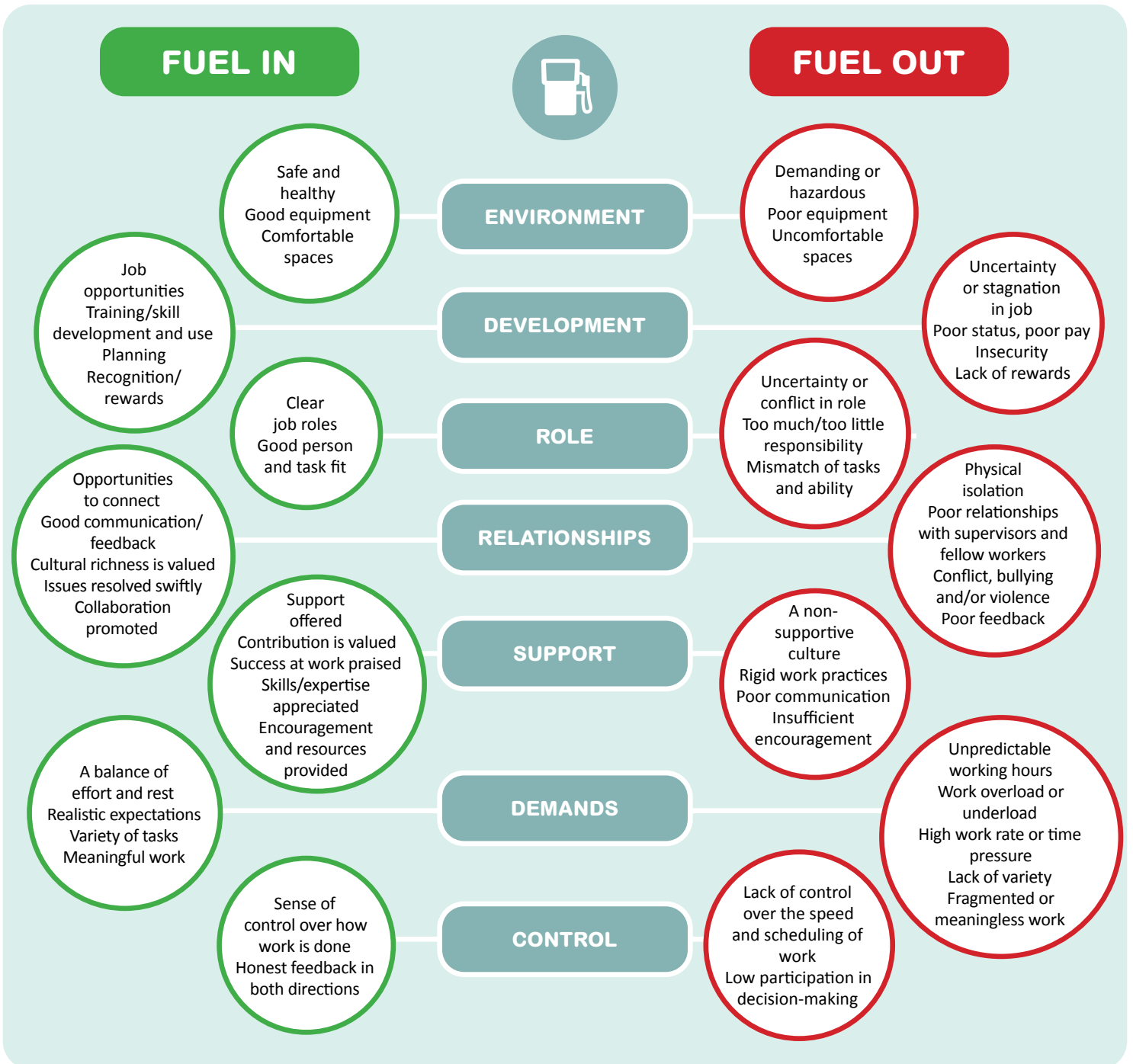
*e.g. traffic in the morning*

# Worksheet (workplace)



## Workplace fuel consumption

Workplaces need to consider how work conditions create stress and how the impacts of stress on individuals are addressed. This worksheet will help managers, team leaders and others with a responsibility for the wellbeing of staff to consider how their workplace can strengthen how it energises and fuels its staff and eliminate, isolate or minimise draining people's fuel.



Stress can result from perceived unfair processes or policies or when there are clashes in values or ideals. There needs to be room for cultural diversity and the valuing of different world views. At the heart of a positive culture is the need to trust and be trusted, and the need to respect and be respected.

### Extra cultural responsibilities

Sometimes there are extra responsibilities that are placed on people, on top of their regular duties, because of their cultural affiliation. For Māori, this might include doing mihi whakatau, hosting waiata sessions, organising activities for te wiki o te reo Māori (Māori Language Week). Workplaces need to be mindful of these additional roles – are they remunerated for or is the impact on workload considered.

In addition, different cultural practices and responsibilities outside the workplace can create stress when they conflict with workplace policies or if a workplace has not considered different cultural beliefs and values. For example, community roles required in different cultures around bereavement and the need to take leave to attend major community or family events.

### Activity

Think about how work is generally done over a week or month or pick a particular time or activity that you think is potentially of high stress for your workplace.

Considering different aspects of work, identify what in your workplace tops up people's tanks or uses up their fuel reserves. Note down the things you identify in either Fuel in or Fuel out.

Look at what supports you have in place that support the Three Rs:



**Refuel | Whakatipu** – looking after wellbeing and cultivating energy to refuel.



**Resolve | Whakatika** – identifying stressors and finding solutions that help resolve the causes of stress.



**Relax | Whakatā** – switching on the relaxation response to restore and rest.

1. Identify how you can strengthen the parts of work that energise and fuel up your staff.
2. Identify how you can eliminate, isolate or minimise the parts of work that drain energy and empty your people's tanks.
3. Think about what supports and services at work and in the community could help.

Work area	Fuel in:		Fuel out:	
		What can we do to strengthen these?		Are there supports available?
<b>Environment</b>				
<b>Development</b>				
<b>Role</b>				
<b>Relationships</b>				
<b>Support</b>				
<b>Demands</b>				
<b>Control</b>				
<b>Other stressors on staff</b>				

# Worksheet (individual)

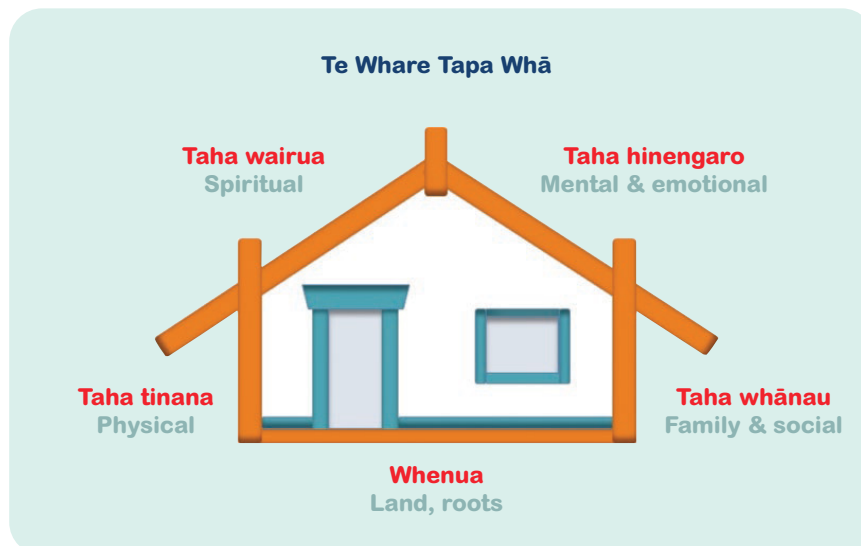


## Finding balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā

Te Whare Tapa Whā <sup>1,2,3,4</sup> is a model of health that helps us to identify where we need extra support. It describes health as a whareniui or meeting house with four walls. These represent taha wairua (spirituality), taha hinengaro (mental health), taha tinana (physical health) and taha whānau (social relationships). Connection with the whenua (land) forms the foundation. This worksheet will help you identify different things you can do to nurture and strengthen these walls and keep yourself well.

We can understand our wellbeing in terms of the balance between different parts of our lives.

Te Whare Tapa Whā was developed by Sir Mason Durie in the 1980s, in response to research by the Māori Women's Welfare League.



Taking care of your physical health is important, but to live well, you also need to pay attention to your mental health, spirituality\* and the strength of your whānau.

The health of the land and environment around is strongly connected to our health and wellbeing, and is also an important part of identity and sense of self for many.

For each of us, there are different things we can do to nurture and strengthen the walls of Te Whare Tapa Whā and keep us well. There are events and situations that may impact one wall of our whare that we cannot control. At these times you can draw on the foundations and other walls until you are able to strengthen that wall again.

\* Spirituality is expressed through beliefs, values, traditions, and practices, that support self-awareness & identity. It provides a sense of meaning and purpose as well as experiencing a sense of connectedness to self, whānau, community, nature and the significant or sacred. It does not necessarily mean practising religion.

## Activity

Think about the four walls of your house and make a note of:

- What keeps each wall in place?
- Which one feels strongest?
- Is there one that needs more support?
- What's one thing you could put in place to strengthen that wall?

**Taha tinana** (physical health)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taha hinengaro** (mental health)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taha whānau** (social relationships)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taha wairua** (spirituality\*)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Whenua** (connection with the land or environment)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Worksheet (workplace)



## Finding balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā

Organisations are only as strong as their people, and the culture of an organisation has a significant impact on the wellbeing of employees. This worksheet will help identify different things your workplace can do to create a positive environment and culture to support your people's wellbeing across all domains of life. Remember, it takes time – this is an ongoing journey.

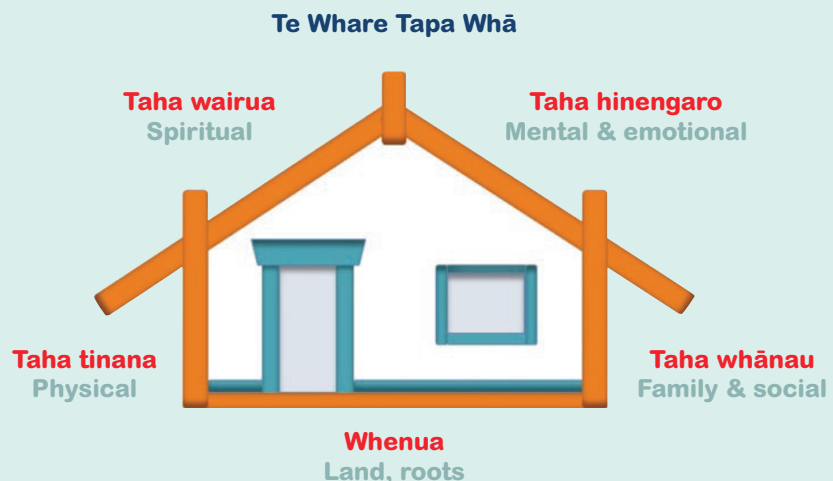
People bring their wholes selves to work. We cannot easily divide one aspect of a person's life from another – we can't tackle wellbeing at work without also thinking about wellbeing at home, and vice versa. A workplace that considers the whole person provides support for all aspects of wellbeing.

The benefits for workplaces and their people are great! Workplaces that prioritise wellbeing have better engagement, reduced absenteeism and higher productivity, while their people enjoy improved wellbeing, greater morale and higher job satisfaction.

Te Whare Tapa Whā<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> describes our health as a wharenui or meeting house with four walls. These represent taha wairua (spirituality), taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing), taha tinana (physical health) and taha whānau (social relationships). Connection with the whenua (land) forms the foundation.

All four walls are needed, and must be in balance, for the house to be strong.

Just as we aim for a healthy work-life balance, workplaces need to provide a balance across mental health, physical health, whānau health and spiritual wellbeing. Whare Tapa Whā helps to explore how workplaces can support wellbeing across all domains of life.



Wellbeing is about balance: when one wall is shaky or out of balance, the others can bear the load for a while – but the house will be less able to withstand other challenges that might come along.

**Activity**

1. As a team, consider how your workplace:
  - Keeps each wall safe
  - Provides support when a wall may be weakened
  - Helps strengthen each wall to build resiliency
  - Supports positive connections (nature, community & with where we live)
2. Consider, what can we do to create balance?

**Taha tinana** (physical health)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taha hinengaro** (mental wellbeing)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taha whānau** (social relationships)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taha wairua** (spirituality\*)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Whenua** (connection with the land or environment)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\* Spirituality is expressed through beliefs, values, traditions, and practices, that support self-awareness & identity. Provides a sense of meaning and purpose as well as experiencing a sense of connectedness to self, whānau, community, nature and the significant or sacred. It doesn't necessarily mean practising formal religion.

# Worksheet (individual)



## Identifying your challenges & practising balanced thinking

Recognising what parts of your life you find challenging will help you identify how particular stressors may impact you. This worksheet will help you know when, and why, you see something as a challenge, identify how you currently manage these situations, and how you respond (thoughts, feelings and actions). You'll also learn about 'balanced thinking'.<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

The way we think about challenges changes how we respond. If we feel like we can cope with the challenges in front of us, our responses are different to situations where we don't think we have the resources (personally or in our environment) to manage.

*"This new job will be challenging. I'm nervous, but know I'll do a good job"*

vs.

*"This new job is overwhelming. I don't think I can do it"*

Often, in positive situations, we recognise our stress response as excitement or anticipation, such as starting a new job, getting a promotion, learning a new skill.

Identifying what we find challenging about situations and how we think, feel and react helps us identify what we need to work on to reduce the stress of each situation.

Think about the first time you tried a new activity like learning to drive, riding a bike, performing on stage or learning to swim. How nervous were you? Your feelings would have been affected by:

- **Previous experiences:** if you had been in an accident or knew someone who had vs. if you had always been around others who were confident doing these activities
- **What did you view the risks as?** High chance of accident or injury, or low?
- **How confident did you feel in your own skills?** Something you could do easily or something you would struggle with?
- **What impact did the actions of the person teaching you have?** Did you feel supported or nervous at what would happen if you made a mistake?

As you learnt the new skill, you probably felt less stressed as your competence and your confidence increased. Some of your fears and worries probably weren't realised and you probably had positive experiences achieving goals.

Your goal was to learn to drive or perform on stage, ride a bike, or learn to swim, but your personal challenges to reach that goal could range from finding someone to teach you, overcoming nerves, or accessing equipment. The challenges and solutions would be different for each of us.

When problem solving, it is often helpful to talk through issues with others and seek support. Others can add new ideas and see things with new eyes.

## Activity:

### 1. Think about times when you feel challenged and what about that situation makes it a challenge.

Some situations only involve physical skills. Others involve your emotions or mental skills. Some situations may be in relationships or about your sense of identity. You may even meet challenges that ask for all of your skills.

Choose something that causes stress in your life and identify what is challenging about the situation for you.

Think about the signs that tell you this is challenging. Recognising the signs you see (or others see) when you are feeling challenged helps you to learn to recognise your stressors and identify your reactions to stress.

(We've provided an example to help guide you)

**Example: What is the stressor?** (*Asking for time off for a whānau occasion*)

	What do you see as challenging about the situation?	What are the signs for you it is a challenge?
<b>With others (relationships) – Taha whānau</b>	<i>Worry that boss may think I'm lazy or say no and my whānau keep pressuring me to confirm I'll attend</i>	<i>I feel nervous about asking and stressed about talking to my whānau, so I put off doing both</i>
<b>Physically – Taha tinana</b>	<i>Nothing</i>	<i>Headaches</i>
<b>Mentally – Taha hinengaro</b>	<i>Thinking about the best way to ask for the time off</i>	<i>I'm thinking about it a lot and keep avoiding just talking to the boss</i>
<b>Emotionally – Taha hinengaro/Taha wairua</b>	<i>I feel like I'll let people down either way</i>	<i>Lump in my throat whenever I talk about the event with whānau</i>
<b>To your identity and beliefs – Taha wairua</b>	<i>Both work and whānau important to me but this event is very important to my family and I really need to go</i>	<i>Worried I won't be able to go and how I feel when I think about it</i>

### What is the stressor?

	What do you see as challenging about the situation?	What are the signs for you it is a challenge?
<b>With others (relationships) – Taha whānau</b>		
<b>Physically – Taha tinana</b>		
<b>Mentally – Taha hinengaro</b>		
<b>Emotionally – Taha hinengaro/Taha wairua</b>		
<b>To your identity and beliefs – Taha wairua</b>		

## 2. What are some of the ways you manage or cope with challenges?

When we are met with a situation that challenges us, we often react to our immediate thoughts and feelings and choose (sometimes almost instantly) what actions to take. Recognising what our immediate thoughts are, and the feelings they trigger, can help us to weigh up how accurate or helpful they are to meet the demands of the situation.

Consider honestly how you respond and how helpful these reactions are.

	<b>Thoughts</b> What do you think about what's happening?	<b>Feelings</b> How do you feel about the situation?	<b>Actions</b> What do you do to cope or deal with the situation?
<i>E.g. Asking Boss for time off</i>	<i>E.g. Worry that boss may think I'm lazy or say no</i>	<i>E.g. Upset, kind of sad and angry</i>	<i>E.g. Putting in extra hours to get in his good books before asking for time-off</i>

### How would you rate how satisfied you are with the results? (1 being very low – 10 being very high levels of satisfaction)

To relieve stress	<i>E.g. 3</i>	
To achieve goals	<i>E.g. 1</i>	
Effect on relationships	<i>E.g. 6 with boss E.g. 2 with whānau</i>	
On self esteem	<i>E.g. 4</i>	
Overall rating	<i>E.g. 2</i>	

If your satisfaction levels are low, you may want to reconsider your course of action.

### 3. Look at the thoughts you had in each situation and consider the following:

- Do I know the facts or am I guessing what other people think or mean?
- Am I jumping to conclusions about the results of a situation?
- Do I often assume the worst or think things in 'always' or 'never' terms?
- Am I blowing the outcomes and impacts out of proportion?
- Have I looked at times I have succeeded, or only considered failures?
- Am I taking responsibility for something that isn't in my control? (e.g. other people's actions)
- Do I automatically think I can't do this, I won't know how, or I won't get it right?

**4. Consider if the immediate thoughts affected your feelings and actions.**

- What were you aiming for?
- How effective were your efforts and how did it leave you feeling?
- Are they moving you towards your goal or away from your goal?

From this you can see what successful strategies you already have in your toolkit and what areas might need a new approach.

You can also consider if there are different ways to think, feel or act in similar situations.

Did you think about calling on the supports available to you? Talking through issues with others can offer support and new ideas on how to approach issues.

**5. Consider a couple of thoughts you noted above. Evaluate the top evidence for and against it and rewrite your thoughts considering both sets of evidence.**

Thought	Evidence for What makes me think that?	Evidence against What does not fit with my interpretation?	Balanced thought
<i>E.g. worry that boss may think I'm lazy or say no</i>	<i>E.g. He told us we are short-staffed so as a team we need to pull together  He will need to find a replacement for me</i>	<i>E.g. I've been putting in extra hours so showing I'm not lazy  I'm giving a month's notice and have the leave available so I'm following policy</i>	<i>E.g. I do work hard and do extra so not lazy. We are short-staffed but I can legally take leave and am giving enough notice to find a replacement – and the sooner I ask the better</i>

**6. Does looking at the evidence on both sides help the way you think and feel about the challenge?**

Can you define the challenge you need to overcome more clearly?

Goal: *Asking for time off for a whānau occasion*

Challenge: *Not delaying asking for time off because of worrying about the boss's response*

Use the acceptance and change activity to come up with options and a plan to resolve the stressful situation.

## Conversation Guide for problem solving (for team or individual)

You can address a lot of these same ideas (above) without having to go through a worksheet. Sometimes a thoughtful conversation can help identify the issues that need to be worked through.

These conversation guidelines are just that, guidelines. The language you use and how you approach these conversations will depend on your relationship and knowledge of the person or team. Think about what other supports are available and who might be the best person to hold the conversation, so people feel safe.

Key to having a successful conversation is having a relationship where it is safe to be vulnerable, listening non-judgmentally, understanding and respecting different perspectives and working together for a solution.

1. What do you think the issue is or what are we trying to achieve?
2. “What’s happening to make this difficult?” Or “Can you tell me about what’s causing you stress right now?”
  - a. How’s that impacting / affecting things for you?
    - i. Potentially ask about how a person is feeling physically, what are they feeling? And how are their relationships affected?
  - b. What do you think is the hardest part to deal with in the situation? Or what part are you feeling stuck on?
3. What are some of the ways you are managing or coping with this?
4. How are you finding they are working?
  - a. Are they helping with how you feel about the situation (reducing any stress)? How did that impact relationships?
  - b. If you weigh up how you are feeling and the results you are getting, how satisfied would you say you are at the moment with the situation? (If low – would it help to look at it more? OR if satisfied – is there a different part that is causing stress?)
5. Looking at the bits you are most stuck on or the ones stopping you resolving the situation – what do you think and feel about them?
  - a. What impact is that having on you taking action?
6. Let’s weigh up what we know –
  - a. What is happening or has been said that made you think about the issue in that way?
  - b. Is there anything that shows a different way to look at the situation?
7. How could we look at the situation in a way that takes both sets of evidence into account?
8. Does that change anything or identify a new way to approach the situation?

Consider using the [Acceptance and Change](#) worksheet to come up with options and a plan to resolve the stressful situation.



# Worksheet

## Acceptance and change

Sometimes, we cannot change a situation that's causing us stress so we need to find ways to accept it. Usually we will need to use a combination of acceptance and change strategies when we're feeling stressed. This worksheet will help you/your team come up with strategies to help accept and/or change situations that are causing stress and provides a simple problem-solving template.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

To manage stress and improve situations, we often only focus on what can be changed. Change-oriented strategies include active problem-solving, changing our behaviour or changing our thinking about situations. However, the things that cause us stress are rarely black and white, so a combination of both acceptance and change strategies is often needed to help us cope.

Acceptance is not passively putting up with rotten situations (when active problem-solving, self-advocacy and other change strategies can make a real difference). But it does mean we don't waste our energy fighting things we can't currently change.

**Example:** "X and Y get their rosters for the next two weeks and find they've been rostered on the night shift.

X hates the night shift and gets angry and worked up, already dreading the fortnight ahead.

Y also doesn't like the nightshift, but accepts that it's part of the job and knows she can make some changes to make these next two weeks easier, like blocking out times when she can have a nap, prepping food she can eat on her breaks and looking forward to the week after, when she will have four days off in a row."

When the situation is out of our control and dangerous, this is not something we should accept, and it can be difficult to change. When this is happening, get support and help from others, find someone you feel safe to talk to or look at some of the supports available on the [Getting help and advice](#) fact sheet to keep yourself safe.

### Activity:

1. Consider some of the situations you/your team identify as challenging and possible strategies to help accept or change the situation. (For support with [identifying challenges](#))

Situation	Acceptance (Strategies for tolerating reality)	Change (Problem solving strategies)

2. Weigh up the ideas that feel achievable and realistic to you. Make sure you have included, where you can, accessing other supports.

## Problem solving template

Situation (what is happening):

---

---

What is the challenge for me/the team?

---

---

What acceptance and change options would work for me/the team?

List of solutions	List advantages and disadvantages of each solution		Choose best or most practical solution or combination
	Advantages	Disadvantages	

**Plan how to carry out the solution: How will I/we achieve the goal?**

1. List the steps to achieve your goal.
2. Remember to look at the supports (both resources and people) you have identified in the **Fuel in, Fuel out** worksheet and use these.

**Review how well the plan went**

Remember this is about reducing stress by resolving an issue, so thinking about how we felt about the process and results is important to review how successful it was.

- **During the situation – how did the approach go?**  
*E.g. How did I/the team feel, what were my/our thoughts, how did I/we manage them?*
- **Afterwards – what was the result?**  
*E.g. How did I/the team feel, how did I/we deal with it, what can I/we learn from this?*
- **Next steps – What else needs to happen?**  
*E.g. Do I/we need to talk to someone, get in other support, change anything for the future?*

# Worksheet



## Working backwards to a solution

Material provided to the Mental Health Foundation by organisational psychologist Ross Gilmour (Gilmour McGregor & Associates).

This worksheet will support you to resolve issues by focusing on solutions and working backwards from there. If your teams have identified a common cause of stress, this activity could provide a good way to work on a solution together.

Too often, we try to avoid dealing with issues that might cause conflict or, alternatively, deal with them head-on in an attacking or confrontational way which rarely leads to a resolution.

A more constructive way to tackle challenges is the 'working backwards' technique.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

The 'working backwards' technique starts with you imagining that it's now a specific date in the future, e.g. six months from now. You then talk about the issue you're facing as though it has been resolved. Talk about the steps you imagine you and others took to resolve the issue and reflect on what worked well.

The date that you choose in the future is determined by how complex the issue(s) are – it needs to be realistic and achievable. The examples below show how different timeframes can be applied to suit different situations.

### Applying the 'working backwards' technique

**Step One:** Choose a realistic time in the future – a time by when you could reasonably expect the issue would be resolved and imagine that that's where you are now. Describe the issue in the past tense – as though it's already resolved.

**Step Two:** Invite the other person, or group, to add their input into the description of the issue now that it has been resolved.

**Step Three:** Look back from the point that the issue has been resolved and, together, describe the steps, actions, etc, that were put in place that resulted in the resolution (i.e. the solutions).

In this phase it is possible to develop agreed plans, deadlines, etc, and to assign responsibilities to people for implementing the actions. Note: it is important to make sure that the actions or solutions are realistic.

**Step Four:** Develop and agree on how and by who action points were followed up. This can be achieved by asking, "What steps did we put in place to monitor progress and make sure that it did all happen?"

One of the biggest advantages of using the working backwards approach is that it moves the focus away from the problems and on to solutions. It is much easier for people to listen to comments and conversations that focus on solutions rather than problems, as problems often come across as criticisms.

**Examples:**

**1. Issue:**

Poor relationships between the technical staff and the admin team.

**Timeframe:**

Six months

**Purpose:**

This meeting is to find ways to resolve some of the issues that I am aware have been arising between the technical and administration teams.

**Description (what it would look like at the end of the time frame):**

*Imagine this meeting is happening in six months' time and we're looking back and reflecting on how well the two teams are currently working together.*

There's a level of mutual understanding and support between the teams. For months I've been hearing how much the administration people appreciate our technical team, and vice versa.

**Conversation starter:**

"What makes the working relationship such a good one?"

**2. Issue:**

Increase in targets combined with a reduction in budgets.

**Timeframe:**

Twelve months

**Purpose:**

This meeting is to find ways to meet our new challenging targets. How can we achieve this?

**Description (what it would look like at the end of the time frame):**

We've met the targets and stayed on budget.

**Conversation starter:**

"We've achieved all our goals for the year. What was the first thing we did to do this? What is working well?"

**Group description of the steps, actions, etc, that were put in place that resulted in the resolution (i.e. the solutions).**

What we did	Realistic?	Agreed?

Don't forget to identify the steps put in place to monitor progress and make sure that it did all happen.

You now have a plan you can all agree to that will help resolve the issue. The action points, dates and goals can be worked toward, and, if when your future date comes around, you can have the conversation again to see if the issue is resolved.



# Worksheet

## Switching on your relaxation response

Switching on your relaxation response helps focus your mind on thoughts or actions that feel good – interrupting stressful thoughts and feelings. This worksheet introduces breathing and muscle techniques that have been shown to be particularly helpful for relaxation.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Relax | Whakatā is one of the **Three Rs** that allow you to reduce things that trigger your stress response. Turning on our relaxation response puts a brake on the physical changes in our body, produced by the **stress response**.

Activities such as breath focus, guided imagery, mindfulness meditation, yoga, Tai Chi or qigong and repetitive prayer/karakia have all been shown to be particularly helpful for relaxation.

There are many activities that can provide a similar focus, such as group singing, waiata, dancing, martial arts, kapa haka, prayer, mōteatea, playing music, sports, walking in nature, swimming, knitting, raranga (weaving) and other crafts.

### Relaxation exercises

The short exercises on the following pages can be practised anywhere without special equipment or training to create a change in the physical response your body has to stress. Practice them at times when you have no or low stress. That way they'll also be more effective at those times when your stress levels are running high and you need relief, fast!

#### Tips to finding the right activity:

- It provides a mind/body connection where you are present in the moment
- It brings enjoyment, peace and refuels you
- Try more than one activity and find the ones that work best for you
- Take notice of the things that refuel you. This can help you identify activities
- Put aside 10-20 mins a day to focus on relaxation - this helps reduce the build-up of stress on the body
- Try something that can be practised anywhere without special equipment or training.
- Give it a go. Even short exercises can have a positive impact
- Activities and techniques become easier with regular practice (several times a day, each day)

If you are experiencing high levels of stress for a period of time, or having symptoms that concern you, seek support from someone you trust. If experiencing health concerns, speak to a health professional.

## Activity One:

### Basic deep breathing

Deep breathing, also called belly breathing, helps you calm down and bring your focus into the present moment. With deep breathing you are expanding your abdomen or belly to draw in air. If you find your shoulders rising and falling, try and practise belly breathing by expanding your stomach so that you fill your lungs.

In these two versions, there is a sequence of four breaths that can be repeated one or more times.

Make sure you stay comfortable at the pace and timing of your breath. You do not have to stick rigidly to any suggested counts.

This activity becomes easier with regular practice (several times a day, each day) and only takes a short time to do.

#### **While seated:** (aim for four breaths at least)

1. Close your eyes (or if uncomfortable closing eyes, lower your focus) and place your hands gently on your stomach so you can feel your breathing.
2. Inhale through your nose – feel your stomach expand.
3. Pause then exhale slowly through your mouth and puckered lips until you empty your lungs.
4. Try and breath rhythmically, e.g. while counting to four breathe in – pause – breathe out while counting to four. Counting can also help keep your attention on your breath and the exercise rather than other thoughts.
5. As you take each breath out try to relax your body a little bit more. If there is one area that is very tense, focus on that.
6. To finish on your fourth or last breath give a large sigh and let your body relax into your chair. Relax with a few normal breaths then open your eyes slowly.

#### **Standing with movement:**

This activity is in four steps with arm movement on each inhale. Remember to inhale through your nose.

1. Stand comfortably with your feet slightly apart and arms at your sides.
2. First inhale through your nose and slowly exhale – feel your shoulder drop and your feet press into the floor as you relax.
3. Second inhale – raise your arms in front of you to shoulder level – exhale slowly.
4. Third inhale – spread your arms to your sides at shoulder level – exhale slowly.
5. Forth inhale – raise your arms over your head so your palms meet. Turn your palms out and on the slow exhale lower your arms to your sides. If you exhale making a “hā” sound on this last exhale – you will relax your face muscles. Notice your shoulders should drop and feet press into the floor.
6. Relax for a few normal breaths, being present in the moment.

### Activity two:

#### Guided breathing

This method works by initiating the relaxation response through focusing your attention on deep breathing and calming thoughts, and interrupting stressful thoughts. If you notice your mind wanders, gently notice this as you breathe and return your attention to your breath and calming focus.

1. Choose a calming focus – something you find soothing and calm, e.g.:
  - Your breathing
  - A sound you say out loud like “OM”
  - A short prayer or karakia
  - A positive word like “peace”, “relax”, “aroha”
  - A phrase that reflects your intent, for example ‘Breathe in calm, breathe out tension, ‘hā ki roto, hā ki waho’ or simply ‘I am relaxed’
1. Repeat your sound, karakia, word or phrase out loud or silently as you breathe in or out.
2. Stay connected with your breath and calming focus, and let go and relax.

### Activity three:

#### Progressive muscle relaxation

This method helps relieve the tension we physically feel when experiencing stress and helps reduce the feelings of stress and anxiety that can accompany this. You can do this almost anywhere and it can be done without anyone really noticing. The exercise gets you to focus on the sensations of tensing and releasing the muscles in one part of your body at a time. If your focus wanders, just bring it back slowly to the way you feel as you tense and release your muscles.

1. Find a comfortable spot sitting or lying down. Try to deep breathe as you do this.
2. Starting at your toes, tense your muscles for ten seconds – paying attention to the feeling, then release for 10 seconds – noticing the sensations.
3. Move up your body through each set of muscles to your shoulders, then your arms, back to your neck. Don't forget your face tensing and relaxing your mouth and eyes.
4. Hold each for ten seconds.

Make sure you stay comfortable and adjust the activity to suit your situation and body. Remember to focus on one set of muscles at a time and try and leave the other groups relaxed.

For more relaxation approaches, [Getting help and advice](#) fact sheet.

# Fact sheet

## Getting help and advice

There are a range of other resources to support mental wellbeing in the workplace and help people and workplaces minimise and manage stress. Here we've highlighted where you can access further support for yourself or your people.

### Workplace support and resources

#### Open Minds

[mentalhealth.org.nz/open-minds](https://mentalhealth.org.nz/open-minds)

Online training materials and information to equip managers with the tools and confidence to talk about mental health.

#### Pink Shirt Day

[pinkshirtday.org.nz](https://pinkshirtday.org.nz)

A national bullying prevention campaign to celebrate diversity and prevent bullying, with a workplace focus. Register now for updates regarding Pink Shirt Day, 17 May 2019.

#### WorkSafe

[worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/work-related-stress/](https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/work-related-stress/)

Information on work-related stress.

#### Workplace Policy Builder

[wpb.business.govt.nz/workplacepolicybuilder](https://wpb.business.govt.nz/workplacepolicybuilder)

Enables businesses to create customised policies on health and wellbeing, including mental wellbeing.

#### Stress leave, sick leave

[www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/sick-leave/taking-sick-leave](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/sick-leave/taking-sick-leave)

Find out more about employer obligations and responsibilities around leave.

[depression.org.nz](https://depression.org.nz)

Includes The Journal, a free online self-help tool, and includes specific advice on helping someone at work.

[www.nokuteao.org.nz](https://www.nokuteao.org.nz)

Information around addressing stigma and discrimination associated with mental distress.



## Support to refuel your tank | Whakatipu ake noa

### Five Ways to Wellbeing

[mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/](https://mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/)

Five simple and proven actions (Connect, Give, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Be Active) to find balance, build resilience and boost mental wellbeing, that can help reduce the risk of developing mental health problems.

### Five Ways to Wellbeing at Work Toolkit

[mentalhealth.org.nz/workplaces](https://mentalhealth.org.nz/workplaces)

Includes fact sheets, tools, templates and team activities to introduce the Five Ways into your workplace to boost mental wellbeing and productivity.



## Support to resolve causes of stress | Whakatika ngā raruraru

**Employer Advice Line** - 0800 805 405 for free advice for employers and managers on how to support team members with a disability or health condition, including mental health. Call for support within normal business hours (8am – 6pm working days).

**Employment Relations Authority** – 0800 20 90 20 for general queries on employment relations.

**Your** Employee Assistance Programme for counselling and support.

**Your** workplace union for workplace support.

### Lowdown

[thelowdown.co.nz](https://thelowdown.co.nz)

For when life's ups and downs are more than just the usual ups and downs. Offers ideas and people who can help.

### Tahatū Career Navigator

[tahatu.govt.nz](https://tahatu.govt.nz)

Tools to get career ideas, explore study options and create your CV.

### OUTLine NZ

[www.outline.org.nz](https://www.outline.org.nz)

0800 688 5463 (0800 OUTLINE)

For support around sexuality and gender identity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Free phone counselling is available Monday to Friday, 9am – 9pm, and weekends/holidays 6pm – 9pm.

**Alcohol Drug Helpline** – 0800 787 797 or text 8681 for support around alcohol and drugs, a free and confidential chat with a trained counsellor, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Family Violence Information Line** – 0800 456 450 for information as well as services in your own region for support around domestic violence. The phonenumber operates 9am – 11pm every day of the year. [www.areyouok.org.nz](https://www.areyouok.org.nz)

### Sorted

[sorted.org.nz/get-sorted/](https://sorted.org.nz/get-sorted/)

Free service powered by **CFFC** (Commission for Financial Capability), the government-funded, independent agency dedicated to helping New Zealanders get ahead financially.

### New Zealand Government Housing and property

[govt.nz/browse/housing-and-property/](https://govt.nz/browse/housing-and-property/)



## Support to switch on the relaxation response | Whakatā tō waiora

### All Right?'s Hikitia te hā is a simple breathing exercise

[www.allright.org.nz/tools/hikitia-te-ha](http://www.allright.org.nz/tools/hikitia-te-ha)

A simple breathing exercise and simple actions to support becoming more mindful.

### All Right? Downtime is good time

[allright.org.nz/articles/downtime-is-good-time](http://allright.org.nz/articles/downtime-is-good-time)

### Introducing mindfulness

[mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/5-ways-toolkit/FWW-introducing-mindfulness.pdf](http://mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/5-ways-toolkit/FWW-introducing-mindfulness.pdf)

Some practical examples to support your people and teams to take a minute and Take Notice.

### How to be more Mindful

[mentalhealth.org.nz/our-work/how-to-be-more-mindful](http://mentalhealth.org.nz/our-work/how-to-be-more-mindful)

### Te Hikuwai: Resources for wellbeing – Relaxation

[www.tepou.co.nz/resources/te-hikuwai-resources-for-wellbeing-relaxation](http://www.tepou.co.nz/resources/te-hikuwai-resources-for-wellbeing-relaxation)

### New Zealand Defence Force

Breathing and stress

[health.nzdf.mil.nz/your-health/mind/mind-toolkit/breathing-and-stress](http://health.nzdf.mil.nz/your-health/mind/mind-toolkit/breathing-and-stress)

### Auckland University

CALM Website, Computer Assisted Learning for the Mind

[calm.auckland.ac.nz/index.html](http://calm.auckland.ac.nz/index.html)

### Engage Aotearoa

Welcome to The Coping Kete

[www.engagenz.co.nz/coping-kete](http://www.engagenz.co.nz/coping-kete)

## Talk to someone

### Your GP, doctor or hauora service

Can help you access counselling and can talk to you about treatment options if you're experiencing stress or anxiety.

**Need to talk?** Free call or text **1737** to talk to a trained counsellor, anytime.

### Lifeline

0800 543 354 for counselling and support.

Text 'Help' to 4357.

### Depression Helpline

0800 111 757 for support from trained counsellors.

### Samaritans

0800 726 666 for confidential support to anyone who is lonely or in emotional distress 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## Directories to find local services

### Citizens Advice Bureau New Zealand (CAB)

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

Help people to know and understand their rights and obligations and how to use this information to get the best outcomes. Provide a free and independent service to all.

### Family Services Directory

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

A searchable online database that lists information about family support organisations and the services/programmes they offer to support New Zealand families.

### Wellbeing Support

[wellbeingsupport.health.nz](http://wellbeingsupport.health.nz)

A searchable database that lists wellbeing support services delivered by GPs, health centres, youth centres and more through the Access and Choice programme.

### Community Law

[communitylaw.org.nz/](http://communitylaw.org.nz/)

Has some of the best legal professionals in the country, and they're free.

### Māori Health provider directory

[www.healthpoint.co.nz/kaupapa-maori-7](http://www.healthpoint.co.nz/kaupapa-maori-7)

There are a number of Māori health providers contracted to Health NZ throughout Aotearoa – find a provider in your area.

### ethniccommunities.govt.nz

[ethniccommunities.govt.nz/](http://ethniccommunities.govt.nz/)

The Office of Ethnic Communities provides information, advice and services to, and for, ethnic communities in New Zealand.

### Te Kāhui Māngai

[tkm.govt.nz/](http://tkm.govt.nz/)

Directory of Iwi and Māori Organisations

### Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People

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

Issues guidance and resources

### Disability Services (Ministry of Health)

[health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services](http://health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services)

Provides support to disabled people and their families so they can live the lives they choose.

# Fact sheet

## Reference list – Minimising and managing workplace stress

### Stress in the workplace

1. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
2. Government of Canada, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2018). *Workplace Stress - General: OSH answers*. Retrieved from <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>.
3. Health and Safety Executive. (2018). *Stress at work - signs of stress*. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/signs.htm>
4. *Healthy work: Managing stress and fatigue in the workplace*. (2003). Wellington, New Zealand: Occupational Safety and Health Service.
5. LaMontagne, A., & Keegel, T. (2012). *Reducing stress in the workplace: An evidence review: full report*. Melbourne, Australia: VicHealth. Retrieved from <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/workplace>
6. Scott-Howman, A., & Walls, C. (2003). *Workplace stress in New Zealand*. Wellington, N.Z.: Thomson Brookers.
7. BusinessNZ., & Southern Cross. (2023). *Workplace Wellness Report 2023*. Retrieved from <https://businessnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Workplace-Wellness-2023.pdf>
8. Harvey, S. B., Joyce, S., Tan, L., Johnson, A., Nguyen, H., Modini, M., & Groth, M. (2014). *Developing a mentally healthy workplace: A review of the literature*. Retrieved from [https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-03/developing-a-mentally-healthy-workplace-a-review-of-the-literature\\_0.pdf](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-03/developing-a-mentally-healthy-workplace-a-review-of-the-literature_0.pdf)
9. Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. (2016). *Working well: A workplace guide to mental health*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
10. Benson, H., Casey, A., & Coltera, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Stress management: approaches for preventing and reducing stress*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.
11. Karmakar, R. (2017). Guidelines for stress management. *Psychology and Behavioral Science International Journal*, 3(2): 555607. DOI: 10.19080/PBSIJ.2017.03.555607.

### Understanding the stress response

1. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
2. Benson, H., Casey, A., & Coltera, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Stress management: approaches for preventing and reducing stress*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.

3. Charlesworth, E. A., & Nathan, R. G. (2012). *Stress management: a comprehensive guide to wellness*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Ballantine Books. (pp. 421).
4. Farmstrong. (2018). *Managing stress and burnout*. Retrieved from <https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeing-topics/burnout>
5. New Zealand Defence Force. (2018). *Health*. Retrieved from <http://health.nzdf.mil.nz/>
6. Nelson, D. L., & Simmons, B. L. (2003). Health psychology and work stress: A more positive approach. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology*. (pp. 97–119). Washington: American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10474-005>
7. Simmons, B. L., & Nelson, D. L. (2007). Eustress at work: extending the holistic stress model. In *Positive organizational behavior* (pp. 40–54). London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446212752.n4>

### Tank on empty?

1. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
2. Charlesworth, E. A., & Nathan, R. G. (2012). *Stress management: a comprehensive guide to wellness*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Ballantine Books. (pp. 421).
3. Benson, H., Casey, A., & Coltera, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Stress management: approaches for preventing and reducing stress*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.
4. Health and Safety Executive. (2018). *Stress at work - signs of stress*. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/signs.htm>
5. Government of Canada, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2018). *Workplace Stress - General: OSH answers*. Retrieved from <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>.
6. Ahola, K., Toppinen-Tanner, S., & Seppänen, J. (2017). Interventions to alleviate burnout symptoms and to support return to work among employees with burnout: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Burnout Research*, 4, 1-11.
7. Aronsson, G., Theorell, T., Grape, T., Hammarström, A., Hogstedt, C., Marteinsdottir, I., ... & Hall, C. (2017). A systematic review including meta-analysis of work environment and burnout symptoms. *BMC Public Health*, 17(1), 264.
8. Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2008). Early predictors of job burnout and engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(3), 498-512.
9. Maslach, C., Leiter, M., & Schaufeli, W. (2008). Measuring burnout. In Cartright, S. & Cooper, C.L. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of organizational well being* Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199211913.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199211913-e-005>.

## Reducing the impact of stress – The Three Rs

1. Benson, H., Casey, A., & Coltera, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Stress management: approaches for preventing and reducing stress*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.
2. Charlesworth, E. A., & Nathan, R. G. (2012). *Stress management: a comprehensive guide to wellness*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Ballantine Books. (pp. 421).
3. Farmstrong. (2018). *Managing stress and burnout*. Retrieved from <https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeing-topics/burnout>
4. New Zealand Defence Force. (2018). *Health*. Retrieved from <http://health.nzdf.mil.nz/>
5. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
6. McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (2011). *Thoughts and feelings: Taking control of your moods and your life*. New Harbinger Publications.
7. Health Promotion Agency. *Structured problem solving*. Retrieved from [http://www.bestpractice.net.nz/resources/depression/MoH\\_structuredProblemSolving.pdf](http://www.bestpractice.net.nz/resources/depression/MoH_structuredProblemSolving.pdf)

## Finding balance: Te Whare Tapa Whā

1. Durie, M. H. (1985). A Maori perspective of health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 20(5), 483–486.
2. Durie, M.H. (1994). Tirohanga Māori: Māori Health Perspectives. In Durie, M. H. (1994). *Whaiora: Māori health development* (pp 67-81). Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press.
3. Durie, M.H. (1998). *Whaiora: Maori health development*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
4. Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. (2004). *Mind your health: How to promote mental health and wellbeing*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.

NB: We have added the dimension taha whenua to Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model, to explicitly acknowledge the inter-relationship of whenua as the foundation for a whare, and the importance of that inter-relationship in Te Ao Māori.

## Identifying your challenges & practicing balanced thinking

1. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
2. Charlesworth, E. A., & Nathan, R. G. (2012). *Stress management: a comprehensive guide to wellness*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Ballantine Books. (pp. 421).
3. McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (2011). *Thoughts and feelings: Taking control of your moods and your life*. New Harbinger Publications.
4. Health Promotion Agency. *Structured problem solving*. Retrieved from [http://www.bestpractice.net.nz/resources/depression/MoH\\_structuredProblemSolving.pdf](http://www.bestpractice.net.nz/resources/depression/MoH_structuredProblemSolving.pdf)

5. Benson, H., Casey, A., & Coltera, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Stress management: approaches for preventing and reducing stress*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.

### Acceptance and change

1. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.
2. Health Promotion Agency. *Structured problem solving*. Retrieved from [http://www.bestpractice.net.nz/resources/depression/MoH\\_structuredProblemSolving.pdf](http://www.bestpractice.net.nz/resources/depression/MoH_structuredProblemSolving.pdf)
3. McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (2011). *Thoughts and feelings: Taking control of your moods and your life*. New Harbinger Publications.

### Working backwards to a solution

1. Allen, R.E.S., & Money, E.A. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland, New Zealand: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.

### Switching on the relaxation response

1. Benson, H., Casey, A., & Coltera, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Stress management: approaches for preventing and reducing stress*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School.
2. Charlesworth, E. A., & Nathan, R. G. (2012). *Stress management: a comprehensive guide to wellness*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Ballantine Books. (pp. 421).
3. Moore, K. M. (2005). *The Sensory Connection Program: activities for mental health treatment*. Framingham, MA: Therapro, Incorporated.