

23 — 29 SEPTEMBER

NĀU TE ROUROU — NĀKU TE ROUROU — KA ORA AI TE IWI

COMMUNITY IS...

WHAT WE CREATE

together.



MHAW 2024 GUIDE

Helping you bring MHAW to life in your community, workplace, school or home.

mhaw.nz

MHAW
Mental Health
Awareness Week

Mā te whakarongo, ka mōhio
through listening, comes knowledge

Mā te mōhio, ka mārama,
through knowledge, comes understanding

Mā te mārama, ka matau,
through understanding, comes wisdom

Mā te matau, ka ora
through wisdom, comes wellbeing

KIA ORA

This guide is designed to provide inspiration and activities to help bring Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) to life in your community, workplace, school, neighbourhood, or home.

The theme for this year's MHAW is:

Community is... what we create together.

There's no denying that the past few years have been challenging for Aotearoa, with extreme weather events, rising costs, and political divides affecting us all.

The Mental Health Foundation recently commissioned **research** to understand how Cyclone Gabrielle and other recent weather events impacted people's wellbeing. Over 1,500 New Zealanders from affected regions revealed a clear theme: community is the key to getting through tough times.

Community looks different for everyone — that's the beauty of it. It's about connecting with others to create something together. This MHAW, we're encouraging the people of Aotearoa to define, build, and celebrate their communities.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.

With your food basket and mine, the people will flourish.

What is mental health and wellbeing?

We all have mental health. It's a taonga/treasure, something to look after so we can lead our best and most fulfilling lives.

The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing as “a state in which every individual realises their own potential; can cope with the normal stresses of life; can work productively and fruitfully; and is able to make a contribution to their community”.

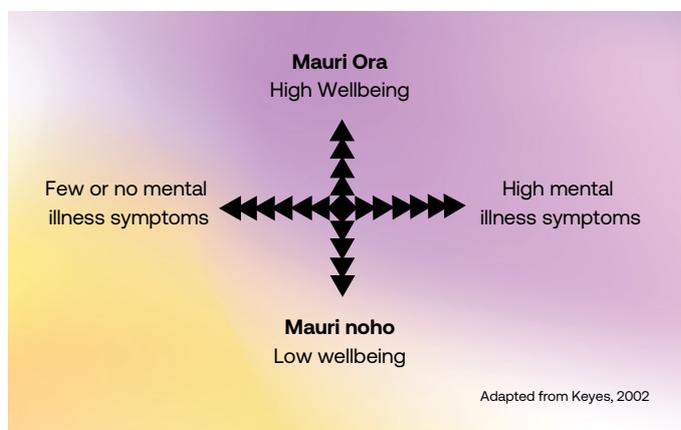
Put simply, wellbeing is about how we feel, and how we function day-to-day.

At least **one in five New Zealanders experience a mental illness and/or addiction each year**. It's important to remember that with the right tautoko/support, many people can and do recover or live well.

Wellbeing isn't just for people who haven't experienced mental distress or illness — it's for everyone. It's a common myth that good mental health and wellbeing is simply the absence of mental distress or illness. We can enjoy high wellbeing (or mauri ora) regardless of whether we experience mental illness symptoms or not, as this diagram shows.

Good wellbeing doesn't happen by accident, it needs nurturing and protecting.

Strong social connections are essential for our life satisfaction and overall health, which is why being part of a community can provide us with a sense of belonging, purpose and connectedness. Join us this Mental Health Awareness Week to celebrate the power of community in uplifting our collective wellbeing.



Our research, Te Whare Tapa Whā and the Five Ways to Wellbeing

The daily activity ideas in this guide are inspired by findings from our recent community wellbeing research, as well as Te Whare Tapa Whā and the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

All Sorts community wellbeing research

In December 2023, **we commissioned a study** to take a snapshot of how Cyclone Gabrielle and other extreme weather events impacted people's wellbeing. We wanted to better understand how people were doing on their road to recovery after a natural disaster, what they needed to support their wellbeing, and what had helped them cope through difficult times.

The research revealed that four in every 10 respondents (40%) had felt lonely at least some of the time over the past two weeks. Support networks and community were identified as a crucial source of strength, practical assistance and coping for people. Respondents also expressed a desire for more community-based events or activities.

These findings inspired us to think about the role of community in protecting our mental health and nourishing our wellbeing, and it's why we've decided to put community at the heart and centre of MHAW 2024.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

Te Whare Tapa Whā was developed in 1984 by leading Māori health advocate and researcher Sir Mason Durie. This model provides a Te Ao Māori perspective on wellbeing, by describing health as a wharenuī/meeting house with four walls. The four walls represent Taha Wairua/spiritual wellbeing; Taha Hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing; Taha Tinana/physical wellbeing; and Taha Whānau/family and social wellbeing. Our connection with the whenua/land forms the foundation.



Five Ways to Wellbeing

The **Five Ways to Wellbeing** are simple strategies proven to boost wellbeing. They are:

- Take Notice – Me Aro Tonu
- Give – Tukua
- Be Active – Me Kori Tonu
- Connect – Me Whakawhanaunga
- Keep Learning – Me Ako Tonu

RĀHINA *Monday*

Manaaki Monday

Start the week off with an act of kindness. On the first day of MHAW, take some time out of your day to help someone in a small but meaningful way. Even one simple thing, like carrying groceries or holding a door open for a stranger, can create a chain reaction of kindness that uplifts the whole community.

Ideas for how you can help someone today:

- Do you know someone who has a lot going on at the moment? Take some kai over for dinner to save them cooking, or offer to take their dog for a walk.
- Do something to help make a colleague's day a little easier at mahi/work. Assist them with a task they haven't had time to complete, or make them a cup of tea to help them get through the day.
- Stop to let a car into the traffic in front of you. Watch the chain reaction of courtesy unfold around you!
- Offer to mind a friend's taitamaiti/tamariki (child/children) for the afternoon, so they can take some time out for themselves.
- Volunteer a few hours of your time today — there are lots of community groups who would love your help!
- Give a genuine compliment to a friend, family member, or even a stranger.
- Take the time to listen to someone who needs to talk, offering your full attention and support.
- Looking for ideas for tamariki? Check out Sparklers' **Everyday Kindness** and **Can't Do it Without You** activities, to help them explore how kindness and helping others can boost their own wellbeing.

What small action will you take to help someone in your community today?



RĀTŪ *Tuesday*

Tautoko Tuesday

It's no secret that the pandemic, rising costs and extreme weather events have made things tough for our local businesses and organisations over the past few years. Today, we encourage you to tautoko an independent merchant or community organisation. Why not purchase a small gift for a friend from a local creator, or post about an awesome business or community group on social media? A little tautoko can go a long way in difficult times.

To support a neighbourhood business or community organisation today, you could:

- Spend some time clearing out that forgotten cupboard. Donate toys, books, sports equipment or clothes you are no longer using to a local charity.
- Is there a business or organisation doing amazing mahi in your community? Help others discover them too, by posting about them on social media or writing a positive review online.
- When you're chatting to a friend, hoamahi/colleague or whānau member today, tell them about a nearby store you love. Ask them if they have any local recommendations for you, too!
- If you're picking up a coffee or snack on your way to mahi, why not check out that new café that you've been meaning to try out?
- Support a local business by letting them know how much you appreciate them. Give them a compliment in person, or send them a glowing letter or email. You could even get your tamariki involved, by using Sparklers' **Sneaky Thank You Cards** activity. Your tautoko might just make their day!
- Need to pick up some veges for dinner tonight? Support local, by heading to your neighbourhood farmer's market or greengrocer to pick up some fresh produce.

*How will you tautoko a local business
or organisation today?*



RĀAPA *Wednesday*

Whānau Wednesday

We've made it to the middle of the week!

Feeling connected to others is strongly associated with better wellbeing, because it gives us a sense of meaning, safety, support and purpose. Give yourself — and your loved ones — a mid-week boost, by reaching out to a friend or whānau member you would like to catch up with.

You could connect with the important people in your life today, by:

- Sending them a message, having a kōrero, arranging a catch up in person, or using our **postcard resource** to get in touch with a loved one you haven't talked to in a while.
- Getting tamariki to write a letter to, or draw a picture for, someone they'd like to connect with.
- Helping tamariki make friends with other taurira/students, with Sparklers' **Being a First-Rate Mate** activity.
- Baking some treats to share with hoamahi at morning tea time. Enjoy a moment to connect with them over some delicious kai.
- Grabbing your mates to spend some time connecting with the whenua. Get into the great outdoors — go on a bush hīkoi/walk, hīkoi up your local maunga, or breathe in the salty fresh air of the moana. Enjoy a kōrero while you're there.
- Coming together with your whānau to take a moment for your collective wairua, by trying out these **Te Ao Māori mindful breathing exercises**.
- Having a think about whether there is someone you know who may be going through a tough time. Reach out and ask them how they are, and empathise and listen to any concerns. You can find more information about how to have a safe and supportive kōrero **here**.
- Reaching out to someone who may be lonely, and inviting them to spend time with you.
- And if you're experiencing loneliness yourself? Remember that feeling isolated is a common experience, and it's okay to feel this way. By reaching out to someone else, you could be helping that person too — and boosting your wellbeing at the same time.

*Which of your loved ones
will you connect with today?*



RĀPARE *Thursday*

Tūhono Thursday

As we move closer to the weekend, find some time in your day to connect with someone in your community that you don't usually talk to. Introduce yourself to a neighbour, a parent at your child's school, or someone at your local café. Building relationships with people who live in your community can create a supportive network, right at your doorstep.

To get to know someone new in your community today, you could:

- Introduce yourself to a new kaimahi/employee at mahi. Ask them if there's anything you can do to help them settle in, and invite them to join you for morning tea or lunch. You could even use our **kōrero card set** to learn more about each other.
- Check out the **MHAW What's On calendar** to find a community event happening near you today. Or, organise your own gathering, using our handy **'How to organise a community event' resource** to help you plan it.
- Get to know your neighbours. Invite them around for a potluck dinner, or head outdoors to your local park together for a picnic.
- Sign up to a class or group — learn an instrument, join a book club or put on your dancing shoes and discover some new moves. Not only will you expand your skill set, you'll get to know a new community at the same time.
- Say “kia ora” to the bus driver, checkout operator or local barista, and ask them how their day is going. These small moments of connection can help to strengthen your local community ties, and give everyone a little wellbeing boost!
- Organise a community clean up day. You could tidy a local awa/river, tātahi/beach or park, or start a whakatō rākau/tree planting project. This is a great way to meet new people in your community, whilst helping to keep Aotearoa beautiful. Check out the **Department of Conservation's website** for more ideas.
- Help tamariki get to know other tauira, using Sparklers' **Common Ground activity**.

How will you connect with someone new in your community today?



RĀMERE *Friday*

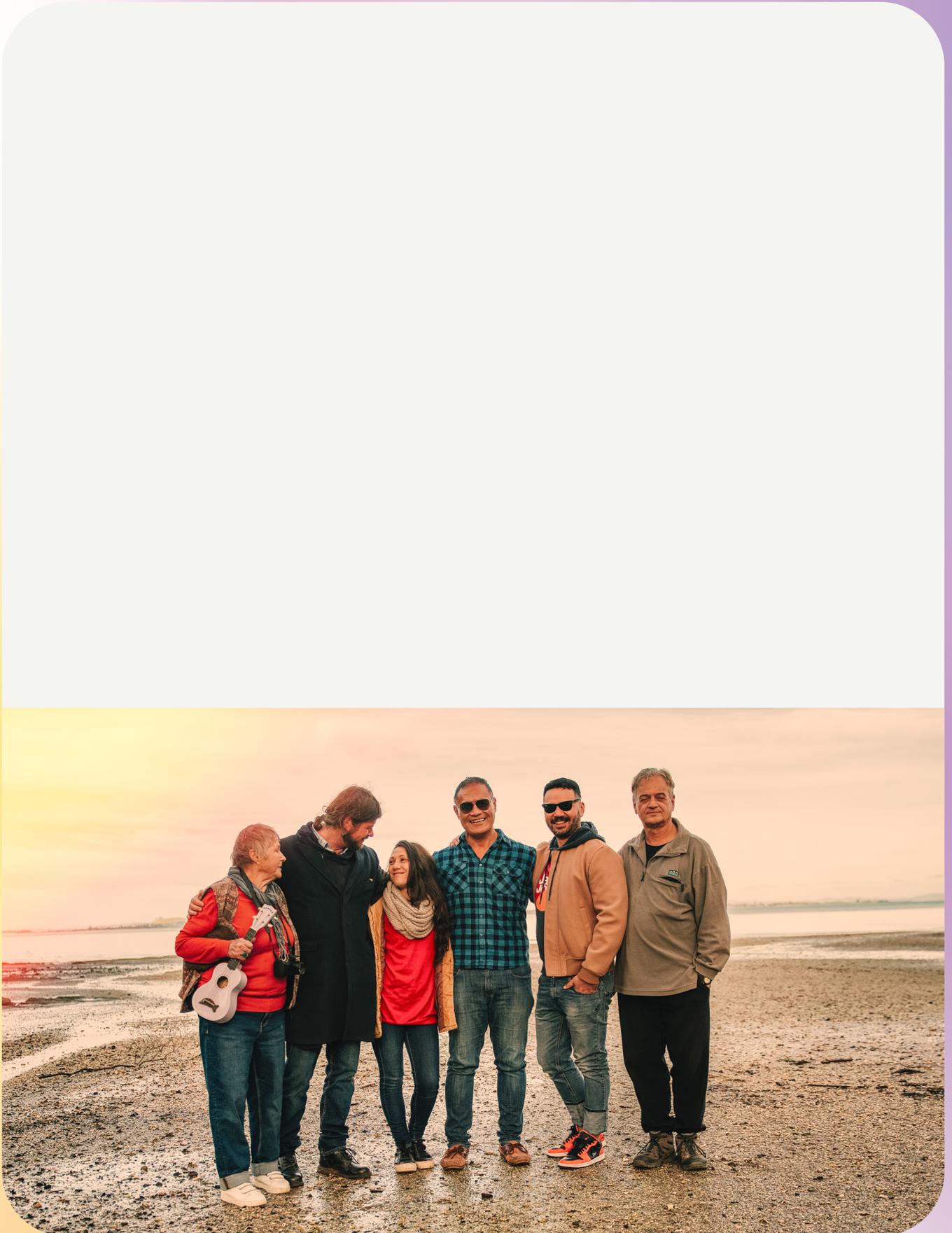
Whakawhetai Friday

What better way to finish off the week, than by saying thank you to someone in your community? Spread some good vibes by showing your gratitude today — it could be to the courier driver, to a local volunteer, or to a workmate or neighbour... anyone who helps make your community what it is.

You could express gratitude to those in your community today, by:

- Using our **whakawhetai/gratitude poster** to say thank you to someone you cross paths with today.
- Has someone gone above and beyond to help your community recently? Mention their contributions at a community meeting, on a neighbourhood Facebook page, or in a local newsletter.
- Getting crafty, and creating something for someone you are grateful for. It could be as simple as drawing them a picture, or writing a thoughtful letter telling them what you appreciate about them.
- Organising a surprise outing for a friend or whānau member you are thankful for. Plan to do their favourite activities, and enjoy the chance to catch up and kōrero.
- Do you have a neighbour who has helped you in some way? Say thank you by inviting them around for morning tea, or returning the favour in whichever way you can.
- Leaving a note on a colleague's desk to thank them for their help at mahi. You could even throw their favourite treat in, to make their day that little bit better.
- Taking a moment for yourself today, by writing down three things you are grateful for. Reflecting on the things we are thankful for can help us to experience more positive emotions.
- Checking out Sparklers' **Compliment Posters** and **Gratitude O'Clock** activities, to help your tamariki practise gratitude.

How will you show your gratitude to the people in your community today?



REFLECTING ON THE WEEK

Now that it's the end of the week, why not take some time to reflect on the impact connecting with your community has made. What have you noticed? What felt good? How will you continue to build, define, and celebrate your community in the weeks and months ahead?

What are your reflections on the week?

A large, empty white rounded rectangle with rounded corners, occupying most of the page below the text. It is intended for the user to write their reflections on the week.

WHERE TO TURN FOR SUPPORT

For some people, this week might have brought up some sadness or distress. If you've had a kōrero with someone and you think they need further tautoko, or if you're worried about your own mental wellbeing, it's okay, there is help available. No one should go through a tough time alone.

The best first point of contact is to visit your tākuta/GP or offer to attend an appointment with a friend or whānau member. A GP can help assess what further support might be needed.

Below is a list of some of the services available in New Zealand that offer support, information and help. All services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week unless otherwise specified.

In crisis

If you or someone you know has immediate safety concerns, please dial 111 or contact your local mental health crisis assessment team, which you can find at [mentalhealth.org.nz/help](https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/help).

National helplines

Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 any time of the day or night, for support from a trained counsellor

Lifeline – Free call 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE), or free text 4357 (HELP)

Suicide Crisis Helpline – Free call 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)

Youthline – Free call 0800 376 633 or free text 234 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), or get in touch via [webchat](#) between 10am and 10pm

Remember it's okay to get support for yourself when you're supporting someone you care about. [Yellow Brick Road](#) provides support for the loved ones of people experiencing mental distress or illness.

Looking for other ways to boost your wellbeing, long-term?

The action plan on the following page is designed to help you take notice of the things that make you feel good, and do them more often.

WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

How does helping someone in your community make you feel?

e.g., happy, supported

How will you continue to support local businesses or organisations in the weeks and months following MHAW?

e.g., post about local businesses I like on social media

Who are some people in your life you would like to connect with, and how will you connect with them?

e.g., send a message to a friend I've lost touch with

Who is someone in your community you would like to get to know over the coming months? How will you do it?

e.g., invite my neighbours around for a barbeque

Who will you show gratitude to in your community, beyond MHAW? And how will you express your appreciation?

e.g., saying thank you to the local delivery driver when they drop off a parcel

What helps you to stay mentally healthy at work, school or home?

e.g., connecting with hoamahi/colleagues at work, or with fellow taira/students over kai at lunchtime

What's something new you'd like to do to boost your wellbeing?

e.g., make some time in my week to help someone in my community who could do with some extra tautoko/support