

PUPIL WELLBEING

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Learning Together, Striving for Excellence
Ako ngātahi tātou, tohea tonu mō te hiranga

Child Wellbeing

A toolkit for Educators, Children and Whanau

My gratitude goes to –

- *Waihopai School Board of Trustees*
- *Waihopai School Staff, particularly the Management team that stepped up so willingly and capably for the smooth running of our school during the sabbatical period*
- *Principals who hosted me on my school visits*

Purpose

The aim was to build a toolkit for Educationalists, Children and Whanau on Child Wellbeing. This is to be a living document with resources and references being regularly added.

A Schools Toolkit for Wellbeing

I have compiled resources in the New Zealand Education and health arena that supports pupils. Teachers, parents and our communities around the scourge of our modern life.

My life has been directly touched by people close to me struggling with their own wellbeing. This has manifested itself in anxieties, mental health disorders, self-harming and suicide.

To quantify this at the time of applying for my sabbatical I had four children in our primary school self-harm.

At the same time (2017) the Ministry of Health quantified that 79,000 young New Zealanders are in “psychological distress” which means they have a high or very high level of anxiety or depressive disorder. This relates to 12% of those aged 15 – 24 are in psychological distress.

One in seven students in New Zealand aged between 12 and 17 have recognised mental health diagnosis and disorder.

These horrendous statistics are being recognised as a younger and younger group being observed by professionals in the health and education sectors in New Zealand.

We are seeing a dramatic increase of anxieties in our primary aged students. This starts with five year olds who have detachment anxieties removing their dependence on their parents, panic attacks and concerns about the dark open spaces.

This can range from tears, headaches, sore stomachs, bed wetting, nightmares and interrupted sleep, angry or irritable students. Sadly we have students from the age of five being medicated.

The upsurge in anxiety has been matched by the increased discussion of one of its most alarming symptoms; self-harm.

Self-harm is becoming more common amongst teenagers in New Zealand and other countries in the western world. Not just teenagers but serious cases in our primary school also.

This can be in the form of cutting, burning, hair pulling, punching and overdose. This needs always to be taken seriously as if you extrapolate these instances forward 30% will become a suicide statistic.

In a survey of New Zealand high schools in 2012 17.9% of boys and 29.1% of girls disclosed they had self-harmed.

Our most shameful statistic follows on from the alarming self-harm rate. New Zealand has the highest death rate for teenagers and young people in the OCED; the countries 19 most developed, wealthy countries (19th out of 19).

Our mortality rate for people aged 10 – 24 years is 35 per 100,000 people. This is twice as high as the USA rate and almost five times that of Britain.

Youth Health & Wellbeing	
How NZ fared out of 19 countries*	
Mortality rate 10 – 19 year	19 th
Birth rate 15 – 19 year	18 th
Not in education or training 15 – 19 years	8 th
Asthma mortality rate 10 – 24 years	18 th
Obesity rate 15 – 19 years	18 th
Diabetes rate 10 – 24 years	11 th
Cancer mortality rate 10 – 24 years	7 th
Suicide rate 10 – 24 years	17 th
Suicide rate 10 – 14 years	19 th
Suicide rate 15 – 19 years	19 th
Road crash deaths 10 – 24 years	17 th
*UK, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, NZ, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, US (International comparisons of health and wellbeing in adolescence and early childhood) – 2018 Source/Nuffield Trust	

Female suicide increased by 30% in the 2018 year. Of all the NZ DHB's Auckland had the highest increase in suicide deaths with a 70% increase in 2017. Maori and Pasifika are highly overburdened in these statistics.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) population are six times more likely to self-harm and take their own lives.

I see that Primary Schools in New Zealand have a place to combat these frightful issues and devastating statistics. Schools are frequently the only stable place for these children and without emotional bias. We need to use the tools at our disposal to try and create a platform to equip children for a better future.

During my Sabbatical I:

- (1) Trained in a Mindfulness Course in Christchurch
- (2) Visited schools in Canterbury and Southland that had implemented mindfulness across the school
- (3) Read and critiqued programmes, course and readings that have gone into the building a toolkit for Child Wellbeing which is able to be accessed by teachers, parents and students

TEXTS

- Play is the Way:
 - Volume I
 - Volume II
 - Volume III
 - Volume IVA practical methodology for teaching social and emotional learning using guided play, classroom activities and an empowering language
Wilson McCaskill – ISBN 978-0-9808450-0-6
- Children Aren't Made of China
Bringing teachers and parents together in the pursuit of emotional intelligence, considerate behaviour and a lasting sense of wellbeing
Wilson McCaskill – ISBN 978-0-9578659-1-4
- CBT Toolbox for Children and Adolescents
200 worksheets and exercises for trauma, ADHD, Autism, Anxiety, Depression and Conduct Disorders
Lisa Phifer ISBN 9781683730750
- The Big Book of Therapeutic Activities and Ideas for Children and Teens
 - Volume I
 - Volume IIActivities for children in schools and Community Health Agencies to support children. This is a Christian based text but has wonderful activities in art, drama, mime and icebreakers to get children to open up to discussions.
Lindsey Joiner – ISBN 978-1-84905—001-2
- A Volcano in my Tummy
Helping children to handle anger, a research book for parents, caregivers and teachers.
Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney ISBN 09582136-3-1

- Feeling like Crap
Young people and the meaning of self esteem
Nick Luxmoore ISBN 978-1-84310-682-1
- Outstanding Worry
An older kids guide (9 – 13 years) on managing anxiety.
Dawn Huebner ISBN 978-1-78592-782-9
- Focusing and Calming games for Children
Mindfulness strategies and activities to help children to relax, concentrate and take control
Deborah Plummer ISBN 978-1-84905-143-9
- Healthy Mindsets for Super Kids
A resilience programme for children aged 7 – 14 years
Stephanie Azri ISBN 978-1-84905-315-0
- Mindfulness Classroom – Learning Journal
A classroom journal for children from Mindful; Aotearoa
Mindful Aotearoa mindfulaotearoa.nz
- Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul
101 stories of life, love and learning that are equally appropriate for upper primary.
Jack Canfield ISBN 1-55874-463-0
- Wellbeing for Success – Effective practice – March 2016
A Prime Ministers Youth Mental Health Project produced by ERO supporting good practice for wellbeing.
ERO ISBN 978-0-478-43836-9
- Wellbeing for Success
Evaluation indicators for Student Wellbeing 2013
ERO ISBN 978-0-478-38973-9
- Wellbeing for Success – A resource for schools 2016
Effective practices to promote and respond to wellbeing
ERO ISBN 978-0-478-43855-2
- Bullying, Prevention & Response
A guide for schools 2015
Bullying Prevention Advisory Group – Led by the MOE
ISBN 978-0-478-16148-9

- **A Parent's Guide for Suicidal and Depressed Teams**
Help for recognising if a child is in crisis and what to do about it
Kate Williams 1-56838-040-2
- **The Journey Through**
Ideas for getting through the tough times
Skylight ISBN 978-0-9582655-4-6
- **When Tough Stuff Happens**
An activity book for tough times for 7 – 12 year olds
Skylight Tricia Irving Hendry ISBN 978-0-9582325-1-7

Mindfulness

- **Mindfulness teacher training**
Mindful in Schools
Learning how to teach mindfulness in schools using proven and successful methods, this was the course I attended in Christchurch and then undertook an 8 weeks online mindfulness training.
- **Meditation on Meaning**
A light level adult content
Positive Psychology.com
(17 best of the best positive psychology exercises)
(Theory not for children)
- **Positive Education NZ Conference**
Material shared with me from Sumner School and Principal Stuart Cameron shared with me on a sabbatical visit to his school.
- **Positive Education**
What is Positive Education?
The movement that promotes wellbeing, reduces anxieties and engages students.
This is a Kings College Positive Education programme.
www.kingscollege.school.nz/life-at-kings/student-care-andwellbeing/positive-education/
- **We are Smiling Mind**
Creating mindful schools
This would be the best example of a mindfulness programme that I have encountered. Not the cheapest but allows all staff to follow, inducts new staff, all on-line and self-managing.
office@smilingmind.com.au / www.smilingmind.com.au

- **Pause, Breath & Smile**
I visited Riversdale, Prebleton and Glen Tunnel all who use the Pause, Breath & Smile programme. I believe this to be a very well researched programme for schools in New Zealand for mindfulness.
www.mindfulnesseducation.nz/pause-breath-smile/

Anxiety

- **Age of Anxiety**
Article from The Listener 3/2/2018
A concise summary of anxiety issues in New Zealand.
Personal instances and research based information
- **Beneath the Surface**
The Nature and Impact of Trauma and ways to provide support.
This was training I undertook on sabbatical.
The notes worked on resilience, trauma and recovery.
- **Healthy Promotion Agency (hpa)**
Excellent material (Pocket guide, posters, staff resource guides, inserts for school newsletters, power point for staff meeting)
www.hpa.org.nz/what-we-do/support-for-schools-and-students/help-for-the-tough-times
- **Life Education Trust**
Material supplied by Teresa Wallace used by the mobile classroom and endorsed by Life Education Trust

Wellbeing

- **Mental Health Foundation**
Material supplied for Mental Health Awareness Week (October 2018)
- **Five Ways to Wellbeing Reminders throughout the year**
Maori perspective – localising the material
- **Wellbeing Focus at Greymouth School Improves Boys Literacy**
Education Gazette 11 February 2018
- **Music Therapy Builds Resilience After Earthquake**
Education Gazette 28 January 2019
- **Play is the Way**
NZ Principal September 2018

Bullying

- Bullying Free NZ
School Poster pack
www.bullyingfree.nz
- Primary School Resourcing package
Person centred training
A package able to be purchased for children transitioning to high school

Self-Harm and Suicide

- New Zealand has the highest death rate for teenagers in the developed world
(Newstalk 2ZB – Nathan Wallis interview 26/2/2019)
- We need to know more what is behind New Zealand's dire youth suicide rate

(The Listener – 19 July 2018)
- What's Behind New Zealand's shocking Youth Suicide Rate
(BBC News – 15 June 2017)
- Understanding Suicide in New Zealand
Ministry of Health
Excellent glossary
- Self-Harm 9 July 2018
www.kidshealth.org.nz/selfharm

Games & Gaming

- Mindfulness matters
A card game that uses mindfulness skills to improve coping in everyday life
- SPARX
E Therapy tool for moderate depression and anxiety. Provides a quiz on moods and directs the player to help avenues.
An avatar journey
www.sparx.org.nz

Wellbeing & Conclusion

I believe that primary schools are in a pivotal position in which to improve children's positive outlook and wellbeing.

While we only see children for 11% of their time in any given year; we are a constant, we are consistent and safe.

Schools are able to implement standards, safeguards and programmes that can make a significant difference in children's lives.

Our curricular reinforces the commitment to children.

Health & Physical Education

Students learn about their own well-being and that of others and society; in health related and movement contexts (page 17 NZC)

Values

- Excellence by aiming high and by persevering in the face of difficulties.
- Diversity as found in our different cultures, languages and heritages
- Equity through fairness and social justice
- Community and participation for the common good
- Integrity which involves being honest, responsible and accountable and acting ethically
- Respect themselves, others and human rights (NZC p10)

Key Competencies

Managing Self

The competency is associated with self-motivation, a can do attitude and with students seeing themselves as capable learners. It is integral to self-assessment.

Students who manage themselves are enterprising, resourceful, reliable and resilient. They establish personal goals, make plans, manage projects and set high standards. They have strategies for meeting challenges. They know when to lead, when to follow and when and how to act independently (NZC p12)

The aim was to create a toolbox for education to source resources in terms of:

- Websites
- Adult texts
- Children's Books
- Programmes available to pupils, parents and educators
- Readings

This is not a definitive list but the toolbox container of all these elements. I intend it to be a living document and to be added to when appropriate material is sourced.

I trained in Mindfulness – Teacher Training Mindfulness in New Zealand. This was a three day block course in Christchurch then a 6 week distance learning and online tutoring.

I found this personally beneficial and rewarding. I can highly recommend the relaxation, gratitude and grounding techniques to be implemented in classroom programmes. I personally feel equipped to work with children who may be suffering from aggression, anxiety or depression in small groups should the opportunity arise.

I visited four schools that were adopters of the mindfulness programmes. The two smaller schools showed that it was able to be implemented and maintained. They were rural settings with very stable staff.

The two large urban schools had concerns of being consistent, having physiological buy in from staff and retraining of changing staff members. Both had champions of mindfulness but questioned if they would have repeated their experience if they were to turn back the clock.

All schools used the Mental Health supported programme; Pause, Breath, Smile (Whole School).

Wellbeing

I would recommend delving into Smiling Mind based in Australia and offering online support and training.

Mindfulness can have the connotation of Religious bias, a Bohemian slant and a time commitment in a pressured and busy curricular.

The Positive Education movement encompasses the whole mindfulness concept but is seen to be more palatable to sell to communities, staff and authorities.

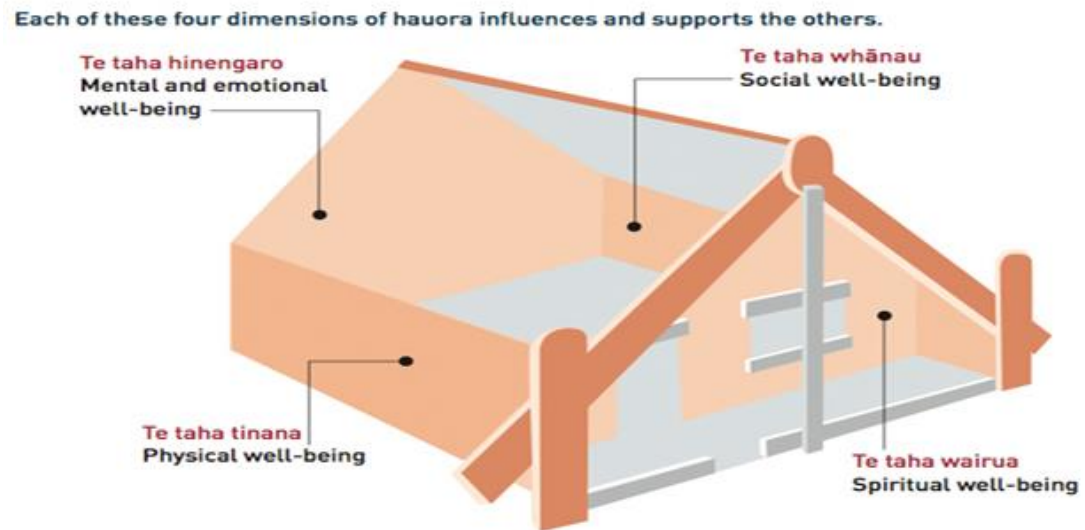
Another major finding and revelation for me was that Christchurch schools that had the trauma of two major earthquakes and since my visits the tragedy of March 15th and had a disproportionate number of children with concerning traits. There were anxieties, depression, self-harming actions, aggression and suicide. The overwhelming advice was to be proactive and put in place counsellors and educational psychologists sponsored by schools.

The Ministry's ability to provide this level of support was not possible. Schools I visited all paid for educational psychologists to be in their school on a regular basis, most had a psychologist for one set day a week.

This allowed schools to reassure parents and whanau that help was at hand and could be offered at short notice; not the long time delay of the public service.

The opportunity to be immersed in study, visits and training around Child Wellbeing has been an immensely gratifying opportunity and a privilege to be involved in. My sincere wish is that some of my work and findings will make the difference in some young people's lives, assist educators and save the heartbreak of students with conflicted wellbeing place on their families.

This is well encapsulated by the Maori understanding of hauora through Te Whare Tapa Whā – The Building block of Wellbeing.



Mason Durie (1994) Te Whare Tapa Whā concept of hauora

The children are our future, we must strive to support resilient, robust and well balanced students to fulfil their full potential and take their rightful place in the world.