



NO.8: WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

COVID-19 is changing our daily lives. It's important to look after our wellbeing and the wellbeing of our whānau and community as we get through this – together.

We all need to think about what we are doing to look after our mental health, because it is **just as important as our physical health**. Just as we have regimes in place to look after our physical health, during the time of COVID-19 we consciously need to think about what we are doing **each day** to look after our mental health.



Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. It is time like this when our mental health **will** be greatly challenged.

Tips to look after mental health:

1. Eat well. Making sure you eat a balanced diet is really important for both your physical and mental well-being.



2. Talk about your feelings. Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled.

3. Keep active. Regular exercise is important it can help you concentrate, sleep, and feel better. Exercise keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy, and is also a significant benefit towards improving your mental health.



4. Daily positive affirmations. Pick a positive phrase and repeat it to yourself throughout the day. Examples: We will get through this. We are all in this together. It will be ok. Better things are ahead. I am strong, I can do this.

5. Drink sensibly. We often drink alcohol to change our mood. Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is only temporary. When the drink wears off, you feel worse because of the way the alcohol has affected your brain and the rest of your body. Drinking is not a good way to manage difficult feelings.



6. Keep in touch. There's nothing better than catching up with someone face to face, but these days that's not always possible. You can give your friends a call, send an email, or chat to them online instead. Keep the lines of communication open: it's good for you!

7. Ask for help. None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we are feeling. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, **ask for help**. Your family or friends may be able to offer practical help or a listening ear. Local services are there to help us, including YMCA's free employee assistance programme through Xero, or the NZ governments "Getting through Together" programme. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/covid-19/getting-through-together/>



8. Take a break. A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. You may even need to get some space from your "bubble" – this could be good for them, and yourself. Give yourself some 'me time'.

9. Do something you're good at. What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Enjoying yourself can help beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it, and achieving something boosts your self-esteem.



10. Care for others. Caring for others is often an important part of keeping up relationships with people close to you. It can even bring you closer together.

To look after your mental health pick what works for you, adapt it, and keep at it! Make a plan to, each day, do what it takes to feel good about life and yourself. You deserve it!



Reach Out
For Help.

You're Not
Alone.

**GETTING
THROUGH
TOGETHER**
WHĀIA E TĀTOU TE PAE TAWHITI

If your mental or emotional state quickly gets worse, or you're worried about someone you know help is available. Free call or text [1737](tel:1737) any time for support from a trained counsellor.

Lifeline: [0800 543 354](tel:0800543354) or [09\) 522 2999](tel:095222999) Free text 4357 (HELP)

Youthline: [0800 376 633](tel:0800376633)

Samaritans: [0800 726 666](tel:0800726666)

You're not alone; talk to someone you trust, or reach out to a trained professional. Sharing a problem is often the first step to recovery. **You are not alone!**