

# Emotions and Cancer

Ngā Kare ā-roto me te  
Matepukupuku



**Cancer  
Society**

Te Kāhui Matepukupuku  
o Aotearoa



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# Your emotions and cancer

This booklet discusses the emotional effects of cancer. Everyone with cancer copes in their own way. The diagnosis may cause you to feel a range of strong emotions such as shock, anger, sadness, uncertainty, and hope. These are all natural reactions.

In a traditional Māori approach, **wairua** (spirit), **whānau** (family), our relationship to the land and the natural world, and the physical effects of illness are not separate from our emotions or our mental health.

This booklet provides practical suggestions on how to talk to others about cancer, treatment, and how you are feeling. The booklet begins by explaining the common emotions you may feel. People often say that understanding what they may be feeling helps them to cope better.

Words in **bold** can be found in the glossary.



# Ōu kare ā-roto me te matepukupuku

Ka matapaki tēnei puka i ngā pānga kare ā-roto o te matepukupuku. Kei tēnā, kei tēnā, te āhua o tana whakahaere i ngā āhuatanga o tōna matepukupuku. Tērā pea, ka nui ngā momo kare ā-roto kaha ka rongo koe whai muri i te puta o te whakataunga mate, pērā ki te tumeke, ki te riri, ki te pōuri, te āwangawanga, me te awhero. Puta noa iho ai ēnei āhuatanga.

Ki tā te Māori titiro, e kore rawa e noho wehe te wairua, te whānau, tō tātou hononga me papatūānuku me te ao turoa, me ngā pānga ā-kiko o te mate, i ō tātou kare ā-roto, ō tātou hauora ā-hinengaro rānei.

Ka hoatu whakaaro whaikiko tēnei puka, ka pēhea te kōrero ki ētahi atu e pā ana ki te matepukupuku, te maimoatanga, me tō āhua hoki. Ka tīmata te puka nei mā te whakamārama i ngā kare ā-roto kitea noatia tērā ka rongo koe. He nui ngā wā kī ai ngā tāngata, mā te noho mārama ki ngā āhuatanga e rongo ana rātou, e āwhina i a rātou ki te whakahaere i a ratou.



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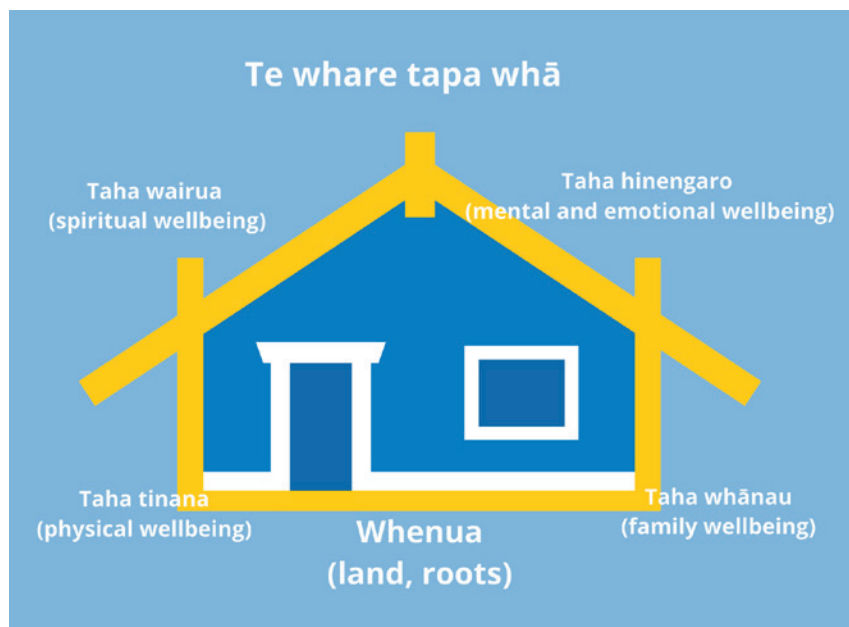
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# Te whare tapa whā

This section uses the Māori health model, te whare tapa whā to explain emotions from a holistic perspective. Te whare tapa whā<sup>1</sup> is a model of wellness that shows the relationship between taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing), taha whānau (family wellbeing) and taha tinana (physical wellbeing).

The symbolic use of a **whare**nui shows the four cornerstones (or sides) of Māori health. If one side is missing or damaged, the whole house (or person) may become unbalanced or unwell.

Whenua (the connection with the land or environment), is the base for the other four sides and is a key part of a person's identity. Connecting to nature, to the land and sea, can play a strong role in improving our emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing.



1 Durie, M Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Rangatahi, Rangitane (2011). Retrieved from [http://www.hauora.co.nz/assets/files/Maori/maori\\_health\\_model\\_tewhare.pdf](http://www.hauora.co.nz/assets/files/Maori/maori_health_model_tewhare.pdf)

## Taha hinengaro

Emotions are how you ‘feel on the inside’. They can have a physical effect on your body, affecting your spiritual wellbeing and your relationships with family/whānau and friends.

This can be a time of grief as you adjust to loss and learn to live with the changes a cancer diagnosis can bring to your life. It is common to experience strong emotions at this time and they will change often.

## Taha wairua

Spiritual distress is a common part of the cancer experience. Life changes in many ways when you or someone you care about has cancer. You might find that spiritual support can help you cope with these changes.

## Taha tinana

When you have cancer you may feel better on some days than on others—every day is likely to be different. Looking after yourself by taking small steps to care for your body can improve your wellbeing and reduce stress. Taha tinana is about more than just the visible effects of cancer. Our mind, body, and spirit are not separate.

## Taha whānau

Being part of a wider social system supports our emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Families/Whānau provide us with the strength to be who we are. In taha Māori, the links to our ancestors—our ties to our past, the present, and the future—are part of the strength we get from taha whānau.



# Te whare tapawhā

He tauira o te oranga te whare tapawhā e whakaatu ana i te hononga ki waenganui i te taha wairua, te taha hinengaro, te taha whānau, me te taha tinana hoki.

E whakaatu ana te **wharenuī** i ngā pūtake tokowhā o te hauora Māori. Mehemea kei te ngaro tētahi taha, kua kinotia rānei, tērā pea ka pōraruraru te whare katoa (te tangata rānei), ka māuiui rānei.

Ko te whenua (te hononga ki te whenua, ki te taiao rānei), te pūtake mō ērā o ngā taha tokowhā, me tana whai wāhi matua ki te tuakiri o te tangata. Tērā ka whai wāhi matua te mahi hono ki te taiao, hono ki te whenua me te moana, ki te whakapai ake i ō tātou oranga kare ā-roto, oranga kikokiko, oranga wairua hoki.

## Taha hinengaro

Ko ngā kare ā-roto, ko ngā mea 'ka rongo koe ki roto'. Tērā pea, ka whai pānga ēnei ki tō tinana, me tōna whai pānga ki tō oranga wairua me ōu hononga me tō whānau me ō hoa.

He wā pōuri rawa tēnei i a koe ka whakarite ki te ngaronga, me te ako ki te noho ora me ngā panonitanga tērā ka puta nā te whakatau mate. E kitea noatia ana, ka puta ētahi kare ā-roto kaha tonu i tēnei wā, ā, he nui ngā wā ka rerekē haere.

## Taha wairua

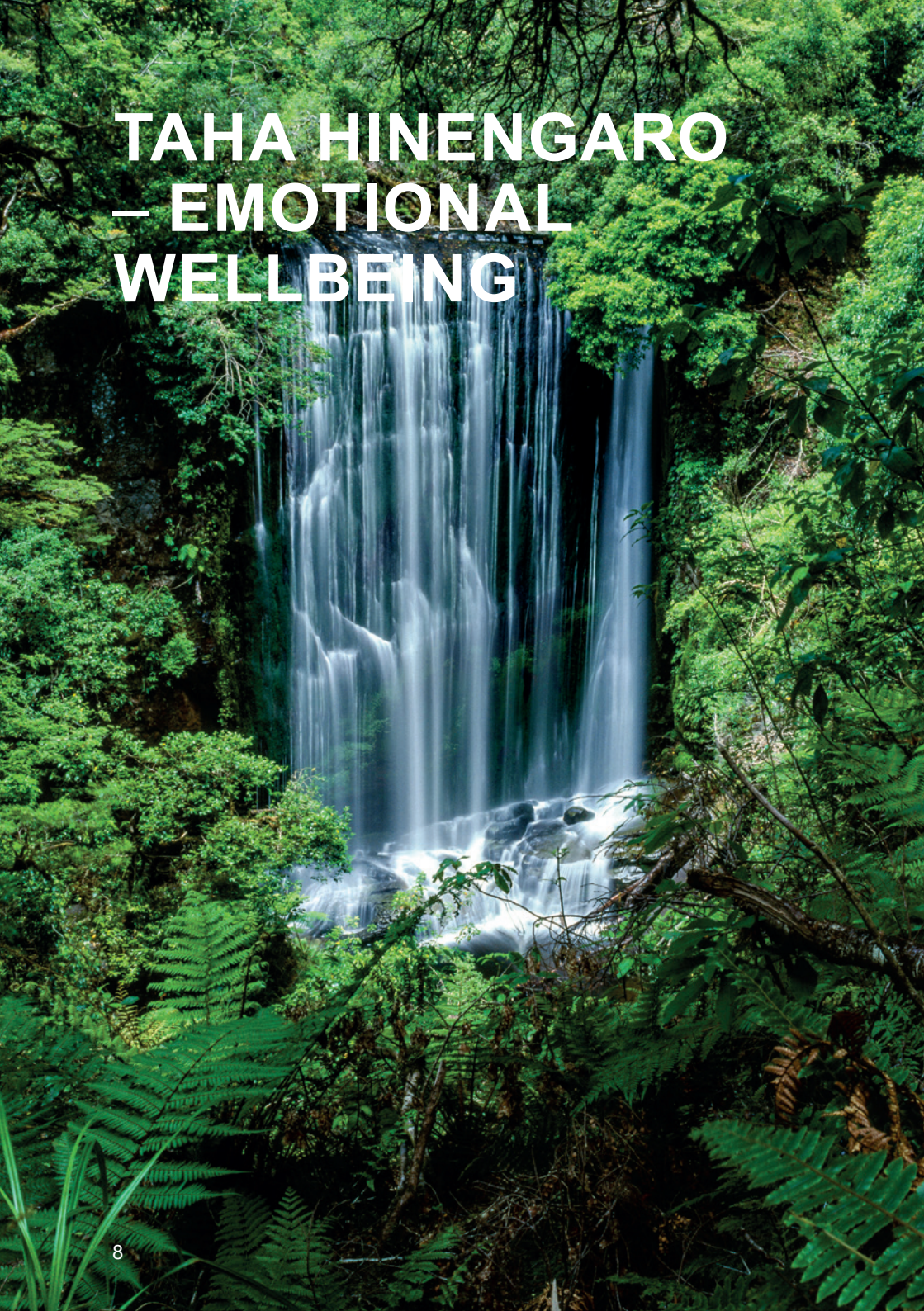
Kitea noatia ai te pōuri o te wairua, hei wāhanga o te wheako matepukupuku. Ka rerekē te oranga o te tangata ka pā ana te matepukupuku ki a koe, ki tētahi atu rānei tino tata ki a koe. Tērā pea, mā te tautoko ā-wairua e āwhina i a koe kia te tū pakari ki ēnei panonitanga.

## Taha tinana

Ka pā ana te matepukupuku ki a koe, tērā pea ka pai ake tō āhua i ētahi rā, e ai ki ētahi atu rā – kāore e kore, ka rerekē i ia rā, i ia rā. Ka pai ake tō oranga, ka heke iho hoki ngā taumahatanga mā tō ata tiaki haere i tō tinana me te whakapai ake i tō waiora me te whakaiti ake i te kōhukihuki. He nui ake te kōrero mō te taha tinana, e ai ki ngā kitenga ā-kanohi o te matepukupuku. Kīhai ō tātou hinengaro, ō tātou tinana, me ō tātou wairua e noho māwehe.

## Taha whānau

Mā te noho hei wāhanga o tētahi pūnaha pāpori whānui e tautoko i ō tātou oranga kare ā-roto, oranga tinana, oranga wairua. Ko tā te whānau, he hoatu i te kaha ki a tātou kia puta ai tātou ki te whaiao. Mō te taha Māori, ko ngā hononga ki o tātou tipuna – o tātou here ki neherā, ki ēnei rā, ki ngā rā e tū mai ana – tētahi wāhanga o te kaha ka whiwhi mātou mai i te taha whānau.



# TAHA HINENGARO – EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



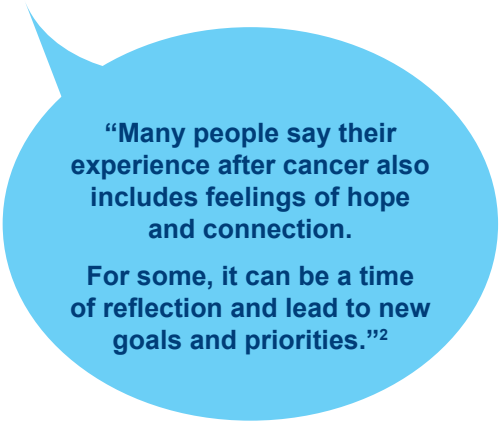
Emotions are how you ‘feel on the inside’. They can have a physical effect on your body, affecting your spiritual wellbeing and your relationships with family/whānau and friends.

Cancer often involves a sense of loss:

- the loss of good health
- a change in appearance
- changes in your lifestyle
- a reduction in income
- having to rely on others
- changes in your relationships
- and a shift in how you see yourself.

This can be a time of grief as you adjust to loss and learn to live with the changes a cancer diagnosis can bring to your life. It is common to experience strong emotions at this time that will change often.

**If you have a history of anxiety or depression, make sure your cancer treatment team is aware of it so they can make sure you get the support you need.**



**“Many people say their experience after cancer also includes feelings of hope and connection.**

**For some, it can be a time of reflection and lead to new goals and priorities.”<sup>2</sup>**



## Emotions and Māoritanga – He aha te kare ā roto?

### *Nā Moahuia Goza rāua ko Brian Te Rauroha Emery<sup>3</sup>*

From a Te Ao Māori perspective, there are many **whakaaro**, names and types of **kare ā roto** (emotions).

Kare ā roto may be referred to as energy in motion. They are related to and connected to everything about you. This includes your **mauri**, your **wairua**, your tinana, your whānau, your tupuna, **ngā atua**, and **te taiao** (the environment).

In this section we **kōrero** about two ways to think about kare ā roto.

### Ngā kare ā roto

One belief is that kare ā roto are personal, dear, and intimate friends who live within you (kare – meaning personal, dear, and intimate friend, and ā roto – meaning within). They are housed in many areas of the tinana, but are usually talked about as being housed in the **ngākau** (heart), **puku** (stomach), and **ate** (liver).

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<sup>3</sup> Nā Moahuia Goza māua ko Brian Emery I tākoha te kōrero nei. Ngā uri o Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Matakore, Ngāti Hauā hoki. 14 Paengawhāwhā, 2020.

Similar to this view is one that our tinana has a **whakapapa** back to **atua**, as do our kare ā roto. There are many different kare ā roto, as there are many atua, and all are designed to help us navigate and respond to this world in which we live.

When on a cancer journey, you may experience many kare ā roto. They may include **mataku** (fear), **āmaimai** (anxiety and nervousness), **whakamā** (embarrassment), **riri** (anger, annoyance, rage), **mamae** (wounded or hurt), or even a renewed sense of **māia** (confidence and motivation).

You may also feel the welling up of kare ā roto from deep within you, such that it feels like it wants to be released. This is totally normal, and totally Māori.

There are many ways of expressing and releasing those kare ā roto that are bubbling up inside you. They include **karanga**, **haka**, singing, composing new **waiata**, writing stories, writing poems, researching **pū rākau** (your ancestral stories), **mahi toi** (art), **raranga**, going for a swim in the **moana**, walking in the **ngahere**, or working out.

You will instinctively know the best ways of expressing yourself.

## Ngā kare o Rangi

Another **kōrero** about emotions is connected to our **kupu** Māori. Each kupu Māori has numerous meanings steeped in **mātauranga**. Here are some examples of kare ā roto that relate to our **rangi** (heavens and skies).<sup>4</sup>

**Rangirua** – rua – two. The feeling of being in two minds and being confused. This can happen many times during a cancer journey and can sometimes settle with more knowledge.

**Pōrangi** – Pō – night. *“Pōrangi is when the sun is shining and it is daylight, but the moon has moved across the skies and eclipses the sun.... even though you know it is still daytime, it is a time when you cannot see.”* This state is usually a temporary experience; the moon will move on and the sunshine will return.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Some similarities to the Rangi matrix; however, a more generalised association with kupu Māori

<sup>5</sup> There are many meanings for the kupu pōrangi. In this context pōrangi means a temporary state of not being able to see clearly.



**Haurangi** – Hau – winds. “*That my mind and emotions are buffeted about like the wind.*” This state is a feeling of being pushed around and unsteady on your feet. Lying down on Papatūānuku, smelling the earth, and feeling her heartbeat may help ground you during this time.<sup>6</sup>

**Ārangī** – a state where you are unsettled and not at ease. Sometimes this can cause you to wake up in the night and not be able to return to sleep. Keeping active, eating good mauri ora kai, and ticking off some ‘to-do list’ jobs may help at this time.

If at any time you feel that these kare ā roto become overwhelming or concerning, please let your family/whānau and your cancer treatment team know as soon as you can.

Lastly, each hapū and iwi will have its own **mātauranga** about emotions. Seek out your **puna mātauranga** (knowledge keepers), who may be able to share other kōrero with you. Learning more about the whakapapa of emotions from your own **whānau kōrero** may itself be **rongoā** for you.

## Ngā kare ā-roto me te Māoritanga – He aha te kare ā-roto?

***Nā Moahuia Goza Rāua Brian Te Rauroha Emery***

E ai ki te ao Māori, he maha ngā whakaaro, ngā ingoa, me ngā momo **kare ā-roto**.

Kīia ai ngā kare ā-roto, ko te pūngao e whakaterere ana. Ka whai pānga, ka hono hoki ki ngā āhuatanga katoa e pā ana ki a koe. Tae noa ki tō **mauri**, ki tō wairua, ki tō tinana, ki tō whānau, ki tō **tipuna**, ki tō/ngā atua, me **te taiao**.

I tēnei tekiona, ka kōrero mātou mō ngā huarahi e rua mō te whakaaro i ngā kare ā-roto.

<sup>6</sup> There are many meanings for the kupu haurangi. In this context haurangi means a temporary feeling of being unsteady and ungrounded.

Ara tetahi whakaaro e mea ana he matawhaiaro ngā kare ā-roto, he mea hira, ā, ko ngā hoa takatāpui e noho ana ki roto i a koe (kare – ko te tikanga o tēnei, he whaiaro, he mea puiaki, he hoa takatāpui, ko te tikanga o ā-roto – e mea ana kei roto). Ka noho ēnei ki ngā wāhanga maha o te tinana engari, i te nuinga o ngā wā, ka kīia kei roto ēnei i te **ngākau**, i te **puku**, me te **ate**.

Ko tētahi whakaaro e rite ana ki tēnei, ko te whakaaro, **whakapapa** ai ō tātou tinana ki ngā **atua**, pērā anō ki o tātou kāre ā-roto. He maha ngā momo kare ā-roto, e ai ki te maha o ngā atua, ā, i waihangatia katoa ki te āwhina i a tātou ki te urungi me te urupare ki tēnei ao e noho nei tātou.

I te wā o tō matepukupuku, ka rongu koe i te maha o ngā kare ā-roto. Tērā pea, ko te **mataku**, ko te **āmaimai**, ko te **whakamā**, ko te **riri**, ko te **mamae**, tērā rānei ka puta ko tētahi āhua māia kua whakahoungia.

Tērā pea ka rongu koe i te pupū ake o etahi kare ā-roto mai i tētahi wāhi hōhonu ki roto i a koe, tērā e mōhio ana koe, kei te hiahia puta. He pai noa iho tēnei, he āhua Māori kē hoki.

He nui ngā huarahi mō te whakaputa me te tuku i ō kare ā-roto e pupū ana ki roto i a koe. Tae noa ki te mahi karanga, mahi haka, te waiata, te tito waiata hou, te tuhi pūrākau, te tito rotarota, te rangahau pūrākau mahi toi, te raranga, te haere ki te kaukau i te moana, te hīkoikoi i te ngahere, te whakapakari tinana rānei.

Ka mōhio koe ki ngā huarahi pai mōu ki te tuku i a koe.

Ara anō tētahi atu kōrero mō ngā kare ā-roto, e hāngai ana ki ō tātou kupu Māori. He maha ngā tikanga o ia kupu nui rawa te mātauranga. Anei ētahi tauira o ngā kare ā-roto e pā ana ki a Ranginui.

**Rangirua** – kua puta rangi rua te hinengaro, kua pōhauhau noa iho. He nui ngā wā ka pēnei i te wā o te matepukupuku, ā, tērā pea ka tau haere mā te nui ake o te mōhio.

**Pōrangi** – pō – wā pōuri. Ko te pōrangi, ko te wā tēnei e whiti ana te rā, ā, kua ao mārama, engari kua whakawhiti kē te mārama i a Ranginui me tana ārai i te rā. Ahakoa e mōhio ana koe ko te wā o te ao mārama tonu, he wā e kore rawa koe e āhei ki te kite. He wheako rangitahi tēnei āhuatanga i te nuinga o ngā wā; ka haere te mārama ka hoki mai te rāwhiti.

**Haurangi** – Hau – ‘*koheritia ai taku hinengaro me ōku kare ā-roto, pērā ki te hau.*’ He āhua tēnei e whakaaro ai koe, kei te pana haerehia koe, kei te tīmangamanga koe. Mā te takoto ki runga i a papatūānuku, te hongī i a papatūānuku, me te rongo i te patopato o tōna manawa, tērā e āwhina i a koe ki te whakapūmau i a koe i tēnei wā.

**Ārangī** – he āhuatanga tērā ka puta, inā kei te tīrengi koe, kāhore i te aumoe. I ētahi wā, ka whakaoho tēnei i a koe i ngā pō, me tō kore āhei ki te hoki ki te moe. Mā te noho pakari, te kai i ngā kai mauri ora, me te whakatau i ētahi o ngā mahi o te “rārangi me matua mahi”, e āwhina i a koe i tēnei wā.

Mehemea kei te whakaaro koe kei te pokea ō kare ā-roto, kei te māharahara rānei koe mō ēnei kare ā-roto, tēnā koa whakamōhio wawe atu i tō whānau me tō rōpū maimoatanga.

Hei kōrero whakamutunga, kei ia hapū, kei ia iwi, ōna ake mātauranga e pā ana ki ngā kare ā-roto. Rapua tō **puna mātauranga**, tērā pea ka āhei rātou ki te hoatu kōrero ki a koe. Mā te ako i te whakapapa o ōu kare ā-roto mai i nga kōrero o te **whānau**, tērā ka puta pea hei **rongoā** mōu.

## Emotions from a Pasifika world view

*Written by Latu To'omaga MEdPsych*

As Pasifika people, how do we deal with the emotions a cancer diagnosis might bring? Often we think about our families' and our communities' reactions to our news, and what it means for them. It is important to take this time to think about how we feel and what can help us at this time. This section briefly explores some of the ways we might deal with emotions from a Pasifika world view.

### Pasifika world view

Our beautiful Pasifika neighbours have ongoing relationships with the land, the sky, nature, the spirit world, and the environment. For example,

the relationship with and respect for the land resembles a child's umbilical cord connecting them to their mother.

Understanding our common Pasifika world view helps us recognise what is important to us. We share a similar holistic view of wellbeing, including the important areas of family, cultural and traditional beliefs, spiritual knowledge, mental and physical wellbeing, communal living, and community/village togetherness. These parts are interwoven in our lives like a mat. All must be cared for equally in order to maintain health and balance.

## Fonofale model of health

The Fonofale Pasifika health model includes values and beliefs from the Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, and Tokelau. A Samoan 'fale' is a traditional house, and the image of a house and its foundations, walls, and ceiling is used to represent each part of the whole structure. In this model the family are the foundation for all Pacific cultures. This can include extended family, community and church. Family are a strong support system. Culture is the roof and is important to finding your way in the world.

The four posts connect the family and culture and relate to physical wellbeing, spiritual connectedness, mental wellbeing or state of mind, and other for example, gender, sexuality, age, socio-economic status, education, employment.



*Fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann, 2009)*

## “Ole ala ole pule o le tautua – the pathway to leadership is through service”

Serving is about giving of yourself and not expecting anything in return. Giving and serving is being humble and showing kindness. This concept in turn supports the importance of role-modelling positive parenting and acts of kindness and generosity. Serving is a value we hold and share with the next generations.

When we have cancer we might find people want to give to us, and we are in a position of receiving. This can feel strange when we are used to giving.

## Giving and receiving

Pasifika cultures have a collective thought of giving. To give is to help others in times of need or to help them to be blessed in their work. ‘To give is to receive.’ Giving is an act of kindness and love. It demonstrates that families are part of a collective or bigger community/family. It is a process that is reciprocated when something wonderful or something sad happens in a family. When someone in our community has cancer, we all feel the need to help that person and their family to carry the burden.

## Faith, culture and traditions

Pasifika people have a strong sense of faith. This means we believe in a higher power, namely God, who has a place called heaven for us to ascend to after this life. Believing in what cannot be seen is a reality for many Pasifika people. It is what we base our faith on. Culture and traditions help to cement our faith to keep our beliefs alive, and these are passed down within our Pasifika Islands. It is more difficult to maintain these beliefs and traditions in the Western world, but they may become more important to us when we hear we have cancer.





## Dealing with emotions

Visiting families and being present in times of need can be very comforting for a person with cancer and their family. Taking food and gifts and offering money can be part of this visiting process. Shared words of comfort and encouragement are extended to the family so that they know they are not alone. Pasifika families are a collective at this time, becoming part of the extended community of Pasifika family. This is often taken forward to prayer and uplifted to God in the hope and expectation that there could be healing and relief in the process.

## Finding hope and support

Confiding in your minister is something common and special at these times. Ministers play a big part in our lives and communities and are highly regarded in our culture. Faith for Pasifika people keeps us connected and grounded; it can give us hope.

Times of stress, or receiving devastating news like a cancer diagnosis, can leave us feeling many things: anxious, shocked, scared, angry, and

so forth. You may also react in a physical way, such as through the fight response to argue. Or you might want to run away and not face it, freeze up, and keep quiet, like you feel when you are shocked.

No matter how you look at it, when anyone is diagnosed with cancer it raises many emotions. Many Pasifika people like to have family around; we process with loved ones, and lean on our spiritual beliefs to help us get through. You may contact your church minister for wisdom and guidance and a religious process may be undertaken with a Pasifika flavour.

Pasifika families are like all families that receive devastating news. However your family processes this news, it is important that they show their understanding of the cancer in a way that is comfortable for you. For example:

- you might not want to talk to someone straight away
- you might be in shock and feel angry and upset
- you could take time for yourself before you talk to others. Coping with the reactions of others can be a big thing. You may want to ask someone else in your family to be your spokesperson
- you might like to find ways that help ground you in times of high emotion, such as:
  - taking a walk in nature and breathing fresh air
  - doing relaxation exercises
  - using positive self-talk
  - listening to motivational talks that uplift you
  - finding a structure in your day that works for you and builds in some exercise.

You are dealing with feelings of loss and grief and these are big emotions to deal with. These are your emotions and this is your journey. Sometimes talking things through with family, a therapist, or a counsellor can help.

The story that I am about to share is a true story of a mighty Pasifika couple, Arthur and Tia, Tia's journey with cancer, and how our paths crossed.



## A true story from a 'Pasifika perspective'

*I decided to go to get a haircut from the local barber and that is where I met Arthur. We greeted one another and to my surprise I looked at the barber seat and noticed his wife seated and getting her hair shaved off her head.*

*Pasifika people have the ability to connect deeply in a short amount of time, so it was not long before Arthur shared the situation.*

*Arthur shared deeply. It affected me so much that I felt emotional and tearful as he was unravelling his story. Arthur talked about getting home the previous night. Things were normal until his wife Tia had a shower and noticed her hair falling out.*

*As I was trying to piece this together I thought to myself, "Does she have cancer?". Arthur continued to share that Tia was having chemo as she had been diagnosed with cancer two years earlier.*

*My heart sank as I sat listening and every now and then glancing over at Tia on the barber's chair. Grippd by Arthur's narrative I was totally engrossed in every word he spoke from that point on. Arthur continued to share that Tia had made a snap decision the previous night that was huge!*

*Tia decided right there and then that she wanted her family to gather that very night. She wanted to have a hair-cutting ceremony and have the family share it with her. Immediately Arthur was on the phone and letting everyone know. Arthur also rang his amazing sister who has a food catering business, and asked her to prepare some food.*

*Once the message got out, within the hour everyone in the immediate family dropped everything and made their way to Tia and Arthur's back deck where the ceremony was to take place.*

*This was put on Facebook and music was playing while the ceremony took place. I was so into his narrative that I couldn't wait to get home and view the Facebook post.*

*Tia finished with the barber and came and sat next to me. I immediately hugged her and, as Pasifika, my mind was thinking about links and connections we had that drew me closer to her.*

*We are actually connected by way of being from the same area in Samoa. Tia's matai name is my surname and therefore we are related through chiefly titles. This brought me closer to her and her story.*

*Tia and I hugged. I felt emotional and inspired at the same time with what Arthur had shared. I told Tia that Arthur had shared what happened the previous night, and she was totally fine with it. Tia told me how overwhelmed she was with everything going on and how she just wanted her family and close friends around her. Tia's mother had passed away from cancer five years earlier, so this was very important to her at this time.*

*I managed to get my hair cut, which was the reason I was there, but when I got home that evening I went to the Facebook post. Well... to be honest I was a total mess during and after watching that post. I will never forget this precious moment of sharing.*

# There is no right or wrong way to feel

You might feel a range of emotions when you hear that you, or someone you love, has cancer. Understanding how you feel can be helpful. Even though you may feel distressed, it does not mean you are not coping.

There is no right or wrong way to feel. Everyone is different and you will cope with things in your own way and in your own time.

**“ I felt completely overwhelmed having to deal with all the admin tasks associated with treatment. Making sure referrals happened when they'd been forgotten and dealing with insurance providers. All this running around to make sure everyone was on the same page was stressful – navigating the health system can be a nightmare. ”**

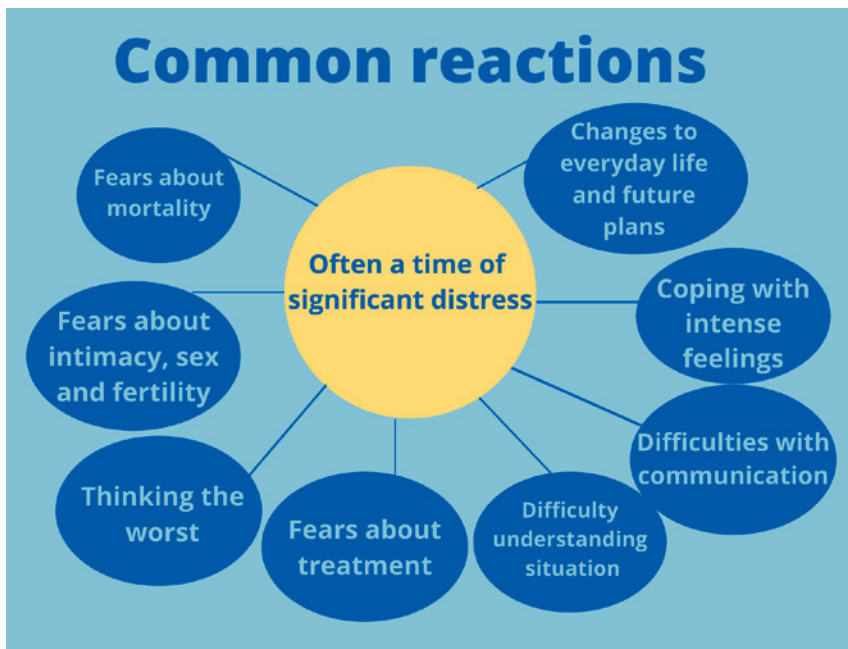
**Jill**

## Kāore he huarahi tika, hē rānei mō te rongo

Tērā pea, ka rongo koe i te maha o ngā momo kare ā-roto ka rangona ana koe kua pā te matepukupuku ki a koe, ki tētahi atu rānei. Mā te whai māramatanga ki ngā āhua e rongo ana koe, e āwhina i a koe. Ahakoa e auhi ana koe, ehara i te mea kāore i te tareka e koe te whakahaere i a koe.

Kāore he huarahi tika, hē rānei mō te rongo. He rerekē tēnā, ki tēnā ā, ka tū pakari koe mā te whai i tōu ake huarahi, me te mahi i te wā e tika ana mōu.





## Common reactions when you have cancer

You may experience some of the following emotions.

### Shock

You may feel shocked when you are told you have cancer. It is often difficult to understand the diagnosis immediately—you might hear the words but not believe them. Cancer is a serious disease, and most people feel afraid and unsure about the treatment, the side effects, and the likely impacts on family/whānau, friends, and work. People sometimes feel numb, or 'shut off' from their emotions. This is normal. It is a protective mechanism that the brain uses when everything feels too overwhelming.

## Fear, anxiety and panic

It is normal to feel frightened or anxious at times during this experience. You might worry about what will happen to you. Fear and anxiety have physical effects. They are a bit like being very nervous before an exam or a job interview.

When you are anxious your body releases adrenaline. This makes your heart beat quickly and your hands sweat, and you may feel hot or cold, have a headache, or get butterflies in your stomach.

Often anxiety changes our digestive system, so we can feel sick, lose our appetite, or have an upset tummy. For some people the anxiety is overwhelming and they experience panic attacks.

Panic attacks feel awful but they are generally not dangerous to your health. Talk to your doctor about ways to manage these.

## Anger and resentment

Some people ask, “Why me?” You may feel resentful of the good health of others. You may feel angry with family/whānau, friends, medical professionals, your God, or even yourself. These are natural reactions to the changes that cancer has caused to your life plans. It is important to be aware of your feelings and find healthy ways to deal with anger so that you do not hurt yourself or others.

## Denial

You may have trouble believing or accepting that you have cancer. Sometimes denial allows people time to adjust to their diagnosis. Denial is a normal reaction. However, it can become a problem if it stops you seeking information and treatment.

## Sadness

After being diagnosed with cancer it is normal to feel sadness. It may be there all the time or it may come and go, depending on what is going on in your life. Sadness is different from depression. Sadness is part of healing. It allows you to emotionally process any loss, grief, change, or disappointment and gradually move on.

## Depression

Depression is a much more intense feeling than sadness. People with depression find it difficult to feel joy or pleasure. It is hard to manage and can affect your ability to cope with everyday things. It is important to remember that being depressed does not mean you are weak.

Depression needs treating, just like a broken leg or a heart condition. You may need medication, counselling, rongoa or spiritual healing.

Talk to family/whānau and your treatment team to find ways to support.

Remember that your mental health is as important as your physical health. If you are concerned about yourself or someone else, talk to your GP or treatment team. There is a lot that can be done that can make a difference to you. [www.depression.org.nz](http://www.depression.org.nz) has helpful information.

Me maumahara, he mea tino hira tō hauora hinengaro, pērā ki tō hauora tinana. Mehemea kei te māharahara koe mōu anō, mō tētahi atu rānei, kōrero ki tō GP, ki tō rōpū maimoa rānei. He nui ngā huarahi hei āwhina kia pai ake ai koe. Kei konei ētahi pārongo āwhina [www.depression.org.nz](http://www.depression.org.nz)

**“ I remember an appointment with my oncologist after several tough surgeries and 6 months of chemo. She said to me, “Andrew, I think you are depressed.” And I was, I just didn’t know it. From the realisation, that my body was unwell and my mind could only hold me together for so long, meant I was able to move forward with help. ”**  
**Andrew**

## Feeling alone

It is common to feel that others do not understand what you are going through. Family/whānau and friends may find it hard to know what to say. Many people find that talking to other people who have cancer diagnoses is very valuable. Explore the support groups available in your community and online.

There may be times when you want to be left alone to reflect on your thoughts and emotions. This is a very normal reaction for some people. However, if you find that you would rather be left on your own for most of the time and often avoid talking to people, this may be a sign that you are depressed.

## Feeling vulnerable

A cancer diagnosis can make you feel very vulnerable. You may feel as though you have lost your independence and no longer have control over your life. It may also seem that things you used to do and find easy are now much more difficult, or that your role as a person who looks after everyone else has been reversed. This might cause you to lose some confidence. Give yourself some time to rebuild your confidence and self-esteem.

**“Remember, this is a moment in time, another chapter in your life and you will get back your confidence and self-esteem. Your personality remains unaffected so you are still the same person albeit with some physical differences. You are still you.”**  
**Jill**





## Loss and grief

Many people only associate loss and grief with dying. However, grieving and feelings of loss can also happen when someone receives a diagnosis of cancer. Many changes and losses occur with cancer. You may be missing work, people, regular exercise or an active and fun social life. You may feel that your relationships have changed. Some family/ whānau and friends may stay away because they are not sure how to deal with your cancer. You may be dealing with an uncertain future and financial changes. It can take time to adjust to the changes and challenges you are now facing, so be kind to yourself.

## Uncertainty

Cancer can lead to uncertainty in many areas of your life. Learning more about cancer and its treatment, and finding positive ways to look after yourself, can give you back a sense of control.



**If you are having trouble dealing with any of your emotions, consider talking to family/ whānau and friends, seeking professional help or joining a support group.**

If you feel that you can't talk to someone about your reactions contact the Cancer Information Helpline on 0800 CANCER (226 237).

## Worrying about the cancer coming back

Feeling anxious about cancer coming back (recurring) is common for people after cancer. For some people this fear affects their ability to enjoy life and make plans for the future.

You may feel more anxious at times, such as on the anniversary of the day you were diagnosed or when you hear about cancer in the media. Many people who have had cancer say that, with time, they feel less anxious.

You could talk to your treatment team or GP about recognising the differences between normal aches, pains, and sickness and cancer symptoms.

***“The anxiety has faded with time. I am 7 years cancer-free and I don't think about cancer so often. Although I do still think about it sometimes. Check-ups and scans are an anxious time. These serve as a reminder, bringing back old memories and fears.”***  
**Andrew**

# Challenging times – timeline

How you feel may be a bit like a roller coaster. It's typical to have ups and downs during the cancer journey. There's often a natural settling of emotions as time progresses.

## Challenging times

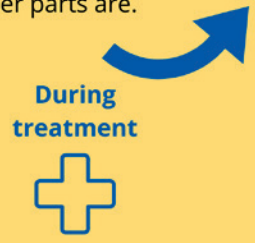
Many people find that they cope better than expected with some aspects of the cancer experience, but are surprised about how difficult other parts are.



When you are diagnosed with cancer it is often difficult to take the news at first. You might hear the words but not be able to absorb them or believe them. Most people feel overwhelmed at first.



The weeks after diagnosis can be very stressful. You may feel like everything is happening too fast – or too slowly. People often feel confused and anxious about treatments and side effects. You may wonder if you will be the same person as before and how your life will change.



Cancer treatments can be physically demanding and disrupt all your usual routines. You may also need to deal with practical issues such as travelling to treatment, getting time off work, and family responsibilities.

Tērā pea, ka whakaaro koe he rite tō āhua ki te eke rōnakinaki. He mea puta noa tenei, ki te whai i ngā piki me ngā heke i te wā o te matepukupuku. Ka kaunēke haere ana te wā, ka tau haere noa iho ngā kare ā-roto.



### Treatment side effects



The physical and emotional impacts of cancer are linked. Side effects of treatment can make it harder to cope emotionally, while emotional distress may make the physical side effects worse. The good news is many side effects can now be well managed if you tell your treatment team.



### After treatment



Many people are puzzled to find that their mood doesn't improve as soon as treatment finishes. This can be a time of adjustment as you reassess priorities and come to terms with any long-term impacts of treatment. It is common to feel concerned about the cancer coming back, especially when you have follow-up tests.

### Advanced cancer



It can be devastating to be told that your cancer is advanced at first diagnosis, or that it has returned after the initial treatment. If this is the case for you, you and your carers may find it helpful to see a counsellor or call our **CANCER INFORMATION** helpline on 0800 226 237. The Cancer Society is here to support you.

*Table adapted with permission from Cancer Council Australia 'Emotions and Cancer'.*



For more information see our section on Helpful ways to help yourself (page 48) or ring the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237).



# TAHA WAIRUA – SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

Spiritual distress is a common part of the cancer experience. Like physical and emotional wellbeing, taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing) is an important part of the four pillars of hauora (health). Life changes in many ways when you or someone you care about has cancer. You might find that spiritual support can help you cope with these changes.

# Spiritual support

Many of us like a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Spirituality refers to our belief about that meaning, whether we call that God, truth or some other term. Most of us have a spiritual dimension, whether or not we attend organised services.

Spiritual moments can happen at any time: when you feel close to nature, look into the face of a loved one, reach out to a person in need, or enter a church, temple, synagogue, mosque or place of worship.

## Religion

Religions are traditions of spirituality. For some people, traditions help to develop their sense of meaning and purpose in life. Some draw their spiritual beliefs from philosophy, poetry and life experiences. Some of us think deeply about these matters, others simply live their beliefs.

## Wairuatanga<sup>7</sup>

Wairuatanga is the concept of spirituality from a Māori world view.

The wairua, sometimes called ‘the two waters’, is a central part of Māori health. For many it is described as the two waters because it allows people to exist fully and fulfil their potential in both Te Ao Kikokiko (the seen world) and Te Ao Wairua (the unseen world).

The wairua is not located in any specific part of the body, but is central to your whole being, leaving the body at death or when you are asleep. During dreaming hours the wairua wanders through the realms of Te Ao Wairua and returns to the body on awakening. This is why dreams are usually very important to Māori.

There are many ways to look after your wairua. Knowing who you are and where you are from, waiata, **karakia**, te reo, **rongoā Māori**, and

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<sup>7</sup> Goza, T Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Haua, Ngāti Raukawa (2019) Nā te aroha ki te tangata, ka tuku enei kupu ki ngā tangata katoa kia tau ai te mauri ka ora ai te wairua.



spending time with family/whānau, going into the **ngahere**, bathing in your awa or moana, seeing a **tohunga**, or returning to your marae are some of them.

As with most journeys in life, a cancer journey is also a wairua journey. Seek out those who will tautoko your journey. Seek comfort from coincidences. If you feel you should go to your **tūrangawaewae**, or have an urge to see something or ring someone, listen to your wairua. Your wairua is gently showing you what it is that you need.

E ngā Rangatira o ngā hau e whā, hokia ki ōu maunga kia purea ai e ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea.

To all the great chiefs of the four winds, return to your ancestral mountains to be cleansed by the warm winds of Tāwhirimātea.



*Photo by Henry Xu on Unsplash*

# Wairuatanga

He ariā te wairuatanga e ai ki tā te ao Māori.

He wāhi pū tō te wairua, e kīia ana i ētahi wā “ko ngā wai e rua”, ki te hauora Māori. Mō te tokomaha, ka whakaatuna kētia ai, ko ngā wai e rua, i te mea, ka āhei te tangata ki te tū tūturu me te whakatutuki i ō rātou pūmanawa nohopuku i roto tahi i Te Ao Kikokiko me Te Ao Wairua.

Ehara i te mea ka noho te wairua ki tētahi wāhanga pū o te tinana engari, ka noho matua ki tō toioranga katoa ā, ka wehe atu i tō tinana i tō matenga, i te wā e moe ana rānei koe. I ngā wā puta ai ngā moemoeā, ka rere te wairua ki ngā ao o te ao wairua, ka hoki mai ki te tinana ka oho ana te tangata. Koinei te take, he mea nui ngā moemoeā ki te ao Māori.

He nui ngā momo huarahi ki te manaaki i tō wairua. Ko ētahi o ēnei, ko te mōhio ko wai koe, nō hea koe, te mōhio ki ngā waiata, ngā karakia, te reo, ngā rongoā Māori, me te whai wāhi ki te taha o tō whānau, te haere ki te ngahere, me te kaukau i tō awa, tō moana rānei, te haere ki te kite tohunga, te hoki rānei ki tō marae.

Pērā ki te nuinga o ngā haerenga i te wā o te toioranga, he haerenga wairua anō te haerenga matepukupuku. Rapua ngā tāngata ka tautoko i tō haerenga. Whāia te oranga ngākau i ngā ōruatanga. Mehemea kei te whakaaro koe ki te hoki ki tō tūrangawaewae, ka puta rānei te hiahia ki te kite i tētahi mea, tētahi tangata, te waea atu rānei ki tētahi, me whakarongo ki tō wairua. E ata tohu ana tō wairua, he aha te mea e hiahia ana koe.

***E ngā rangatira o ngā hau e whā, hokia ki ōu maunga kia purea ai e ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea.***

## Finding hope

Finding hope is having a sense of optimism about the future. Cancer treatments are improving and many people are living well, for longer.

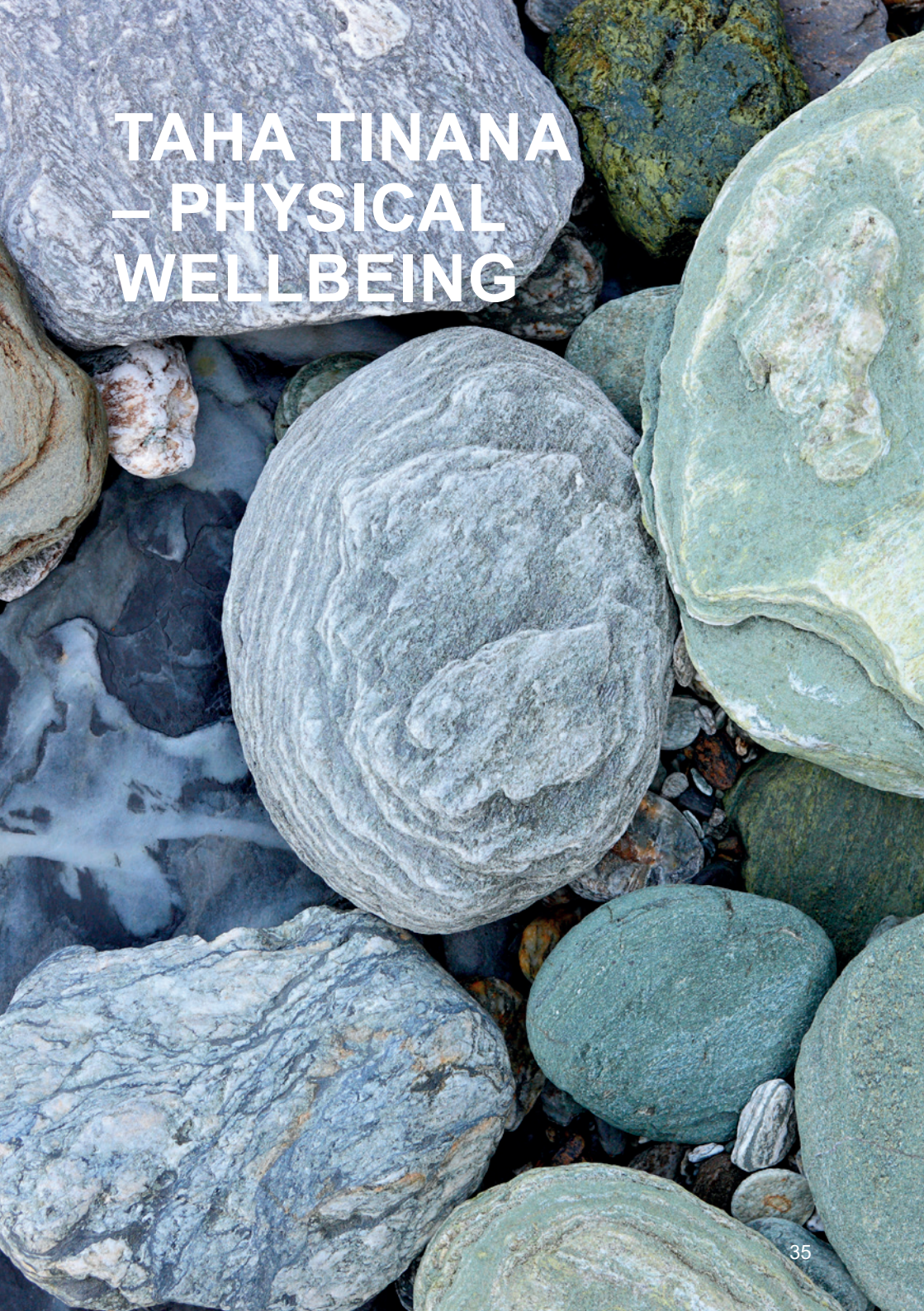
It can be hard to stay hopeful about your future all the time, and what you hope for may change. It is OK to have days when you feel sad or scared about what lies ahead. You may like to talk to your treatment team about what cancer means for you. Knowing more about your cancer can be useful.

Talking to family/whānau and friends can be reassuring and uplifting. You might find strength and hope through things like mindfulness, affirmations, or counselling to help you find new ways to view your situation.

Spiritual or religious practices can help some people adjust to the effects of cancer and its treatment. People who have a strong faith or spiritual beliefs tend to experience increased hope, optimism, and feelings of inner peace.

**““ Post-treatment I found it helpful for my mental/physical recovery to set some short, medium, and long-term goals. Things I could look forward to. Initially, it was simple things like having a trip out each day for a cup of coffee and a walk. It was winter and I remember gradually increasing my walking distance until I could walk the length of the local mall without having to rest. Long-term was a family holiday. The children were young so we went to an adventure park to make up for some of the time I had spent in bed. ””**  
**Andrew**





**TAHA TINANA  
– PHYSICAL  
WELLBEING**



When you have cancer you may feel better on some days than on others – every day is likely to be different. Looking after yourself by taking small steps to care for your body can improve your wellbeing and reduce stress.

Taha tinana is about more than just the visible effects of cancer. Our mind, body, and spirit are not separate.



# Looking after yourself

Physical changes like fatigue, changes in appearance, changes in appetite, and not being able to sleep can change how well you cope. They can affect how you feel about yourself and how other people relate to you.

It can help to focus on self-care and taking time to get used to physical changes. Ways to look after yourself include eating well, keeping active, and taking time to rest. Go to page 50 to find more tips.

## Fatigue

Fatigue is often confused with tiredness. Usually you know why you are tired and a good night's sleep solves the problem. Fatigue is overwhelming tiredness (physical and emotional) and is not relieved by rest or sleep. Fatigue is one of the most common side effects of cancer and its treatment. It can happen to anyone with any type of cancer and at any time, during and after treatment.

- Gentle exercise can help to relieve fatigue.
- If you need time to rest during the day, do not be afraid to say no to visitors.
- Other things that may help include planning ahead and pacing yourself, increasing fluid intake, and having plenty of nutritious snacks on hand.



For more information on fatigue and suggestions on how to manage it, see the Cancer Society's information sheet, Cancer-related fatigue on our website

<https://bit.ly/2ZVX1iw>



## Effects on your eating

Changes in appetite and weight can be normal due to the effects of your cancer, treatment, fatigue, pain, anxiety, or how you are feeling. Even though you may not feel hungry, your body still needs food to maintain your weight and support your recovery. The following ideas may help.

- Eat small, regular meals and snacks throughout the day.
- Do not rely on your appetite to tell you it is time to eat. Eat at regular times.
- Make the most of your appetite when it is good and you are most hungry.



Read more on eating well in our information sheet

[www.cancernz.org.nz/cancer-information/treatment/eating-well-during-cancer-treatment/](http://www.cancernz.org.nz/cancer-information/treatment/eating-well-during-cancer-treatment/)

## Changes in your appearance

Changes in your appearance can make you feel self-conscious. People may react differently towards you and this can be upsetting. If you are finding it difficult to deal with these changes there are people who can help you.

Tell your family/whānau and friends how you are feeling so they can support you. Focusing on yourself as a whole person, not just the part of you that has been scarred or altered, can help.

**“*Nowhere, in anything I read or asked about, was it said that sometimes people breeze through treatment, that it can be ok. Everyone is different and it might not all be bad. I was diagnosed with breast cancer, which was a huge shock, and I had a mastectomy, six months of chemo, radiation and I’m now on a daily tablet for 5 years. But the side effects have been trivial.....there were times where I forgot that I was going through treatment - until I scratched my head and felt the head scarf instead of hair.*”**

**Jill**

## Difficulty sleeping

There may be times when you find it difficult to sleep. Often this is because you are anxious about treatment or worried about the future. Although you may feel you have been awake all night, you may have managed a few hours of good quality sleep. If you get help with the emotional effects of cancer, your sleep patterns may improve.

You may find regular exercise and bed-time routines helpful. Try to avoid napping during the day to improve your sleep at night.



See our information sheet – If you have trouble sleeping

<https://bit.ly/2ZUPLDI>



# TAHA WHĀNAU – FAMILY HEALTH



Being part of a wider social system supports our emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Families/Whānau provide us with the strength to be who we are. In taha Māori, the links to our ancestors – our ties to our past, the present, and the future – are part of the strength we get from taha whānau.

## Talking to family/whānau and friends

How your family/whānau communicates about your cancer depends on how you have always spoken to each other. Families/Whānau and friends who frequently share their feelings may be better able than others to talk about cancer and the changes it brings. Some relationships are more private or have one person playing the major role in decision-making.

Being able to share your anxiety and fear can make you feel stronger and help you through difficult times. Talking about your feelings with a family/whānau member or friend who is a good listener could be helpful.

You may find that talking about cancer is not as difficult as you had anticipated. Trying to hide the diagnosis is usually unsuccessful. Sooner or later, family/whānau and friends will learn that you have cancer. If the people close to you have difficulty talking about cancer, calling a family/whānau hui (meeting) may help.

**“I did feel a great sense of uncertainty about prognosis and how to tell my friends and family, in such a way they wouldn't get upset and how to let my work colleagues know.”**  
**Jill**



## Te kōrero ki tō whānau me ō hoa

Ka hāngai te āhua o ngā mahi whakawhitiwhiti kōrero a tō whānau mō tō matepukupuku, e ai ki te āhua kōrerorero ai koutou ki a koutou anō. Ko ngā whānau me ngā hoa e kaha ana ki te kōrero i ō rātou whakaaro, ngā mea pai ake pea ki kōrerorero mō te matepukupuku me ngā rerekētanga ka puta. Ka noho tūmataiti ētahi hononga, kotahi rānei te tangata e kawe ana i te tūnga matua mō ngā mahi whakataunga.

Ka kaha ake koe mā te kōrero mō tō mānukanuka, mō tō matakū, ka āwhina hoki i a koe i ngā wā taumaha. Tērā pea, he mea āwhina te mahi kōrero ki tētahi o te whānau, tētahi o te hoa rānei e pai ana mō te whakarongo.

Ka kite pea koe, ehara te mahi kōrero mō tō matepukupuku i te mahi uaua, e ai ki tērā i whakaaro koe. I te nuinga o te wā, kāore he take o te huna i tō whakatau mate. A tōna wā, ka rongo, ka mōhio te whānau me ngā hoa. Mehemea he uaua mō ngā mea tata ki a koe ki te kōrero mō te matepukupuku, mā te karanga i tētahi hui ā-whānau, ā-hoa hoki pea e āwhina.

## Suggestions for sharing your cancer diagnosis

Be prepared for people's responses when you first tell them you have cancer. People can react very differently when hearing distressing news. Some might withdraw and others may become closer.

- Provide clear and honest information and let them know what kind of support you need if this is appropriate.
- Often family/whānau and friends would like to provide support but are unsure how.
- Tell people about the diagnosis when you feel ready and in a way that you feel comfortable with.

- Family/Whānau or friends may be able to tell others what is going on if you cannot.
- People will want to ask you questions. You choose how much information you want to share.
- Many people know people who have had cancer. Some will want to share their thoughts and advice about cancer that you may find upsetting. It is OK to tell them you do not want to hear them right now.
- Let people know if you do not want your cancer details shared with others.



Read more in our information sheet, Telling others about your diagnosis.

<https://bit.ly/3g7w94y>

**“Everyone had an opinion about my cancer and they didn't mind sharing it in an unfiltered, non-thinking way. That was when I felt fear - friends rambling on about this or that person who'd had chemo and what it did to them. In the end I remember thinking I can't have this 'talk' getting into my head so I shut it down by saying 'everyone is different so there is no reason to think I will experience what you are describing' - sometimes I had to say it more than once.”**  
**Jill**

## Talking to your children about cancer

Children usually sense something is wrong even if they do not know what it is. Some people avoid telling their children they have cancer. However, when they are not told what is going on, children may imagine the worst. They may also find out from someone else, which can make them feel angry and confused.



Your children benefit from an open and honest approach. With planning, practice, and support from family/whānau or health professionals, most parents are able to talk to their children about cancer.

- Consider what you will say and how you will say it before the discussion.
- Talk to children in a language they understand—younger children need simple explanations, while teenagers and young adults might ask for more details.
- Reassure them that their needs are important.
- Communicating with children gives them the opportunity to ask questions and express their feelings.

Tell your family/whānau and other people close to your children (grandparents, friends and school teachers) about your diagnosis and your plan for talking to your children, so that you all say similar things. Trusted family/whānau and/or friends can also talk to your children about cancer if you feel unable.



Call the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237) for a copy of the booklet, Cancer in the Family.

[www.cancernz.org.nz/cancer-information/living-with-cancer/cancer-in-the-family](http://www.cancernz.org.nz/cancer-information/living-with-cancer/cancer-in-the-family)

***“I was 37 and my children were 1, 4, and 6 years old. My wife and I gott some advice about what to tell them. They decided to tell them, “Dad is sick and needs some medicine to help him get well”. We felt this was the right level for their age and ability to understand. Young children don’t need all the details and don’t know what it means anyway.”***  
**Andrew**

## Talking to your workmates

Whether or not you tell your employer and colleagues about your cancer is up to you. If your ability to do your job is not affected, you may not want to tell your employer straightaway.

Most people find there are things that can be done to make it easier to continue to work, such as working part-time or working from home. Talk with your employer about what you might need while you are having treatment.

If you have any employment difficulties, talk to Community Law or seek legal advice from someone with experience in employment law.

## Coping with the financial impacts of cancer

Coping with the financial impacts of cancer can be difficult. Your income may reduce if you have to stop working or if you have run out of leave. Transport, accommodation, and some treatment costs can add extra financial strain.

Financial stress can affect your relationships, and for some people it can lead to depression or anxiety.

Cancer is stressful enough without having to worry about how to make ends meet. There are some things you can do to help.

- Take action early. Approach your bank or mortgage provider to see if there is anything they can do, such as provide you with a mortgage holiday or manage your loans differently.
- Talk to your treatment team about the National Travel Assistance Scheme if you need to travel long distances for treatment. Information on the scheme is available through the Ministry of Health website. [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)
- Contact a local financial mentoring service (budget advisor) that can help you. The directory of family budgeting services is a good place to start. [www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory)
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau is another place that can provide advice and support.
- Talk to the social worker who is part of your cancer treatment team.
- Talk to others such as family/whānau, a friend or your GP, or ring the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237).

## When people stay away

When people hear you have cancer, relationships can change. Some people will be very supportive, while others may withdraw.

People have their own reasons for staying away. They may not be able to cope with their feelings or they may not know how to respond. If you feel hurt by this sort of reaction, a conversation may clear the air. Sometimes accepting that people are unable to offer their support can help you move forward.

## Talking to others

Sometimes we need different support from that which our family/whānau and friends can provide.

For some people, meeting others who are in a similar situation can help to decrease feelings of anxiety, isolation, and fear. Support groups offer you the opportunity to share your experiences and learn different ways to deal with problems.



The Cancer Society can link you with local support groups and services that you may find helpful. Phone the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237) for further information or see the information page on (p 62).



# HELPFUL WAYS TO HELP YOURSELF

# Getting support from others

People often want to help but may not know what you need. The suggestions below may help you think about the help you can ask for.

## Ways family and friends can help

The suggestions below can be a useful prompt when someone says "Is there anything I can do?".



### Keeping others informed

- screening calls and emails
- acting as the main point of contact
- coordinating offers of support
- updating social media



### Providing practical support

- preparing meals
- doing household chores
- going grocery shopping
- driving to appointments
- sharing an after-school roster
- helping you exercise



### Offering companionship

- keeping you company
- listening without trying to solve your problems



### Keeping you involved

- getting you out and about
- talking about other things aside from cancer

*This table has been adapted with permission from the Cancer Council of Australia 'Emotions and Cancer' publication.*

## Ways to share how you are feeling when you do not feel like talking

Your physical health, your spiritual and emotional wellbeing, and your family/whānau relationships may change during and after cancer treatment. Sometimes it can be hard to talk about how you are feeling. To express your feelings without talking, you could try:

- journaling, emailing or blogging
- drawing or doing something creative
- leaving notes on your fridge about how you are feeling
- scrap booking.

## Tips to help you cope with change

- Keeping up your usual daily activities when you can may help you feel more in control, give you a sense of achievement, and take your mind off cancer.
- Take time out for some fun. Listen to your favourite music or watch a funny movie.
- Remember it's OK to have bad days and to feel down every now and then.
- It may help to learn more about your cancer.
- Let your treatment team know if you are in pain or having trouble sleeping or eating.
- Keep active – a short walk every day can help.
- Spend time in nature.
- Learn relaxation techniques such as breathing, yoga, romiromi, mirimiri, fofo, or massage to release tension and anxiety.
- Eat well.
- Spend time with supportive family/whānau and friends.

## When you might need professional support

Feeling anxious and upset is a normal reaction to hearing you have cancer. However, if you notice any of the following things happening, you need to seek professional support if you:

- are finding it difficult to function on a daily basis
- have lost the desire to do things that previously gave you pleasure
- begin to rely on alcohol or drugs to get you through the day
- lose your appetite and stop eating
- find you are sleeping too much or are having a lot of trouble sleeping
- are at risk of hurting yourself or someone else because of your anger
- are thinking about self-harm or are feeling suicidal. Call Lifeline on 0800 543 354.

**If you are concerned that you, or someone else, is in immediate danger, call 111 immediately and ask for help.**

***“I don't think I cried with friends or family. However, one day very early in my diagnosis, when I was home alone, I rang the Cancer Society and spoke to one of the care team. There was no talking actually, with a stranger on the other end of the phone, I just cried and cried and cried. I couldn't speak at all. The person on the other end of the phone was so very understanding and supportive.”***  
**Andrew**





## Te wā tērā pea me whai tautoko ngaio koe

Kāore he aha mō te puta o te āwangawanga ka rongō ana koe kua pā te matepukupuku. Heoi anō, mehemea ka kite koe, ka rongō rānei i ētahi o ēnei mea e puta ana, me whai tautoko ngaio koe mehemea:

- he uaua mōu ki te whakahaere i a koe i ia rā, ia rā
- kua ngaro katoa tō kaha ki te mahi i ngā mahi i pai ki a koe i ngā rā ki muri
- kua huri koe ki te inu waipiro, ki te kai whakapōauau rānei hei āwhina i tō rā
- kua ngaro tō hiahia ki te kai, kua kore koe e kai
- kei te roa rawa tō moe, kei te raruraru rānei koe ki te moe
- kei te noho mōrea koe mō te whakawhara i a koe anō, i tētahi atu rānei, nā tō riri
- kei te whakaaro koe ki te patu i a koe anō, ki te whakamomori rānei, waea atu ki a i LIFELINE i runga i te nama 0800 543 354.

**Mehemea kei te māharahara koe kei te noho mōrearea koe, tētahi atu rānei, me waea wawe atu ki 111, ka tono āwhina.**

# People helping people

Sometimes talking with family/whānau and friends is not enough. There are other people who may be able to help you.

Your GP	Your GP will work with you to provide ongoing care, and can refer you to other health professionals for emotional support.
Counsellors	Can help you talk about your feelings and about the impacts a cancer diagnosis can have, and help you work on healthy coping strategies.
Psychologists	Use specialist approaches to help people manage the changes that come with cancer.
Social workers	Social workers are available to help support you and your family/whānau through the practical, social, and emotional changes a cancer diagnosis brings.
Hospital chaplains and spiritual care practitioners	Available to offer support through prayer and quiet reflection.
Kaupapa Māori health and social services	These will depend on the area you live in.
Tohunga puna ora	A traditional healer who practises traditional Māori healing such as rongoā.
Rongoā	Traditional Māori medicines and remedies that may include rākau rongoā (native flora herbal preparations), mirimiri (massage), and karakia (prayer).
Pacific healers	Pacific people will often go to the ministers of their churches to gain support when there is sadness or a death in a family.  Members of the community who have status are also considered respectful enough to be in a space to support families; they include a mātai (chiefs), heads of state, doctors, and nurses.
Cancer treatment team	This is your cancer team based at the hospital. It often includes oncologists, social workers, cancer nurses, and psychologists. They can arrange referrals to other health care professionals.
Cancer Society	<b>You can call a health professional at the Cancer Society to talk through any concerns or if you are not sure where to go for help. Call the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237) or contact the local office (see page 62).</b>



# Finding other support

For some people, meeting others who are in a similar situation can help decrease feelings of anxiety, isolation, and fear. Support groups offer you the opportunity to share your experiences and learn different ways to deal with problems.



The Cancer Society offers support groups that you may find helpful. Phone the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237) for further information.



# HOW CARERS CAN HELP

## Ways family/whānau and friends can help

As a family/whānau member or friend of someone who has been diagnosed with cancer, you may want to help but not know what to do. Here are some suggestions that may be useful.

- Learn about cancer and its treatment. This will help you to understand what the person you are supporting is coping with.
- Be thoughtful about offering advice. Listening while they talk or just being there with them are good ways to show you care.
- Talk about your feelings together and be honest about what worries you.
- Offer to go to appointments with them. You can be there for support, to take notes or, when appropriate, to take part in the discussions.
- Provide practical support, such as preparing meals, doing housework, driving them to appointments, doing gardening, or providing childcare.



We suggest you read Supporting Someone with Cancer, which is available on our website

<https://bit.ly/2CzRwgB>

## Self-care for carers

If you are caring for someone, your own health and wellbeing are important. Be clear with the person with cancer about what you can and cannot do to help them. Make the effort to take some time for yourself each day.

### Adjusting to change

Cancer is not just one stressful event to be dealt with and moved past – it is a series of changing situations and demands. You may need to:

- if you have young children, talk to their school about what is happening
- talk to your employer about what is happening at home and arrange some leave if needed
- talk to your bank about changing financial commitments to make them more manageable.

## Changing roles

When someone close to you is diagnosed with cancer, there may be changes in family/whānau roles and routines. The person with cancer may not be able to manage all their usual roles and tasks. They may be more dependent on you. You may have to take on roles that do not come easily or that you find hard to manage.

At first, a shift in roles may be difficult for you both. Talk together about how you are both coping with these changes. This may include doing less housework, simplifying tasks where possible, or accepting offers of help from family/whānau or friends.

## When the going gets tough

Many people supporting people with cancer say they have times when they feel they have had enough!

- Try to have one thing to look forward to every day, such as a catch-up with a friend, a coffee date, or some time to yourself to read or go for a walk.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help.
- It is OK to feel angry, to cry, and to let people see how you are feeling.
- Talk about your feelings with a close friend or relative or seek help from a counsellor.
- Some people find their religious and spiritual beliefs help them cope with their emotions.
- You cannot do everything, so do not expect to. There may be days when you need to leave certain things like the washing or cleaning.
- Remember – there are some things you just cannot change!

# Further information and support

## Health/Mental health

### **Cancer Society – Cancer Information Helpline**

0800 CANCER (226 237) for further information

**AnxietyNZ Trust phone line** – 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)

**Depression.org.nz Helpline** – 0800 111 757 [www.depression.org.nz](http://www.depression.org.nz)

**Government Health & Safety Lead** – (2018) A Guide for Maintaining Health and Wellbeing [www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/assets/Documents/A\\_Guide\\_for\\_Maintaining\\_Health\\_and\\_Wellbeing.pdf](http://www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/assets/Documents/A_Guide_for_Maintaining_Health_and_Wellbeing.pdf)

**Healthline** – 0800 611 116 [www.healthline.govt.nz](http://www.healthline.govt.nz)

**Lifeline Aotearoa** – 0800 543 354 [www.lifeline.org.nz](http://www.lifeline.org.nz). Lifeline aims to reduce personal stress through 24/7 counselling and other services.

**Man Alive** (New Zealand) – [www.manalive.nz](http://www.manalive.nz)

**Need to Talk?** – 1737 for free 24/7 counselling

**Samaritans Aotearoa New Zealand** – 0800 72 66 66 [www.samaritans.org.nz](http://www.samaritans.org.nz). Samaritans operates a 24/7 crisis help line.

## Family/Whānau support

**Family Services Directory** – [www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory)

**Family budgeting services** – [www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory)

**Financial capability mentors** (budget advisors) – [www.fincap.org.nz](http://www.fincap.org.nz)

**Kidslines** – 0800 543 754 [www.kidslines.org.nz](http://www.kidslines.org.nz). Telephone support line for kids. Call free between 4pm and 6pm weekdays.

**Supporting Families New Zealand** – <https://supportingfamilies.org.nz>

**Skylight** – [www.skylight.org.nz](http://www.skylight.org.nz)

**0800 What's Up?** – 0800 942 8787 [www.whatsup.co.nz](http://www.whatsup.co.nz).

The Kids Help Foundation Trust offers a telephone counselling service for children and young people.

**Youthline** – call free at any time: 0800 37 66 33 [www.youthline.co.nz](http://www.youthline.co.nz).



## Books and resources

**Cancer Society Auckland-Northland Division's *Relaxation and Mindfulness CD***

<https://auckland-northland.cancernz.org.nz/how-we-can-help/want-support/relaxation-and-mindfulness-cd>

**Cancer Society Wellington Division's *Relaxation and Visualisation CD***  
<http://bit.ly/2gmRdaN>

**Life, Happiness...and Cancer** by Phil Kerslake, Steele Roberts, Wellington, NZ. 2006

**A Mild Touch of the Cancer** by David Downs, NZ, 2019 – also available on <https://www.audible.com.au/ep/new-zealand> as an audiobook, and as an e-book on Amazon Kindle

**Finding Hope that Heals** by Wendy Schlessel Harpham, 2020  
**(free e-book)**

<https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/resources/finding-hope-that-heals-ebook/>

**Healing Hope – Through and beyond cancer** by Wendy Schlessel Harpham, Curant House, USA, 2018. Blog - <https://www.wendyharpham.com/writing>

**The Cancer Whisperer: Finding Courage, Direction and the Unlikely Gifts of Cancer** by Sophie Sabbage, Hodder & Stoughton, UK. 2017

### **Managing Fear**

<https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/podcasts/episode-11-managing-fear/>

**Coping with a Cancer Diagnosis** <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/podcasts/episode-1-coping-with-a-cancer-diagnosis/>

**Cancer Council Australia – Emotions and Cancer (2019)**  
[www.cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UC-pub-Emotions-and-Cancer-2019.pdf](http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UC-pub-Emotions-and-Cancer-2019.pdf)

# Glossary

**Āmāimai** – anxiety

**Haka** – Māori dance/  
performance

**Karakia** – prayer

**Karanga** – call out

**Kare ā roto** – emotions

**Korero** – talk

**Kupu Māori** – words

**Mahi toi** – art and craft

**Māia** – confidence and purpose

**Mamae** – deep hurt

**Mataku** – fear

**Mātauranga** – knowledge

**Mauri** – life essence

**Mauri ora kai** – healthy food

**Moana** – sea

**Ngā atua** – your god

**Ngahere** – bush

**Ngākau** – heart

**Puku** – stomach

**Puna mātauranga** – keeper of  
knowledge

**Rangirua** – to be in two minds  
and to be confused

**Raranga** – weaving

**Riri** – anger

**Rongoā** – traditional Māori  
medicine

**Te taiao** – the environment

**Tohunga** – a traditional healer  
who practises traditional  
Māori healing

**Tupuna** – ancestors

**Tūrangawaewae** – a place  
where one has the right to  
stand/live through kinship

**Waiata** – song

**Whakaaro** – thoughts

**Whakamā** – shyness

**Whakapapa** – genealogy/  
descent

**Wharenui** – house

# Cancer Society information and support services

The Cancer Information Helpline is a Cancer Society phone line where you can talk about your concerns and needs with trained health professionals. Phone the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237).

Your local Cancer Society offers a range of services for people with cancer and their families/whānau. These may include:

- information and support
- volunteer drivers providing transport to treatment
- accommodation while you are having treatment away from home.

The range of services offered differs in each region. Contact your local Cancer Society to find out what is available in your area.



## Auckland/Northland

Domain Lodge  
1 Boyle Crescent  
Grafton  
**Auckland**  
09 308 0160

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Daffodil House  
73 Kamo Road  
Kensington  
**Whangarei**  
09 437 559360

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[information@akcansoc.org.nz](mailto:information@akcansoc.org.nz)  
[Northland@akcansoc.org.nz](mailto:Northland@akcansoc.org.nz)

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## Central Districts

Young House (District office)  
127 Ruahine Street  
**Palmerston North**  
06 356 5355

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3 Koromiko Road  
**Whanganui**  
06 348 7402

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TSB Cancer Support Centre  
71 Lorna Street  
Westown  
**New Plymouth**  
06 7573006

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Morris Adair Building  
Gisborne Hospital  
**Gisborne**  
06 867 1795

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310 Orchard Road  
**Hastings**  
06 8767638

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Addis House  
135 Ruahine Street  
**Palmerston North**  
06 356 5355

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## Waikato/Bay of Plenty

**Divisional Office (Hamilton)**  
511 Grey Street  
**Hamilton**  
07 838 2027 or 0800 22 77 44  
[admin@cancersociety.org.nz](mailto:admin@cancersociety.org.nz)

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1235 Ranolf Street  
**Rotorua**  
07 349 4556 or 0800 22 77 44  
[rotorua@cancersociety.org.nz](mailto:rotorua@cancersociety.org.nz)

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111 Cameron Road  
**Tauranga**  
07 571 2035 or 0800 22 77 44  
[tauranga@cancersociety.org.nz](mailto:tauranga@cancersociety.org.nz)

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## Wellington

52-62 Riddiford Street  
**Wellington**  
04 389 8421

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27 Kāpiti Road  
**Paraparaumu**  
04 298 8514

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37 Te Ore Ore Road  
**Masterton**  
06 378 8039

---

102 Hardy Street  
**Nelson**  
03 539 1137

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The Forum Building  
Market Street  
**Blenheim**  
03 579 4379

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[info@cancersoc.org.nz](mailto:info@cancersoc.org.nz)

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## Canterbury-West Coast

97 Fitzgerald Avenue  
**Christchurch**  
03 379 5835

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98 High Street  
**Greymouth**  
03 768 9557

---

32 Memorial Avenue  
**Timaru**  
03 688 0124

---

6B Kidman Street  
**Rolleston**  
03 925 9708

---

122 Kermode Street  
**Ashburton**  
03 307 7691

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[contact@cancercwc.org.nz](mailto:contact@cancercwc.org.nz)  
[info@cancercwc.org.nz](mailto:info@cancercwc.org.nz)

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## Otago and Southland

283 Great King Street  
**Dunedin**  
(03) 477 7447  
[SupportiveCare@cansoc.org.nz](mailto:SupportiveCare@cansoc.org.nz)

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Waitaki District Community House  
100 Thames Street  
**Oamaru**  
(03) 434 3284 or 027 674 4200

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Arcade 84  
5/37 Clyde Street  
**Balclutha**  
(03) 418 3916 or 027 277 7632

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Alexandra Community House Office  
14-20 Centennial Avenue  
**Alexandra**  
(03) 440 0754 or 027 580 0640

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Wanaka Community House  
40 McDougall Street  
**Wanaka**

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112B Aurum House  
1092 Frankton Road  
**Queenstown**  
(03) 442 4281 or 027 536 0066

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**Southland**  
149 Spey Street  
**Invercargill**  
(03) 218 4108

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## National Office

39 The Terrace  
**WELLINGTON**  
04 494 7270  
[admin@cancer.org.nz](mailto:admin@cancer.org.nz)

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[www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz)

ANY CANCER, ANY QUESTION  
0800 CANCER (226 237)  
Cancer Information Helpline

