



Additional Support for Young People and their Families

When a young person and their family is seen at an Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, clinicians usually recommend a range of supports. These might include one-to-one therapy for young people, parenting support, family therapy, medication, or referral to other organisations that can help. Recommended supports might also include some – possibly surprising – other things, perhaps youth-friendly mentoring from a community agency, or joining an after school sports team. The Mental Health Foundation’s Five Ways to Wellbeing (Connect, Take Notice, Give, Keep Learning, and Be Active) may seem simple, but are actually powerful and evidence-based ways to recovery, even when a young person’s difficulties are serious or really entrenched. They will almost certainly be part of a package of interventions offered.

As a parent, it can be really challenging to support a young person to do things that are foundational to their wellness (good sleep habits, regular meals, connecting), as they may have stopped doing those things because they are feeling very low or anxious. Be encouraged that even small steps towards these habits can add up. And while a therapist can help with motivation and problem-solving, taking steps forward in these areas will mean that any therapy will be more effective, more quickly.

Alongside therapies or services, evidence-based resources are also often recommended for young people and their parents as part of the recovery journey. As a group of clinicians and academics from the Centre for Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health at the University of Auckland, we wanted to share this collection of supports that we recommend in our clinical work, or that we have been involved in researching. We hope that this is helpful.

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The following resources are designed to augment, supplement, or be part of a package of supports for children, young people and their families.

Improving well-being and resilience

- **Whitu – seven ways in seven days** is a NZ app designed to teach young people aged 13+ evidence-based skills for recognising and managing emotions via seven bite-sized modules. Developed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Whitu was found to improve well-being, mood and self-compassion. It is now being adapted for use in high schools.
 - <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/apps/w/whitu-7-ways-in-7-days-app/>
- **Headstrong** is a chatbot app developed by researchers and clinicians at the University of Auckland to help young people to build resilience and a healthy outlook on life. It is free to download.
 - <https://www.headstrong.org.nz/>
- **Manaaki Ora** is a NZ developed app that helps young people and whanau recognise emotions, manage low mood and get support from friends and whanau. It is free to download.
 - <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/apps/m/manaaki-ora-app/>
- **DNA-V** is a youth-friendly adaptation of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ideal when thoughts are troubling or intrusive). The Australian authors of several books for young people have a page of free downloads including a therapeutic game for children under 12, and worksheets for teens.

Anxiety

- **Fear-Less Triple P** is an Australian evidence-based online programme for parents of anxious children. It is currently free of charge, funded by the Ministry of Health.
 - <https://wharaurau.org.nz/parentandteacher.org/triple-p-free-online-programme-initiative>
- **Camp Cope-A-Lot** is a US adaptation of the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)-based Coping Cat program. Multiple parent and child-focused modules are available to anyone for a fee via the developer's website.
 - https://www.copingcatparents.com/Camp_Cope_A_Lot
- **Sparklers at Home** is a toolkit of fun wellbeing activities for children, including managing emotions. It was developed after the Christchurch earthquakes and provides a fun way to start important conversations.
 - <https://sparklers.org.nz/parenting/>
- **This list** of 25 practical tips for parents of young children who are anxious was created by Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton
 - https://incredibleyears.com/?wpfb_dl=2038
- **"Helping Your Anxious Child: A step-by-step guide for parents"** by Professor Ron Rapee and colleagues from Macquarie University is available as an e-book, audiobook or library book. It has sound evidence-based advice for parents of children experiencing anxiety.
 - <https://www.audible.com.au/pd/Helping-Your-Anxious-Child-Audiobook/B01BGZVNT4>

Depression

- **SPARX** is a NZ-developed game and CBT-based app for young people aged 12-17 years. It is free of charge, and studies have shown that it improves symptoms of mild to moderate depression and anxiety in young people.
 - www.sparx.org.nz
- **The Lowdown** is a NZ website that provides excellent, youth-friendly information about depression and anxiety (it is not designed as a treatment programme).
 - www.thelowdown.co.nz
- **Youthline** is another great NZ website with youth-friendly information about depression and anxiety (again, not designed as a treatment programme).
 - <https://www.youthline.co.nz/>
- **Aunty Dee** is a NZ-developed app that coaches young people to solve problems that might be related to stressful life experiences. It is free to download.
 - <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/apps/a/aunty-dee/>

Suicidality and self-harm

- **Village** is a NZ-developed communication app that helps young people experiencing low mood, self-harm and suicidal ideation more easily communicate with, and receive effective support from a network of up to five trusted individuals (buddies). It can be used while waiting for, or alongside, face-to-face counselling or therapy.
 - www.villageapp.kiwi

Getting through a tough moment

- Sometimes we need to just get through a moment without making it worse and apps that can help us wind the emotion back a bit can be helpful. Many smart phones have similar functions built in and a simple app web app that can help with this is **Breathe**
 - <https://breatheapp.uk>
- Or if you need a few different ways to relax, distract or soothe, **Virtual Hope Box** has some great resources:
 - <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/apps/v/virtual-hope-box-app/>

Disordered eating

- **Recovery Record** is a clinician-supported, CBT, DBT, ACT and Motivation Enhancement Therapy (MET)-based app from the US that helps individuals better manage and track symptoms of anorexia nervosa. Though fee-based, it is now the most downloaded app for eating disorders and has high user ratings.
 - <https://www.recoveryrecord.com/>
- **Equip** is a newer, and also fee-based, US-developed clinician-supported online intervention involving access to a five-person 'care team' via video sessions, text messaging and self-help resources. Initial studies of its efficacy are underway.
 - <https://equip.health/>

Challenging behaviour

- **Triple P Online** is an evidence-based Australian programme for parents of children with challenging behaviour. There are different versions for parents of children under 12 and teens. It is currently free of charge, funded by the Ministry of Health.
 - <https://wharaurau.org.nz/parentandteacher.org/triple-p-free-online-programme-initiative>
- **The Incredible Years** is an evidence-based programme for parents of primary-aged children (2-8 years) with challenging behaviour (including ADHD). In-person groups are run throughout New Zealand, but if it's not possible to attend one of these, then the e-book or audiobook outlining effective techniques may be of value.
 - <https://www.audible.com.au/pd/The-Incredible-Years-Audiobook/B00XWWR1UA>

Advice for Parents

- **Whāraurau** has a series of videos to help young people and their families navigate their way through child and adolescent mental health services, including the roles of different professionals, and the role of medications.
 - <https://wharaurau.org.nz/mental-health-services-video>
- **"How to Talk so Kids will Listen, and Listen so Kids will Talk"** (and "How to Talk so Teens will Listen...") by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish are books that were written decades ago, but remain incredibly relevant for parents who are trying to communicate with their child, and finding it hard going. Filled with comics and cartoons, they're an easy read, with lots of practical ideas. Available from public libraries, or as audiobooks.
- This **Specialist Library** has hundreds of audiobooks, books, DVDs, and all sorts of resources relating to anxiety, depression, Autism, ADHD, social skills, and parenting children with complex needs. It's free to become a member and borrow resources, and the only cost is to courier or post the resource back to the Wellington-based library when you're finished.
 - <https://ihc.mykoha.co.nz/>
- The UK's **Anna Freud Centre** has very sensible advice for parents and carers:
 - <https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/self-care-for-parents-and-carers/>
- **Whāraurau** also has downloadable books and games for children of parents who are experiencing a mental illness or addiction difficulty
 - <https://wharaurau.org.nz/supportingparents.nz.org/children-young-people>