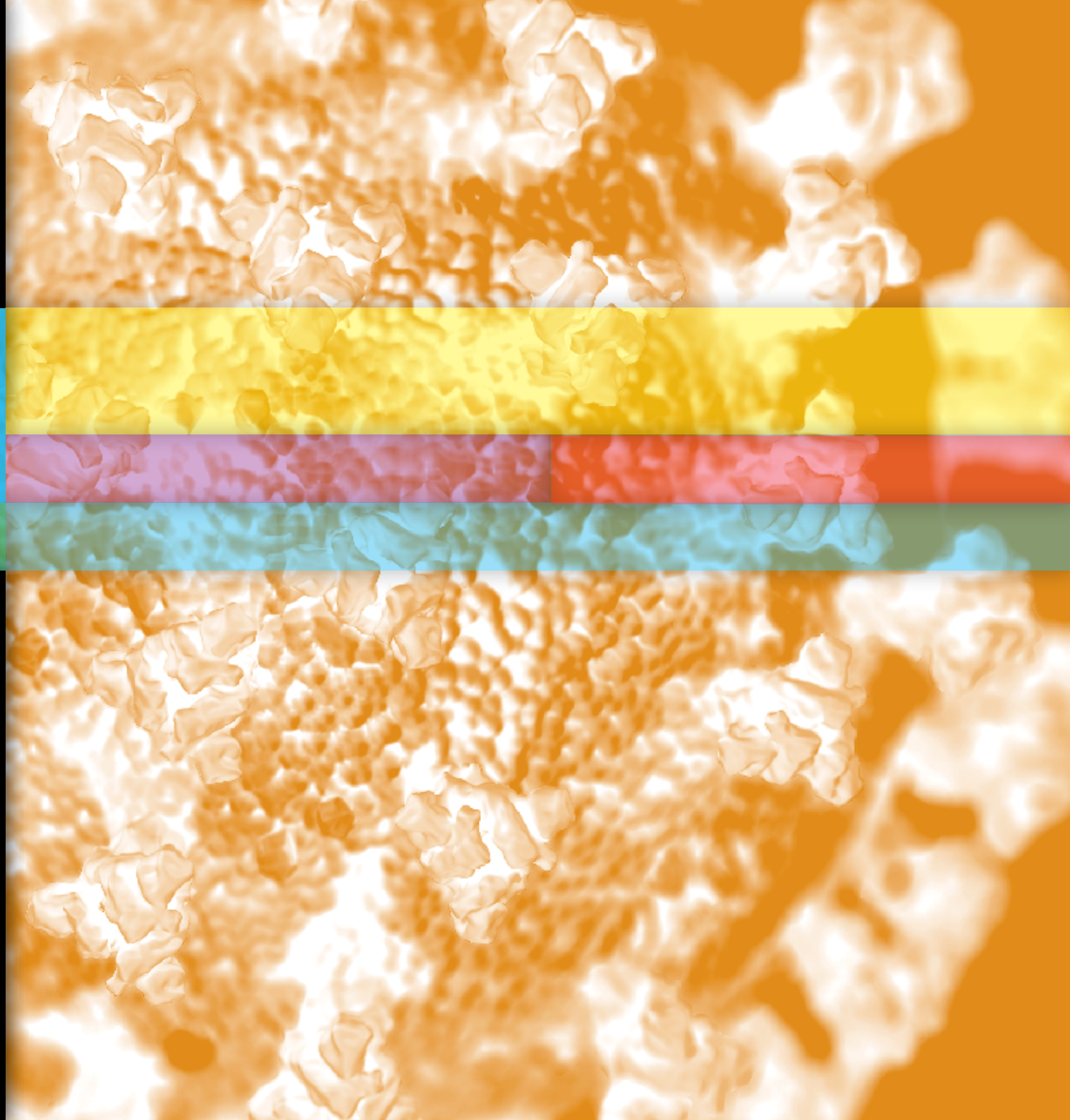


COVID-19

A GUIDE FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING
IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

MODULE 3:

PREPARING FOR AND
RETURNING TO SCHOOL



NAU MAI HAERE MAI KI

THE COVID-19 WELLBEING GUIDE

MODULE 3: PREPARING FOR AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL

The COVID-19 Wellbeing Guide has been developed by Julie McCormack (Clinical Psychologist) and Future Curious Limited to provide teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand with information and resources that can help them to navigate discussions about COVID-19 with their students and the wider community and support the hauora/wellbeing of their students. Julie McCormack, is a clinical psychologist with over 20 years of experience working with children and families in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

Children and young people across Aotearoa New Zealand are experiencing stress and disruption due to COVID-19. This guide will support teachers and parents to provide students with support and information that can help them to develop coping skills, critical literacy, pro-social skills and a sense of agency. This will contribute to their wellbeing and resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each module provides information and links to resources related to COVID-19, health practices, and social and emotional wellbeing. There are also tip sheets that can be shared with parent/caregivers and older students.

The guide is intended to be used alongside health information provided by the Ministry of Health COVID-19 and any guidance and updates from the Ministry of Education. Additional information can be obtained from reputable sources such as [Unite against COVID-19](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#) webpages.

The COVID-19 Wellbeing Guide comprises three modules.

MODULE 1: HAUORA/WELLBEING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

General wellbeing guidance; responding to challenging conversations and behaviours; identifying and referring children at risk; services, support networks, and resources for supporting children and young people's wellbeing; tip sheets for teachers, parents/caregivers, and young people.

MODULE 2: SCHOOL CLOSURES AND LEARNING FROM HOME

Background information and support; tip sheets and activities that teachers and parents/caregivers at home can use to support children and young people's understanding and responses to Covid-19 while building their skills in wellbeing; ideas for young people to make the most of their time at home.

MODULE 3: PREPARING FOR AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Background information and support; tip sheets and activities that teachers and parents/caregivers at home can use to support children and young people as they return to school and integrate back into the school community.

Each guide can be used independently. However, we recommend that teachers begin by becoming familiar with **Module 1: Hauora/wellbeing in uncertain times** as it provides a useful foundation for the Wellbeing Guide as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wellbeing Guide has been developed by Julie McCormack (Clinical Psychologist) with support from Future Curious Limited. We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their contributions to and support of this resource.

The Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga for their funding and support of the Wellbeing Guide.

Sian Carvell (Future Curious Limited) for her coordination and support.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for the use of their information and resources in the development of the programme:

Ministry of Health Manatū Hauora

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand mauri tū, mauri ora

Ministry of Social Development Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Sparklers

Unicef NZ

World Health Organization (WHO)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Images: Coronavirus image created at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sourced from unsplash.com.

Tip sheets image source: D Bergin.

© Julie McCormack (Clinical Psychologist) and Future Curious Limited 2020

The copyright in this resource is not Crown Copyright.

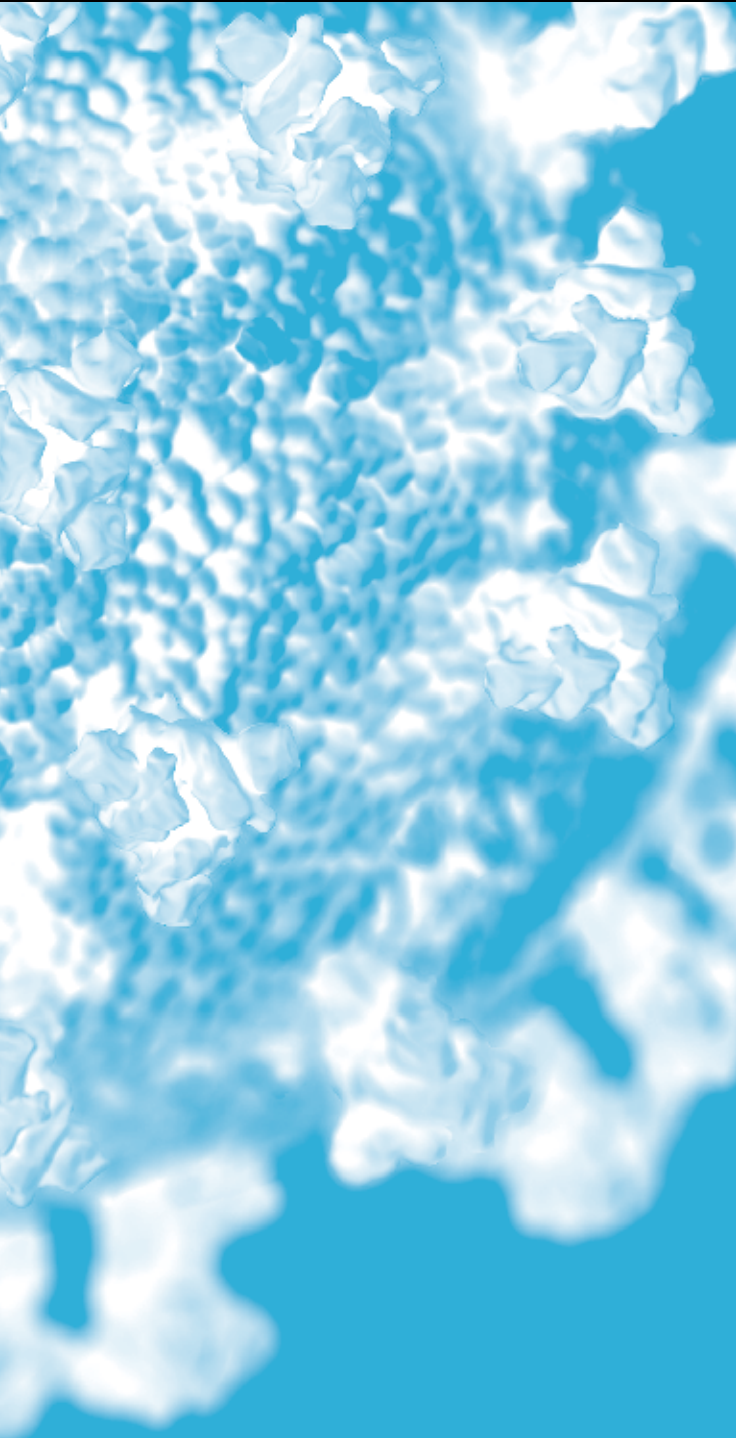
The copyright vests in Julie McCormack (clinical psychologist) and Future Curious Limited and may include copyright

licensed from third parties. Teachers may use this resource on a royalty free basis in schools in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For any other use, interested parties must obtain permission to reproduce part or all of this resource from Julie McCormack (Clinical Psychologist) and Future Curious Limited.

For more information, please contact Julie McCormack (Clinical Psychologist) at julie@familypsychology.co.nz

CONTENTS

- 
- 2** INTRODUCTION TO THE COVID-19 WELLBEING GUIDE
 - 4** REFLECTING ON UNCERTAIN TIMES
 - 5** LOOKING FORWARD: TRANSITIONING FROM HOME TO SCHOOL
 - 5** 1. Challenges and opportunities for children and young people
 - 5** 2. Preparing for and returning to early learning and school
 - 2.1 Preparing children and young people
 - 2.2 Preparing yourself
 - 2.3 Preparing your learning community
 - 8** 3. Children and young people's wellbeing during transitions
 - 3.1 School climate and classroom connection
 - 3.2 Routine
 - 3.3 Being trauma informed
 - 3.4 Let's talk about life and learning in the 'bubble'
 - 10** 4. Transitions: Protective actions at the centre or school
 - 4.1 Hygiene reminders
 - 4.2 Physical distancing: What does it mean now that I am at my centre or school?
 - 12** 5. Beyond COVID-19 transitions: risk, recovery, resilience, and renewal
 - 5.1 Recovery and resilience for children and young people
 - 5.2 Springboard for learning
 - 5.3 Building back better
- TIP SHEETS**
- 14** Tip sheet 1: My 'future smart' plan (for students)
 - 15** Tip sheet 2: Supporting yourself and your child/ren during transitions (for parent(s)/caregiver(s))

COVID-19 MODULE 3: PREPARING FOR AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL

REFLECTING ON UNCERTAIN TIMES

Communities in Aotearoa New Zealand have responded to COVID-19 disruption with resilience and resourcefulness. The physical closure of early learning centres and schools has interrupted formal learning and separated children and young people from their peers, teachers, and other supports.

For many children and young people, this unforeseen and rapid change in school life has presented opportunities. There have been many examples of resilience, creativity, and innovation in response to the challenges of lives in 'lockdown'. Many children and young people have enjoyed closer family bonds, a diversity of rich learning experiences, and a greater sense of community. However, the opportunities have been constrained for others by stressors that have been created or made worse by physical distancing requirements. These stressors include:

- loss of household income
- whānau balancing working from home with caring for children
- loneliness, relationship breakdowns, household violence and/or abuse
- mental health distress, substance abuse, and addiction
- reduced access to services and supports.

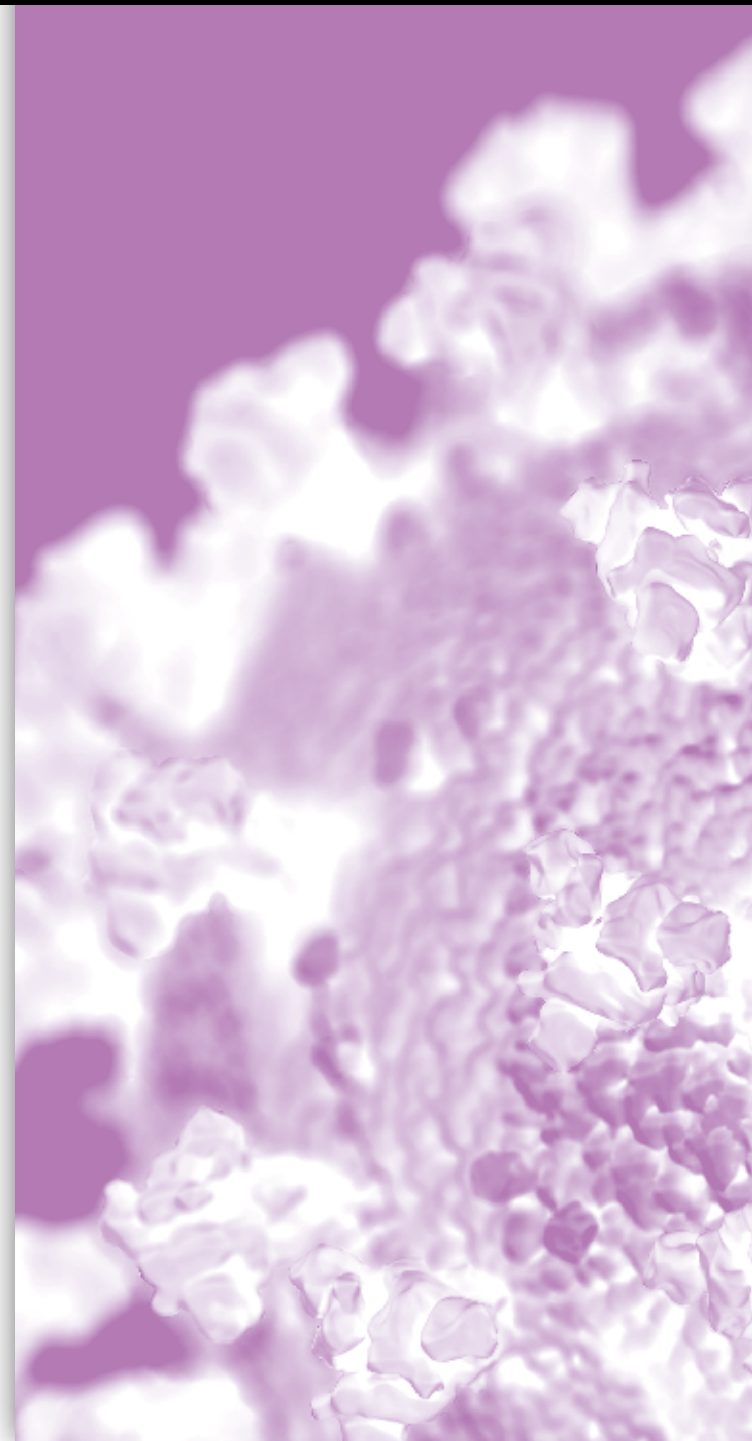
From a learning perspective, under incredible pressure, innovative teaching practices have developed. As whānau took a more active role in their children's formal learning, it fostered a deeper appreciation of what early learning settings and schools provide. The appreciation is mutual, as more than ever centres and schools' value the contributions home and whānau make to formal learning. Taking time to recognise and capitalise on these and other strengths enables continuity for children and young people and can inform future practices.

However, the crisis has also highlighted existing inequities for some children and young people. This includes learning opportunities being partially limited by lack of access to learning resources, such as devices, hardcopy materials, or the reduced availability of support. The uncertainty and inequities have intensified existing adversity for some vulnerable students, increasing risks to wellbeing and learning.

From a community perspective, there has been a growing sense of altruism and collective responsibility. Across Aotearoa New Zealand, communities, hapū, and iwi

are responding with compassion and innovation. In every neighbourhood, there are *stories* (SOURCE: STUFF) of aroha and community spirit. In contrast, the Human Rights Commission has received 113 complaints and inquiries related to COVID-19, including 34 complaints of racial discrimination and abuse towards those perceived to have caused the virus and its spread. (See *Coronavirus: Dozens of complaints to Human Rights Commission about Covid-19 racism*. SOURCE: STUFF.) This sort of behaviour requires a counteractive response.

Each of us will have experienced COVID-19 differently, according to who we are and our circumstances. A useful way of understanding the impact of COVID-19 on hauora (health, wellbeing) is through the four interconnected dimensions of *Te Whare Tapa Whā*: Taha Tinana (physical wellbeing), Taha Wairua (spiritual wellbeing), Taha Whānau (family and social wellbeing), and Taha Hinengaro (mental wellbeing). Exploring its impact through these dimensions respects people's strengths and resilience, while highlighting areas for further attention and support.



LOOKING FORWARD: TRANSITIONING FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

There are encouraging signs of containment of COVID-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are transitioning from lockdown to less restrictive approaches, although ongoing uncertainty can be expected. Alongside these transitions, our children and young people will be transitioning from home to school.

1. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Transitions are an inevitable part of life, including people's pathways through education. Transitions present both stresses and opportunities for development. They are best understood as a process, rather than a single event.

Typical educational transitions, such as that from early learning to primary school are predictable, reflecting an expected progression. While they can be stressful, there is time for learners to prepare, supported by their teachers and parent(s)/caregiver(s).

In contrast, the outbreak of COVID-19 has brought a series of unanticipated transitions for which there was little opportunity to prepare. Children and young people experienced an abrupt change from the routines of their centre/school including friendships to life in a 'bubble' and remote learning at home. Further changes lie ahead, with likely blends of face-to-face and distance learning and the need for ongoing protective routines, such as physical distancing.

The disruptions will be felt differently for each individual and at different times. However, it is expected that most children and young people will experience minimal long-term harm and demonstrate resilience and growth. Suggestions to optimise wellbeing during this time include:

- responsive, reciprocal relationships, including support from teachers, peers, and whānau
- positive learning environments that promote acceptance, belonging, and vitality
- preparation for what's coming, including social and emotional learning
- linking into and validating learner's identities, languages, cultures, values, and other existing knowledge and strengths.

2. PREPARING FOR AND RETURNING TO EARLY LEARNING AND SCHOOL

2.1 PREPARING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As children and young people prepare for and return to school, a range of reactions will be 'normal'. These include relief, excitement, grief, anger, and trepidation. With support, most students will transition successfully, braving the uncertainty and building on their lockdown learning.

Throughout each transition, children, young people, and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) are likely to have a lot of questions. Some questions may include:

- Will I / my child / my friends get sick?
- What happens if I haven't completed all of my schoolwork? Will I / my child be behind? Have we been doing it right? Will we be judged?
- What will happen with assessments I missed or are coming up? What does this mean for my future? **NB: COVID-19: Guidance for school assessment** (SOURCE: NZQA)
- How will I connect with my friends while practising social distancing?
- How do other children and young people feel? How long will these feelings last?
- Will I be ok? Will my child be ok?

Children and young people often look to adults in their lives on how to respond to challenging situations. Adults who are calm and composed can encourage both autonomy and connection during transitions.

It is recommended that support be made available to students when planning their return to onsite learning. Guided by the child and in partnership with their whānau, support can include:

- allowing learners time to process what they have experienced, while also considering what comes next
- proactively discussing their lockdown experiences, including identifying and consolidating strengths, needs, and important relationships

EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY

- *Let yourself be aware of and fully accept the reality of the situation, including the feelings that go with it.*
- *Find the stability in the situation through familiarity and routine.*
- *Take one moment at a time and keep your mind in the present.*
- *Remember that "thoughts are just thoughts" – practise detachment.*
- *Focus on what you know and actions you can take.*
- *Practise gratitude for the things in the situation that are positive.*
- *Consider, and talk about, strengths and skills.*
- *Use the self-help resource, **Accepting Uncertainty** (www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~!media/CCI/Consumer%20Modules/What%20Me%20Worry/What%20Me%20Worry%20-%2009%20-%20Accepting%20Uncertainty.pdf)*

- identifying and understanding any concerns and developing plans to address them where possible
- sharing any confirmed information, such as staffing, timetables, and locations
- focusing initially on wellbeing over learning.
- strengthening the communication and partnership between home and centre or school.

The following tip sheets have been developed to support you and your students and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) during this change:

- For students: **Tip Sheet 1: My future smart plan**
- For parent(s)/caregiver(s): **Tip Sheet 2: Supporting yourself and your child/ren during transitions.**

The quality of communication and connection between the home learning environment and that of the centre or school makes a significant difference to the wellbeing of children and young people. This is especially so during transitions. Effective learning partnerships provide reassurance, promote resilience, and enable all those involved to identify and minimise risks to wellbeing.

EARLY LEARNING

Tip Sheet 2: Supporting yourself and your child/ren during transitions can be shared with parent(s)/caregiver(s) to help them prepare their children for the return to early learning. You could also adapt the activities below for use with early learners upon their return to your centre. You can find further information and ideas at [Te Whāriki Online: Pathways and transitions](#).

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ONWARDS

During the early stages of the return to school, you could facilitate and adapt the activities suggested below or you could share them with parent(s)/caregiver(s) to try at home.

Activity: Wellbeing Check In

Ask: *What has it been like in your bubble so far? What are your thoughts about returning school – your worries, hopes, or questions? Do you have ideas for coping with the changes?*

Affirm the positive coping strategies your learners suggest. (For example: “I can talk to my teacher about what I have missed.” “I can start going to bed a bit earlier now.”)

EXTRA: Older children may want to reach out to peers across Aotearoa New Zealand, sharing ideas on how to adjust to the transition back to school.

EXTRA: Students who are first to return to school could produce and share a tip sheet or poster for later arrivals.

Activity: What happened, and who am I now?

Read: For younger children, read [My Hero You](#) (SOURCE: UNICEF). For older students, read [‘Schools and universities are closed - how do you cope?’](#) (SOURCE: UNESCO).

Adjust your approach to the reading to the age and literacy level of the children and young people.

Ask: *Who helped you during your ‘bubble’ time? What are some of the ways you acted like an ‘everyday hero’? How did you help others during the lockdown?*

Discuss: Focus the discussion on coping and efficacy, strengthening the students’ awareness of how they have contributed to other people’s wellbeing. *Did you realise that you did that?*

EXTRA: Have older students prepare a one-minute summary of their lockdown experience. You could also share a summary of your own. Acknowledge statements of coping and efficacy.

EXTRA: For senior students, discuss how lockdown experiences could prepare them for tertiary study or paid work. Support them to integrate the experience and skills they have developed into their CVs. See the [School Leavers’ Toolkit](#) for guidance.

2.2 PREPARING YOURSELF

While managing your own transition to life in the ‘bubble’, you have been required to work off-site and respond to the new challenges of online learning and establishing virtual relationships. Looking ahead, many centres and schools will be reopening and welcoming learners back to onsite learning. There may be a period where you are teaching learners both at centre or school and at home. You are also likely to be navigating concerns from children, students and/or parent(s)/caregiver(s) about health and safety.

Due to the nature of COVID-19, like everyone, you will need to consider your personal situation and needs while balancing those of your centre/school, teaching team, and learners. Thriving as a teacher and responding effectively to children and young people requires your own wellbeing and that of your family to be nurtured.

Navigating what is likely to be a complex scenario, with people in different places and a combination of face-to-face and distance learning, will require sustained creativity, flexibility, and resilience. This is not a one-size-fits-all situation. Support from your school’s community of practice, including your leadership team and colleagues, is more important than ever. It will also help for you to extend your network so that you can share solutions and discuss ideas with others.

Your school and Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako will have its own mechanisms for sharing and support. Online offerings include:

- Ministry of Education: [Early learning voices](#)
- CORE Education: [He Kohinga Rauemi Tautoko - Support Resources for Schools, Kura and EY Centres](#)
- The Education Hub: theeducationhub.org.nz

A collective wellbeing approach is one that involves listening, sharing, and caring to each other. It fosters each person’s wairuatanga (spirituality), mauri (life force, essence), and mana (prestige, authority). For resources to support you to care for your wellbeing and that of others, refer to:

- [Module 2, page 4](#)
- Sparklers: [Teacher Tips](#)
- Teaching Council New Zealand | Matatū Aotearoa: [The very real value of teacher wellbeing](#)
- [The Good New Habits Book, 2018](#)
- PPTA Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland: [Looking after each other: teacher mental health and wellbeing](#).
- MHAW: [Explore your way to wellbeing with Te Whare Tapa Whā](#)

Through observation of student needs, self-reflection, and discussion you may identify professional development needs in relation to distance learning, social and emotional learning or trauma informed education (for example [He Māpuna te Tamaiti](#) or [Making Space for Learning](#)). An important part of your wellbeing and ongoing vitality is ensuring you feel supported and equipped for your role.

2.3 PREPARING YOUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

Every learning community presents a different set of challenges and opportunities, and so each is best served by a targeted approach to the transitions ahead. This proactive stance involves a ‘stocktake’ of strengths and needs to determine the requirements of staff, learners, and the wider community. This will guide curriculum responsiveness, teaching and learning methods, social and emotional learning targets, and individualised interventions.

Community Wellbeing Stocktake: COVID-19 and its ongoing impacts has highlighted the importance of ensuring wellbeing and social and emotional learning are integrated into our local curricula in a focussed and seamless way. This will equip learners, parents and caregivers, whānau, teachers, and communities with coping strategies to adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

[He Māpuna te Tamaiti](#) provides a self-assessment tool and guidance for early learning centres that is founded upon

Te Whāriki. *Wellbeing at School* is a self-review tool that schools can use to understand and improve their wellbeing 'climate' and access guidance for implementing change.

Your whole learning community could also use *Te Whare Tapa Whā* to discuss and explore the impact of COVID-19 on the four dimensions of hauora (wellbeing and health). As individuals or in groups, you could use the approach to identify both positive and negative impacts as well as discovering strategies uniquely suited to enhancing the wellbeing of your learning community.

Learning Needs: Progress during home learning may point to specific needs. Some learners will have embraced home learning, experiencing faster than usual progress, and therefore may benefit from more challenging content. Some may have discovered new strengths and interests and be keen to develop them further. Others will have struggled to adapt and feel they have fallen behind, requiring extra learning support.

Psychosocial Risks: For some children and young people, home is not a place of security but one of neglect and where they may be exposed to harms, such as violence, substance abuse, and/or pornography. Some students may live in out-of-home or state care, having previously experienced neglect or violence. Family violence and child maltreatment can increase during crises, while community oversight and support is often reduced. This means that for some children and young people, increased time at home means greater exposure to harm and reduced access to support. The stress of transitions may complicate an already difficult time. Ideally, access to trusted adults who recognise their needs and provide support will increase on return to school.

By paying careful attention to children, students, and whānau who you know to be vulnerable, you can plan to put in place mental health or welfare supports. For children in vulnerable or risky situations, your role is to be observant and be supportive if a disclosure is made. If you suspect that a learner is at risk, make an urgent referral to *Oranga Tamariki*.

Mapping Strengths and Assets: Consider mapping out the strengths and resources within your school and wider community. Older students may be able to support younger ones in a tuakana-teina relationship. Staff, parents and caregivers, whānau, and individuals and groups in the wider community will hold a wealth of expertise from which you can draw. Inspiring Communities has a *Community Asset Mapping Tool* that you may find helpful.

Parents and Caregivers: Parents and caregivers have been coping with these unprecedented times. Taking time to understand their home learning experiences will consolidate your partnership. It is well established that family engagement supports learning and wellbeing. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) is the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand so any approach needs to be applied in this context. It is therefore critical that schools reach out to, listen to, and respond the voices of whānau, hapū, and iwi. The Education Hub's *'Home-school partnerships: What the research says'*, *'Information sharing and building learning partnerships: Having conversations with young people and their whānau about their learning and progress'* (SOURCE: TKI) and *Embedded in the community: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLDDFedc0zM* (SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY VIA YOUTUBE) provide information and guidance. The Ministry of Education *'For Parents'* also offers a wealth of information and support to share with parent(s)/caregiver(s).

3. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING DURING TRANSITIONS

3.1 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Positive relationships with peers, teachers, and parent(s)/ caregiver(s) promotes child and student wellbeing during transitions, providing emotional support and affirmation of identity. Children and young people confirmed the importance of this with the Office of the Children's Commissioner and School Trustees Association during the '*Education Matters to Me (2018)*' engagement. When asked what would support them when facing educational transitions, participants shared the following: **Help me get to know my new surroundings; When things change for me, relationships are really important; Support me when things change, or when they go wrong; Really listen to me; It's my life – let me have a say.**

The social and emotional environment: A positive, welcoming centre or school environment is always important, but especially now. Well-established community wide norms, values, and positive expectations help learners develop prosocial skills related to resilience and care for self and others. These norms need to be embedded in the community's policies, practices, and routines.

At this time, it is important to reinforce the importance of the values of trust, care, inclusion, cultural responsiveness, and connection that learners in your community experienced before lockdown. Show interest in their recent experiences, including their feelings about returning onsite.

For more information, see *TKI Inclusive Classroom Culture* and *He Māpuna te Tamaiti*.

The physical environment: The physical environment can also play a role in helping children and young people feel calm and secure. It is also important to pay attention to colours, clutter, lighting, distractions, noise levels, and sensory tools and spaces, especially for younger children and those with sensory issues.

During ongoing distancing, the layout of the physical environment is likely to change, and there will be new hygiene requirements. Whenever possible, involve learners and whānau in designing and implementing these changes. This will help promote a sense of shared responsibility and connection.

IT JUST TAKES ONE

Scientists who study long-term resilience discovered that the presence of even one caring adult in a child's life will make a big difference to wellbeing later in life. (*The Vision of Urie Bronfenbrenner: Adults Who Are Crazy About Kids*)

Activities: Distancing not distant

Loss of connection with peers can be a great source of anxiety for many children and young people. School and centre closures may have impacted on learners' sense of belonging. Providing ways to reconnect and strengthen bonds before and in the early days of being back together will help them to cope.

Younger children: As the centre or classroom reopens, provide extra opportunities for play, cooperative activities and discussion (within the limits of social distancing). *Sparklers* has some great activities. Have fun with *Icebreaker Games* (SOURCE: ACTIVITY VILLAGE) to help your students rebuild a sense of community.

Older students: During distance learning, create time and space to chat to your students about life outside of formal learning. You could also ask students to organise "informal" chats where they can connect with you and other students. Consider using the wellbeing check-ups from *Module 1* of the Wellbeing Guide (page 10). Challenge the students to design icebreakers that allow for social connection and physical distancing.

EXTRA: For secondary students, ask them to discuss how they have connected with others while in the bubble and review the strengths and limitations of different approaches and platforms.

3.2 ROUTINE

Engaging with familiar people, routines, and activities will provide a sense of safety and enhance coping skills. To encourage this, you could:

- Take the time to talk through routines and share schedules
- Balance the need for routine and predictability with time and space for people to reconnect and process their experiences
- Be prepared to change an activity or let it go if the learners are restless or disengaged
- Initially, reduce expectations of academic performance, focusing more on social and emotional outcomes
- Increase the opportunities for physical movement and sensory engagement to help learners release energy and self-regulate.

3.3 BEING TRAUMA INFORMED

Most children and young people won't become traumatised; however, some may through secondary impacts such as domestic abuse, parental mental health, or unemployment. Being trauma-informed is about being aware of the impact of trauma on children's behaviour and learning, and creating safety through actions such as validating feelings and encouraging curiosity. (See *Making Space for Learning*). While trauma-informed care is critical for this smaller 'secondary' group, all learners will benefit from an opportunity to experience environments of safety, connection, and support – the essence of trauma-informed services. Trauma-informed curiosity and reflecting on behaviours are helpful, alongside assumptions that 'children are doing the best they can' and 'actions are expression and reflections of past experiences'.

When we think of children as behaving badly, we lean away with frustration and punishments. When we think of them as struggling, we lean in and provide support.

3.4 LET'S TALK ABOUT LIFE AND LEARNING IN THE 'BUBBLE'

Children and young people will benefit from discussing their experiences with you and their peers in a safe, supportive environment where their feelings and responses are validated. Some learners will have found home positive and enjoyable, while others may have experienced distress. Regardless, if and when they feel comfortable, provide space for them to share their experiences. Highlight evidence of their efficacy and coping strategies and, where appropriate, support them to share concerns or ask questions. Learners may share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences spontaneously, or you can facilitate reflection and conversations through simple activities that enable both verbal and nonverbal means of expression.

Younger children can write stories, create meaning, and convey their experiences through play, art, song, and dance.

This expression can include embracing the various culturally valued ways of sharing and making meaning. For older students, all the creative arts, including audio and video, offer vehicles for reflection. Conversations are based on what children are ready to share, highlighting their worth and agency. Long-term approaches aim to gradually transform any adversity into learning and resilience. (See Section 5, page 12.)

Activity: Discovering Strengths

Bringing awareness to strengths throughout transitions can consolidate learning and maximise learners' feelings of efficacy and community.

EARLY LEARNING

Observe or talk to children about what they are good at, what they know about, and what they did in the bubble. Write learning stories highlighting the strengths they shared. For further information, see [Learning Stories in the New Zealand Curriculum](#) and [Learning Stories in Early Education](#).

EARLY PRIMARY (YRS. 0–3)

Read and/or listen to the Ready to Read story, [Poi by Tira Johnson](#)

Ask: *What are some 'strengths' it is good to see in people (for example, being kind, funny, brave, showing manaakitanga, or giving service)? What strengths were shown by the characters in the story? Thinking about time in your bubble, what did you do that was helpful? Can you think of strengths other people showed? How could these or other strengths help?*

Make: Have the learners draw a picture, make a collage, or write a story about their time in the 'bubble'.

LATER PRIMARY (YRS. 4–8)

Use the [Sparklers Discover Your Strengths](#) activity to explore student strengths. Extend this activity by exploring which strengths they used during home learning and when returning to school.

EXTRA: Put students in groups of ten and, provide each student with ten strips of paper. On their strips of paper, have each student writes a strength about each member of the

group, including themselves. Have each student read out the strengths they have written and pass it to the student it belongs to. Once all students have shared and received their strengths, they can link them together to make a chain.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Brainstorm: Have the students brainstorm different character traits and cultural strengths. *What are strengths? What is the difference between a strength and something you do or that you like?*

Discuss: In groups, students could discuss their experience of home learning. *What strengths did you use to adapt to the change? Which of these skills and strengths do you think you will draw on in the future?*

EXTRA: Have the students conduct research exploring the strengths and innovations shown by different cultures and families during the crisis. This could include interviewing members of the community. Discuss these strengths and how we can benefit from them in the long-term. Refer to ['COVID-19: Vital that tikanga adapts again'](#) (SOURCE: NEWSROOM) as an example of successful adaption to the crisis.

Activity: Cultivating Gratitude

EARLY LEARNING

Read and/or listen to the Ready to Read story, [Stay Where You Are by Tricia Glensor](#)

Ask: *How did the piwakawaka fantail help Jessie and Jessie help the piwakawaka when Jessie lost her way? How could Jessie say thank you to the piwakawaka?*

Discuss: Explore helping in the bubble. *Did someone or something help you while in your bubble? How could you say thank you for their kindness?*

EXTRA: Using soft toys, explain to the children that Toy 1 has been kind and helpful to Toy 2, but Toy 2 does not know how to say thank you. Ask the children to help the toy by sharing ideas of how to express gratitude.

EARLY PRIMARY (YRS. 1–3)

Listen to and/or read [Rātā me te Rākau](#) (via Literacy Online Junior Journal, Level 2 2018).

Ask: *What do you think 'gratitude' means? [Being thankful, grateful, appreciative] Why do you think the tree would mysteriously grow back each day?*

Ask: *What do you think the following means: "All we ask," said Kārearea, "is that you show respect and give thanks to Tāne-mahuta for the gifts of the forest and that you teach others to do the same."*

Discuss: Help the students identify some of the things that they missed while in their bubble. Then ask them to share some of the things they were or are thankful for.

EXTRA: Create a gratitude jar or box. Give each student one strip of paper each day for a week to record something they are grateful for. At the end of the week, read out statements from the jar.

LATER PRIMARY (YRS. 4–8)

Use Sparkler's [Gratitude O'clock](#) to introduce the concept of gratitude to the students. Extend this activity to help them explore what they felt grateful for during home learning and their time in their bubble.

EXTRA: Have the students keep a gratitude journal for a week, noting three things each day they feel thankful for.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ask: *What do you think 'gratitude' means?*

Act: Help the students find a comfortable position and play a [gratitude meditation \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhF8vLesRRc\)](#). Guide reflection on the meditation and its impacts on thoughts, feelings, and body.

EXTRA: Have the students write a letter to someone they are grateful to have in their lives. Ask them to describe what they are thankful for and the positive qualities of the person.

4. TRANSITIONS: PROTECTIVE ACTIONS AT THE CENTRE OR SCHOOL

As children and young people transition to face-to-face learning environments, there will be ongoing requirements for protective actions and distancing. Although this can be addressed with environmental measures (such as controlling the size of bubbles, providing opportunities for outdoor learning, and rearranging seating), it remains critical to maintain and extend learners' sense of agency. As far as possible, include them in the process of planning, implementing, and reviewing protective actions.

4.1 HYGIENE REMINDERS

Having been in the relative safety of their bubbles, children and young people – and teachers – may need reminders about how to maintain hygiene when in a larger group.

EARLY LEARNING

Role model safe practices make the learning in fun and practise patience when children's hygiene falls short of ideal. Songs and games can help children embed handwashing and other hygienic practices into their daily routines.

Activity: Sing your hands clean

Ask: *When, how, and for how long should we wash our hands?*

Act: Demonstrate and practice washing hands, using music to get those fingers wiggling and clean! You could try this example from *The Wiggles* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=_02FuyeCWFU) (SOURCE: UNICEF).

EXTRAS: Use puppets or dolls to demonstrate sneezing and coughing into the elbow.

EARLY PRIMARY (YRS. 0–3)

Keep the focus on role modelling and learning in fun ways. Again, songs and games can help learners embed handwashing and other hygiene practices into their routines.

Activity: Super-powered hand washing

Ask: *When have you been washing your hands at home? When is it good to wash your hands? What are some reasons we wash our hands?*

Discuss: *Why do you think it is important to remind ourselves about handwashing now we are back at school together?*

Act: Teach the learners a handwashing song, reinforcing the message that washing hands is a way to help and be a hero.

LATER PRIMARY (YRS. 4–8)

Activity: Unite with protective behaviours

Ask: *What protective actions have you taken at home to keep yourself and others safe?*

Discuss: *Why is it important to remind ourselves about handwashing now we are back together at school?* Reinforce the message that protective actions, such as handwashing and catching our sneezes, is one way we can unite to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19.

Together with the students, design a classroom strategy for taking protective actions at school.

EXTRA: Review and discuss *Nanogirl Hand Washing (Search: You Tube)*. Use it to help the students understand the basic concepts of disease prevention and control. Try other exercises that demonstrate how germs can spread. For example, you can put coloured water in a spray bottle, spray it on a piece of white paper, and observe how far the droplets travel through the paper. As an extra, they could try it using other materials such as face masks!

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Activity: Don't stop: Protective actions ahead

Ask: *What do we mean when we talk about 'protective actions'? What are they? How have you been carrying out protective actions at the different levels? What changes do you expect we will make now we are back at school?*

Create: Have the students design a video or poster for secondary students, promoting the protective actions they can take at school.

4.2 PHYSICAL DISTANCING: WHAT DOES IT MEAN NOW THAT I AM AT MY CENTRE OR SCHOOL?

Physical distancing will still be required when learners return to their centre or school environments. Your community will be guided by recommendations from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

EARLY LEARNING

Distancing is near impossible for children in an early childhood setting and not conducive to their emotional and social development. However, organising the environment to limit close play and consciously thinking about centre's operations can assist. Measures can include moving outside for as much of the day as possible, limiting group numbers, and putting spots on the floor as signals to help children stay apart from each other.

EARLY PRIMARY (YRS. 0–3)

Activity: How far to be?

Explain to the students how we can help keep well by making a little bit of space between us. Then give each student a two-metre length of string. Have them make a circle and practice being two metres apart. They can experiment by trying this both with and without the wool, perhaps stretching out their arms. It can help to “name” the behaviour with a metaphor (for example, “we are being social butterflies”) and to share this metaphor with parents and caregivers.

LATER PRIMARY (YRS. 4–8)

At this level, the focus moves to understanding the rationale for distancing and taking agency for its implementation.

Activity: ‘Distance’ not ‘distant’

Ask: *What is ‘physical’ or ‘social distancing’? How have you been practising it recently?*

Discuss: *How can we implement physical distancing in our class and across our school? Distancing may feel awkward at school – what are some ideas for coping with the awkwardness and keeping us connected? As much as*

REMIND CHILDREN that physical distancing remains a social responsibility. It is a way we can all help each other.

possible, encourage the students to take the lead in planning and implementing distancing measures.

EXTRA: Your students may want to reach out to other schools in Aotearoa New Zealand or even overseas, sharing ideas on how best to achieve physical distancing at school.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Activity: ‘Flattening the curve’: the ‘why’ of physical distancing and different approaches

Please note: Depending on students’ understanding and information needs, you may need to refer to activities from modules one and two.

Recap: *What is physical distancing? How have you been practising it?*

Discuss: Prompt discussion on how your own and other schools have been implementing physical distancing. Encourage the students to share their ideas for embedding these principles and routines. Implement their ideas where possible, with the students taking the lead.

Review: *Read NZ COVID-19 Response* (SOURCE: NEWSROOM) and discuss its main points, highlighting the messages about collective action and social responsibility.

Discuss: New Zealand may be perceived to have overreacted to the pandemic, with some people wondering whether the ‘cure is worse than the disease’. Using their critical literacy and thinking skills, ask the students to inquire into and discuss this idea.

NATURE KNOCKS

Time and play in nature is helpful to mental wellbeing. For more information see [Nature and Mental Health](#) and [Little Kiwi’s Nature Play](#)

5. BEYOND COVID-19 TRANSITIONS: RISK, RECOVERY, RESILIENCE, AND RENEWAL

5.1 RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The longer-term impacts on social, community, and individual wellbeing is unknown. It is expected that most children and young people will adapt to the evolving situation, manage the impact of the disruption, and recover from any personal stress or symptoms. The quality of the learning environment plays a critical role in supporting recovery, resilience, and ‘post-trauma growth’, in both the short and long-term.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE? The term ‘resilience’ derives from physics. It refers to the ability of an object or substance to ‘spring back’ into shape. When applied to people, resilience refers to the ability to ‘bounce back’ from adversity.

WHAT IS POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH? Most adverse experiences do not lead to prolonged negative impacts on wellbeing or mental health issues. ‘Post-traumatic growth’ refers to the positive psychological changes that can arise from struggling with challenging events and life circumstances. Calhoun and Tedeschi (2004) describe such changes. These include realisation of personal strength, consideration of new possibilities for living, improved relationship skills, a greater appreciation of life, the opportunity to re-examine values and priorities, and spiritual change. (SOURCE: [Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence](#))

What can the education system do to promote resilience and growth? A strong and embedded platform of social and emotional teaching and learning, delivered within the context of a positive learning climate and caring relationships, will optimise learners’ pathways towards resilience and growth. For Māori and Pacific learners, resilience is associated with the affirmation of cultural identity and the cultural familiarity and responsiveness of education centres.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI AND COVID-19

Our founding document sits at the heart of a response to COVID-19, demanding an equitable and bicultural response.

The relevance of e Tiriti o Waitangi in the Covid-19 era (SOURCE: DR CLARE CHARTERS, NEWSROOM)

Why equity for Māori must be prioritised during the COVID-19 response (SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND)

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Children and young people’s existing social and emotional competencies, including their sense of self-worth, provide an important source of resilience during transitions. These competencies develop early and vary over time and in different contexts. Higher levels of these skills relate to other outcomes, including academic outcomes and interpersonal skills.

You can enhance and model these learners’ social and emotional competencies within the centre, classroom or larger school context, while ensuring the deeper principles of prosocial learning are embedded within the curriculum and across policy and practice. By fostering reciprocal, respectful relationships with parent(s)/caregiver(s), whānau and iwi, you can help grow these critical competencies in all parts of a child or young person’s life.

The current vulnerability experienced by both individuals and communities has increased attention on wellbeing and social and emotional skills. It presents an opportunity to shift to a greater focus on social and emotional competencies in education. There is information about initiatives to support this focus on the Ministry of Education’s [Positive Behaviours for Learning](#) site.

Te Whāriki’s Mana-Atua | Wellbeing strand recognises that health and wellbeing are foundations for learning. Te Whāriki emphasises Māori and Pacific conceptions of wellbeing in fostering competencies such as self-regulation, resilience, and risk taking. For more information, see the webinar, [Mana-Atua | Wellbeing – can I trust you?](#) and [He Mapuna te Tamaiti](#).

The New Zealand Curriculum places wellbeing at the centre of a rich and meaningful curriculum. According to the [Education Review Office](#) (2015, page 26) *Student wellbeing is central to successfully implementing The New Zealand Curriculum. A focus on wellbeing ties together the curriculum’s vision, principles, values, key competencies and learning areas. Wellbeing clearly positions learners and their development as confident young people at the centre of what schools do.*

[Wellbeing for Success: Effective Practice \(2016\)](#) provides practical examples of wellbeing approaches in schools and there is a [Student wellbeing spotlight](#) on The New Zealand Curriculum Online.

GROWING RESILIENT IDENTITIES DURING TRANSITIONS

A positive learning environment provides opportunities for children and young people to learn and grow throughout transitions. You can obtain useful resilience in education insights at [NZHEA Mental Health and Resilience Teaching and learning activities for NZC Levels 6-8](#) (May 2018). Other useful sources include [“How to help students improve their resilience”](#) and [“Understanding transitions in the early years: Supporting change through attachment and resilience”](#).

Please note: The following activities can be adapted and used with learners at a variety of levels.

Activity: Take Home Messages

There are many models of wellbeing and mental health, and a host of resources available to help enhance wellbeing.

For younger children, wellbeing information and resources are best curated by teachers and whānau, embedding wellbeing messaging within stories and other media. For older students, providing information and engaging critical literacy is key. Discuss the four dimensions of wellbeing introduced in [Te Whare Tapa Whā](#), supporting these with examples of online wellbeing and mental health resources, such as these from the [Health Promotion Agency](#) or websites, like [The Lowdown](#) or [Le Va](#). Ask them to design a tip sheet or video for the school or specific target audience summarising coping strategies that support all four dimensions of hauora.

Activity: Creativity for Resilience

The arts provide a creative platform for hearing student voice and fostering agency, including through opportunities for processing and making meaning from adversity and personal and cultural expression. They can foster resiliency skills, such as divergent thinking, the ability to imagine new possibilities and re-examine values and priorities. Through the arts, you can provide opportunities for learners to explore, shape, and embrace values; play and create; and advocate for their viewpoints and needs. You can do this both during the current transitions and into the future.

For information, read [Arts and Resilience](#). Lesson plans are available through [Te Rito Toi](#) (SOURCE: AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY).

Activity: Making Waves for Resilience

Opportunities for civic action enable children and young people to move from individual to collective action and social responsibility. When engaging with things that matter to them, learners can experience hope and empowerment, improving both personal wellbeing and that of their community.

Find and discuss examples of the contributions children and young people have made to the COVID-19 response.

Review the digital citizenship activity in the Wellbeing Guide [Module 2, page 8](#) or look at [Get Digital Resources](#).

For older students, ask them to read and discuss the resource [a test of national values](#) (SOURCE: STUFF). Use this as a springboard for talking about what matters to them and the actions they can take.

Activity: Places to go, things to do

By regularly washing your hands and practising physical distancing, children and young people are already helping others. But they may also be thinking, *'I want and need to do more!'* Being able to act on something that matters and helps others and the environment also helps people feel positive about the situation. So, what is their role going to be during the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath? At every transition, there are always things that we can do to help flatten the curve and show kindness and gratitude. Below are some links to help get ideas flowing!

1. [Search 'How to help, volunteer, or donate to the fight against Covid-19'](#) (SOURCE: THE SPINOFF)
2. [Spreading acts of compassion](#) (SOURCE: CAREMONGERING NEW ZEALAND)
3. [Community kindness: how to help others during COVID-19](#) (SOURCE: WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND).

5.2 SPRINGBOARD FOR LEARNING

Infectious diseases, their pathogens, best practice in disease management, and protective behaviours are not new topics in education. However, their relevance and interest have greatly increased. Learning contexts could include the history of pandemics, inequity, and the impact of COVID-19, social action, and the role of government. Learners could write and share stories about the virus's impact and people's resilience, using a variety of media. Bacteria and viruses could be placed under the microscope and ecological contributors to pandemics could be explored. There will also be opportunities to consider stigma, digital citizenship, and critical literacy, as discussed in Module 2.

5.3 BUILDING BACK BETTER

The term 'building back better' describes a process of capitalising on opportunities that follow a major event or disaster with the aim of making communities stronger and more resilient.

COVID-19 has required profound change within our education system, and innovation and creativity have emerged. A spotlight has also been placed on the inequities experienced by children and young people. We have a unique opportunity to build on positive developments, including deepened learning partnerships and our greater appreciation of the benefits and limits of digital technology. Children and young people have a valuable role to play in informing the process and participating within it. Everybody benefits when learners have opportunities to create meaning and gain agency from their experiences.

Please note: The following activity can be adapted and used with students at different levels.

Activity: A Better World

Ask: *What were your experiences of education as we moved through the levels of our COVID-19 response?*

For older students, introduce and discuss the concept of [Build Back Better](#) (SOURCE: EDUCATION POST). Explore ways in which students think education was better during this time.

Discuss: *Were there already problems with our education system that home learning highlighted? What improvements would you make to education and learning?*

Act: Write a letter or produce a video for the Ministry of Education (or other chosen audience) reflecting these ideas and hopes.

Discuss: What are the opportunities for embracing or developing your ideas within current learning environments. You might connect this discussion with the outcomes of the [Education Conversation | Kōrero Matauranga](#), which have already prompted so much reflection on the direction of our education system, and a great deal of change.

EXTRA: Encourage virtual exchanges with peers in other parts of the country or world. Ask students to interview their whānau or community members about their experiences with and ideas for improvement and share this through a chosen medium.

STUDENTS AT RISK

Because some children and young people will experience delayed impacts or symptoms, there is an ongoing requirement for educators to identify and support individuals at risk. While this resource covers wellbeing guidance and activities suitable for all learners, those with additional needs may require an individualised approach and external support. These children and young people will be a priority in terms of the provision of support when returning to onsite early learning or schooling.

Additional resources that can support teacher's and whānau with at risk students include [Supporting young people with stress, anxiety and/or depression](#) and [Skylight](#)

MY 'FUTURE SMART' PLAN

Life has been a bit different lately. For one thing, words like 'bubble', 'lockdown', and 'isolation' meant quite different things back in February! One minute you had your friends, school, hobbies and future to look forward to. And then, "Boom!" You had to stay at home in your 'bubble', learning from home, away from everything and everyone. (Well, not quite, but it sure feels like it, sometimes!) And, no doubt, it has been a mix of good and ... well ... not so good.

Most of us are feeling uncertain, not knowing what the future will look like next week, let alone in a year! Change can be hard. It's normal to feel upset or even excited. Being prepared for change can help us cope, as can talking with someone you trust. But, at some point, you will return to school and a life like what you had before the lockdown. It will be great to see your friends and teachers and do the things you love to do, but you may also have some big questions:

Will school be the same as before or different?

What will we need to do to be safe and how will our teachers support us?

What are the sorts of things I can do to help me with the changes?

Will I be able to play sport or attend the other things I love to do, like art or music class?

Will I be able to hang out with people outside my bubble, like my friends and wider whānau?

Will my whānau be safe while I am at school?

Stocktake: *What changes do I want to keep going? What areas of my life do I need to pay attention to? Or get some support with?*

Use **Te Whare Tapa Whā** to think about your hauora (health, wellbeing). Ask yourself about the benefits and downsides of the changes around lockdown for your Taha Tinana (physical wellbeing), Taha (spiritual wellbeing), Taha Whānau (social and family wellbeing), and Taha Hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing).

My 'future smart' plan: Focus on your strengths, supports, and heroes, and the things you want to do to help yourself and others. You can write, draw, or record your plan, or mix it up! Do it alone, with people in your bubble, or through connecting with friends and family by phone or online.

STEP 1: Who am I? When we worry about new or big things, we can forget about the things we are good at, including how we have coped with big stuff in the past. Now is a good time to remind yourself of the things that you are good at and enjoy and the people that supported you.

STEP 2: Everyday heroes: A lot of people have been keeping us safe and well in our 'bubbles'. Is there someone you admire or who has been helpful during the lockdown? What makes them special? Is there a way you could tell them? Or could you help others the way they did?

STEP 3: Different but the same: What things have changed in your life lately, and what has stayed the same? Of the things that have changed, and you have liked, how could you keep them going after we move alert levels?

STEP 4: What have I learnt? Even if we feel a bit scared about a change or difficult situation, most of the time we cope. Afterwards, we feel stronger and know more about ourselves. Think about how you coped when school stopped quickly and you had to stay in your bubble? What did you do to cope? What was helpful to you?

STEP 5: Acting up for good: When we are dealing with something new or difficult, it can help to take action. What are some of the things you can do that might help you get used to or deal with the move back to school? For example, it might be finding out about what will happen or talking to a teacher or friend. Choose at least one idea and try it out!

HINTS ON HELPFUL PLANNING

How do I feel? When things change, you may feel lots of different things. You may feel nervous about the unknown, happy at the thought of seeing your friends and teachers, and sad about not being with your family. It can get confusing!

Nervous Happy Sad Upset Angry Calm Lucky Relaxed Joyful Confused Disappointed Grumpy
Playful Brave Curious Worried Guilty Lonely Hurt Bored Restless Tired

My own best friend: All of us have thoughts in our heads, all of the time. Sometimes, the thoughts can be encouraging, like: "I can do this. Just chill out and you will be alright." Sometimes, our thoughts can be a bit mean or unhelpful, like, "I can't do this" or "I am no good." We can choose to be a good friend to ourselves by talking to ourselves with kindness. This can help us feel better when we are upset.

Talk it over: Sometimes, when we are upset or finding something difficult, it can help to talk it over with someone we trust like a parent, sibling, or friend. Other times, it may help to talk to someone outside the family like a teacher, doctor, or counsellor. You can also call a helpline such as What's Up 0800 942 8787 or Need to Talk 1737 or take a look at [The Lowdown](#).

SUPPORTING YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILD/REN DURING TRANSITIONS

A tip sheet for parents and caregivers

Along with many other aspects of daily life, the physical closure of schools came upon us quickly, with little chance to prepare. Overall, most children, young people, and their whānau are adapting to the challenges of ‘bubble’ life and learning, and working at home. They are displaying resilience and creativity. As we move between alert levels, ongoing changes and uncertainty are expected. What we do know is that face-to-face learning in centres and schools will be different. The differences will continue to evolve as the wider situation changes.

TRANSITIONS AND WELLBEING
It is a time to pause and take stock. It is a time to expect and accept much less from yourself and your children, adjusting both priorities and expectations.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Each transition will take time to process and adjust to. Physical distancing and increased hygiene practices will be required for some time. Your children may be in smaller ‘bubbles’ that may not include their friends. Breaks may be staggered, with restrictions to activities and equipment. Some children and young people will be worried about the changes ahead. The text box on the right lists some behaviours that might suggest your child needs some extra support and some things you could do to help.

Many children and young people will also be looking forward to reconnecting with friends, teachers, and centre or school routines, as well as extra curricula activities, such as sport and cultural groups. You may share your child/ren’s concerns and hopes, while also having some of your own. As you prepare for the changes ahead, it will help if you work alongside your children and their teachers as much as possible.

PREPARING YOURSELF

Children and young people often look to the adults in their lives for guidance on how to respond and manage their reactions to a given situation. Adults who model calm and functioning behaviours provide children and young people with the leadership and support needed to transform adversity into resilience.

Take time to reflect and acknowledge your own experience. It is likely that you faced at least some upheaval and stress, and increased demands. You may also have experienced treasured and creative ‘bubble’ time, finding strength and innovation when you thought you had none left. Prioritising your wellbeing can benefit your whole family and support. You can find ideas in the Wellbeing Guide, [Module 1, Tip Sheet 3](#).

BEHAVIOURAL CONCERN	SUGGESTED SUPPORT
Separation anxieties	Prepare your child, set up routines, and offer transitional objects like a favourite toy. Focus on security with parent(s)/caregiver(s) and building your child’s connection with teachers and other carers.
Fears around COVID-19	Share facts and empower your child with opportunities for positive action. Extend their critical literacy and have calm conversations. (See the Tip Sheets in Module 1 .)
Anxiety or avoidance of school	Address any needs around friendship, schoolwork, or bullying. Educate your child about anxiety. Empower them through opportunities to make their own choices, preparation, and plans. (Hey Sigmund)
Problematic gaming (solitary or interfering with daily life or return to school)	Identify the function of gaming, find alternative ways to meet needs. Encourage balance of activities, prioritise sleep and physical activity. Keep gaming in sight (not behind closed doors). Together keep a record of gaming or monitor usage and develop strategies to mediate use and manage harms.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD

- **Know your stuff:** Make yourself familiar with up-to-date information from your school and the *Ministry of Education*.
- **Where we have been:** Talk with your child/ren about their experience of the lockdown, including their feelings, needs, and especially, their strengths. Share your observations of how they have adjusted and their valuable contributions towards bubble life. Tell them how confident you are in their capacity to deal with the changes ahead and the school's ability to manage. Acknowledge your own journey and celebrate the strengths and achievements of life in your bubble.
- **Use what is familiar:** When talking to your child/ren, share an image or story about change that they know or can relate to. For younger children, you could explain social distancing by comparing it to butterflies and encouraging them to keep two wingspans apart when playing. For older children, find out how they feel about returning to school and what they know already. Contribute any other information or resources you think would be helpful.
- **Connect and be connected:** Keep talking with your child/ren about school, including friends and activities. If possible, connect to their 'important people'. Address any worries about separation by focussing on parting rituals and later re-connection: *When I see you after school, we will play a boardgame together*. Consider a transitional object or ritual, such as a comforting snack in the lunchbox. Help them explore their feelings about returning to school. Provide validation that indeed, it could be an awkward or uncertain time *and* you have every confidence in their capacity to cope.
- **Same, but different:** Together with your child/ren, consider what parts of the transition may be the same or predictable. Ask them what differences they are aware of/expect, sharing information relevant for their age. Offer choices about any part of the situation that is negotiable.
- **Future smart planning:** Take time to think about practical ways you and your child/ren can do to get ready. It might be simple things, like getting the bags and lunchboxes out and choosing what to wear. Or, for older children, looking through the schoolwork that has been done and what needs to be taken to school.
- **Wellbeing agenda:** Practice gratitude or mindfulness, develop a family creative project, or take actions that create health and wellbeing, such as getting more sleep, changing screen or media habits, improving nutrition, increasing time outside, or having meals together. Keep your expectations simple, and just take one step at a time.

KNOWING THE RISKS

For most children and young people, the social and emotional experiences of COVID-19 are not expected to cause long-term wellbeing and mental health issues. However, it may make worse existing vulnerabilities for some, especially those exposed to secondary stresses such as loss of household income and/or increased tension. These children and young people may respond to transitions with mood swings or changes in behaviour, like withdrawal or excessive gaming. They may find returning to school somewhat harder and may require firm but calm and empathetic leadership and support from parent(s)/caregivers and teachers. If you need extra support, talk with their teacher and available health services. If the problems are new and you are seeking help for the first time, refer to the [Tip Sheet 3, Module 1](#) for suggested resources and services.

