

# WINNING WAYS TO WELLBEING



## Connect – Me Whakawhanaunga

Feeling close to other people and valued by them is a fundamental human need. Across all ages, relationships and participation in a social life are critical for mental wellbeing. Strong social relationships are supportive, encouraging, and meaningful, and a wider social network is also important for feelings of connectedness and self-worth.

One of the hardest things to do as a parent is to slow down and find the time to talk with and listen to our children, no matter what their age. Unfortunately, the solutions haven't really changed. Shared mealtimes, fewer hours in front of kids' TV and finding activities that the family can enjoy together, will all help to support your child's well-being. The same is true of making the time to spend with extended family. But it's not just family that matters. We know from mentoring work, that sometimes having a trusted adult, who perhaps isn't a relation, to talk to and spend time with, can really help children and young people when difficult times arise. And finally, of course, children's friendships are vital. Interestingly research found that seeing friends was much better for children than speaking to them either by phone or online. So helping your children to see their friends outside of school, if possible, will make a real difference.

- Gather some friends for a DVD evening; ask people to share a film they like.
- Have a family WIFI, TV and text free day and bring out the old board games you have – you may be surprised at how much fun they still are!
- Smile at a stranger – you may be surprised by the smile you get back!
- Find more opportunities for humour in the home by starting a family joke collection.
- Connect with the whenua; grab some friends and get into the great outdoors - go on a bush walk, go to the park or mountain bike riding.
- Take time to read your local newspaper or newsletter – find out what's going on in your area, such as music or cultural performances, then organise an outing with friends and whanau.
- Become involved in groups; join your local craft, sports, choir, hobby or book club and enjoying singing, sewing, playing a card game, visiting gardens or croquet on the lawn together.
- Contact a friend you have not seen or spoken to for a while and talk, talk, talk!