

Tēnā tātou Katoa

Tēnā koe i ō tātou mate tārūrū nui kua riro ki te kāpunipunitanga o ngā wairua I paerau. Ā, waiho te hunga mate, ki te hunga mate, ko tātou te urupā o rātou ki a tātou.

Greetings in light of the dead, whose loss greatly pains us, who have departed for the assembly of spirits in the homeland. The dead have gone together, and we, the repositories of their memories, remain.

It has been a devastating time for our country as we deal with the aftermath of Friday's tragedy that unfolded in Christchurch. The impact of this is being felt by each and every one of us across Aotearoa. We know that this will affect the mental health and wellbeing of people in our communities - those in our Muslim community and others who may be experiencing a trauma reaction. We know that these events can impact people in the days, weeks and months following such a devastating loss of life.

Our initial work has been to get information on our website that guides people on how to seek the right help in the immediate future. There are resources available here, which are being translated into a number of languages (Arabic version is available) as well as Easy Read <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/mental-health/mental-health-advice-coping-after-traumatic-event>.

I wish to extend my thanks to the many people and organisations who have reached out to assist our communities - both nationally and internationally. Our team is working closely with the Canterbury services to ensure help can be directed to the right places as they need it.

We also know that other communities will be impacted, and a national response is needed to ensure we coordinate our efforts and understand needs at a local level.

The Mental Health and Addiction Directorate is taking responsibility for leading out a national psychosocial response and plan. We have established a team lead by Dr Ian Soosay in Auckland to do this work.

We have set up an email address so we can enable you to communicate your community needs to us, as well as any offers of help. It will assist us to understand what is happening across the country. This can help us communicate directly with you, put you in touch with others and also understand resourcing needs. The email address is mhresponse@health.govt.nz.

We will develop a plan outlining an approach that is supported by workforce development and cultural responsiveness and communicate that back to you when it is ready. Some of you may be asked to directly contribute to this plan. We are already working closely with the team in the Canterbury community on this.

Thank you for reaching out to the communities in the way you have. There has been an outpouring of compassion and kindness that is going to help heal our communities.

Nga mihi nui,

Robyn



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