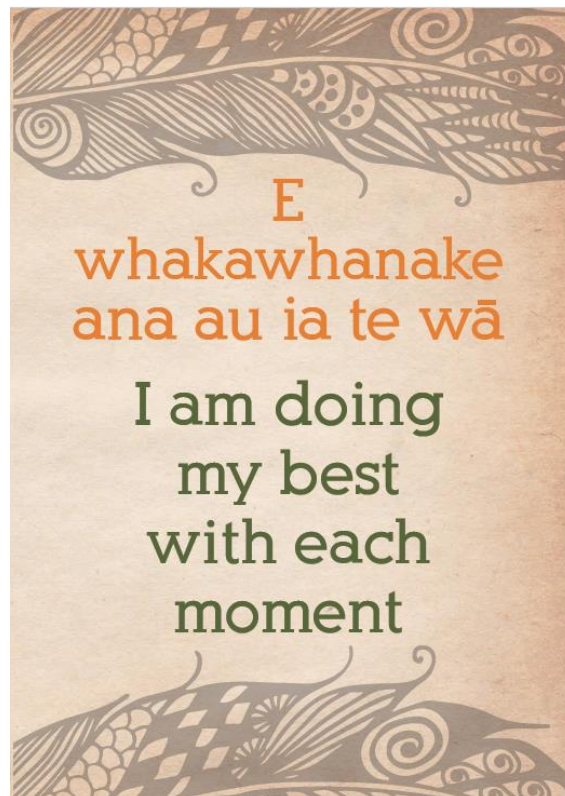


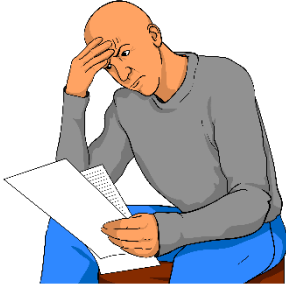


**About trauma:
I am doing my
best with each moment**



Published: April 2025

Before you start



This document talks about abuse.

This information may upset some people when they are reading it.



This information is not meant to scare anyone.

If you are upset after reading this document you can talk to your:

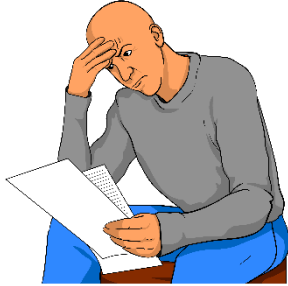
- whānau / family
- friends.





This is a long document.

It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



What is in this document

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About this document



This Easy Read document is made by **Abuse and Rape Crisis Support Manawatū**.



Abuse and Rape Crisis Support Manawatū supports people who have experienced **sexual violence**.



In this document **Abuse and Rape Crisis Support Manawatū** is called ARCS for short.



Where it says **we / our / us** in this document it means ARCS.



Sexual violence is when a person:

- **rapes** you
- **forces** you to do a sex act
- **hurts** you in a sexual way.



Rape is when a person **forces** you to have sex with them.



Here **forces** is when somebody makes you do something bad you:

- do not want to do
- have not agreed to do.



Here **abuse** is when a person:

- hurts you
- treats you very badly.

Abuse can also be **sexual abuse**.

Sexual abuse is when a person does something to you that you do not want them to like:

- touching your body or private parts
- kissing you
- raping you.



Here **crisis** is a mental health **emergency**.

A crisis is where you need support right now.



A crisis can be when you:

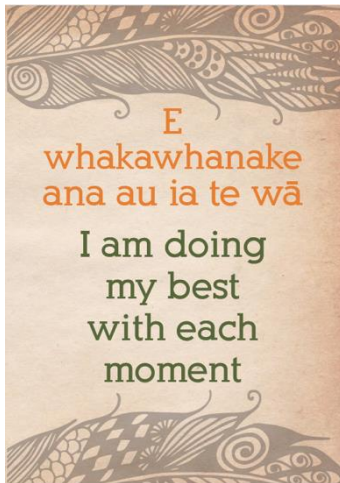
- are very upset
- cannot cope with your:
 - emotions
 - thoughts.



Emergency is when someone:

- is in danger
- and**
- needs support right now.





This document is an Easy Read version of our booklet

**E whakawhanake ana au ia te wā –
I am doing my best with each moment.**

You can read this booklet at this **website:**

URL



This Easy Read document deals with **trauma.**



We tell you more about what trauma is on **page 10.**



This Easy Read document also has some ideas to support you to **cope** with trauma you have experienced.



Here **cope** means to deal with a hard or scary experience in a calm way.



The goal of this document is to support you to find ways to calm your thoughts about trauma.

What is trauma?



Trauma is when something very scary happens to you.



It is so scary you keep thinking about the trauma a long time after it has happened.



Sexual violence is a kind of trauma.

Trauma makes it hard for your brain to work in the right way.



Trauma can make it hard for you to:

- think
- make decisions
- do everyday things
- remember things
- enjoy your life.



There may be things that **trigger** your trauma.



Here **trigger** is when something happens to remind you about something bad that has happened.



A trigger could be something like:

- seeing a person
- a smell
- a sound.



A trigger can make your brain think you are in danger again.



In this document we tell you about different ways to understand what trauma is.

Understanding what trauma does to your brain can support you to:

- know how trauma is affecting you
- work out ways to control your trauma thoughts.





Window of Tolerance in your day to day life



Living in your **Window of Tolerance** is when:

- your life is comfortable
- you can think clearly
- you can make your decisions easily
- you are in control of your emotions
- you are taking care of yourself.



Your life may not be perfect but you:

- feel you are in control of your life
- can cope with the things happening in your life.





Living in your Window of Tolerance means you:

- can live your life in a good way
- can control your thoughts
- feel good about your life.



Trauma can make it:

- harder to live in your Window of Tolerance
- hard to live your life.



Trauma can make you feel:

- **hyperarousal**
- **hypoarousal.**





Hyperarousal is where you can feel:

- very anxious
- it is hard to do everyday things
- angry
- out of control
- you want to fight
- you want to run away.

Hypoarousal is where you can feel:

- like you have no feelings
- spaced out
- like your body is frozen.

You do not choose to feel like this.



It is normal for your brain to behave in a different way to try to cope with your trauma.



Everyone is different.



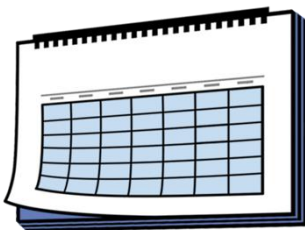
It can take 1 person longer for their trauma to:

- go away
- be controlled.



Trauma is very hard to live with.

Be kind to yourself.



Things usually get better over time.



It can help to remind yourself:

- the trauma is over
- you are not in danger now.



There are some things you can do to take care of yourself when you are having a hard time with trauma.



We tell you about this in the next part of this document.

Exercises to support you to be calm

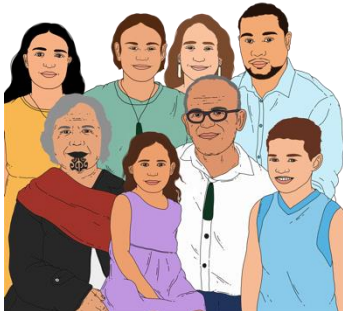


It can be very hard to cope with your feelings about trauma.



There are things you can do to support you to feel safe like:

- bring your thoughts back to what is happening now
- keep talking to the people you:
 - love
 - trust.





Exercises to keep you calm

Here are some exercises to support you to:

- stay calm
- relax.



Exercise 1:

- Lie down.
- Put your left hand on your heart.
- Put your right hand on your belly.
- Take 10 breaths.





Exercise 2:

- Drink a hot or cold drink.
- Take a little break after each sip.
- Think about how:
 - the drink tastes
 - hot / cold the drink is
 - the cup feels.



Exercise 3:

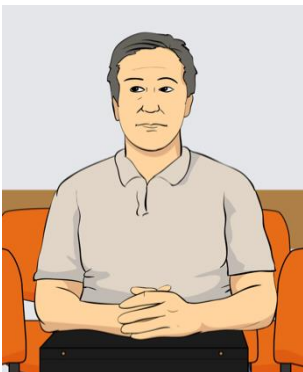
Relax:

- your jaw
- your forehead.



Exercise 4:

- Breathe in through your nose.
- Count to 4 as you breathe in.
- Make sure your belly gets bigger as you breathe in.
- Hold this breath as you count to 2.
- Breathe out slowly.
- Do this until you feel calmer.





Exercise 5: The 5-4-3-2-1 way to ground yourself

This is another way to calm your thoughts down.



There are 5 parts to this exercise.

5



- Look:
 - around the room
 - out a window.



- Name 5 things you can see:
 - inside like a cup
 - outside like a tree.



4

- Look around the room.
- Name 4 things you can touch like:
 - the ground under your feet
 - the chair you are sitting on
 - something on a table or desk.



3

- Listen.
- Shut your eyes if you feel safe.
- Name 3 things you can hear like:
 - birds singing
 - a computer whirring
 - the sound of your breath.





2

- Name 2 things you can smell like:
 - perfume
 - something cooking
 - something in the air.



1



- Try to name 1 thing you can taste.

Go back to listening to your breathing.



Some other exercises

Other exercises you can do to support you to be calm are things like:

- going for a walk
- doing something like yoga.



You can do things like yoga by doing classes:

- online
- in person.

Other ways to cope with trauma



Connect to your whenua / land

Massage / rub your feet.



Your feet connect you to
Papatūānuku / the earth.



Get out into nature like going:

- to Tangaroa / the sea
- for a walk in the park.



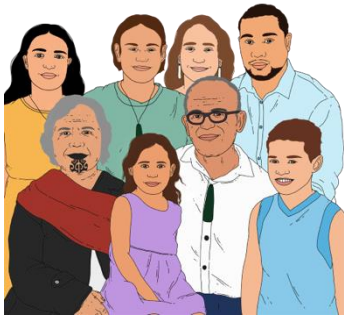
Go to the place you know as home
so your feet are on your whenua /
land.



Kōrero / talk

It is ok to ask for support.

Talk with people you trust.



Stay connected to your
whānau / family.



Talk with your kaumatua /
older people you trust.



Use technology

Try using an app to support your mental health like:



- taking an online exercise class like yoga
- making a play list of songs that make you feel good.



There are a lot of things online that can support you to:

- exercise
- relax
- stay calm.





Be creative

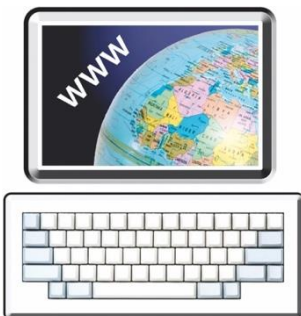
Here being **creative** is making or doing things like:

- painting
- writing
- knitting.



Things to support you to stay calm can be like:

- doing adult colouring in using:
 - books
 - pages you can print out from websites
- writing down your feelings in a notebook / journal.





Think about the creative things you like doing.



Do these things to support you to be calm.

Other support



Support from other people can be very important to help you work through your trauma.



Think about the support you:

- already have
- would like.



You might like to share this document with people close to you to help them understand what you are experiencing.



If you are not feeling well check in with your:

- doctor
- **MEDSAC** team.



A **MEDSAC** team is made up of mainly:

- doctors
- nurses.



They work with people who have experienced sexual harm.



There are services made to only support people who have experienced sexual abuse.



Kōrero mai ka ora – Safe to talk

Kōrero mai ka ora – Safe to talk is a **national** sexual harm helpline.



Here **national** means that this service can support anyone:

- who lives in Aotearoa
New Zealand
- and**
- who has experienced sexual harm.



Staff answer calls any time of the:

- day
- night.



You can contact Kōrero mai ka ora –
Safe to talk by:

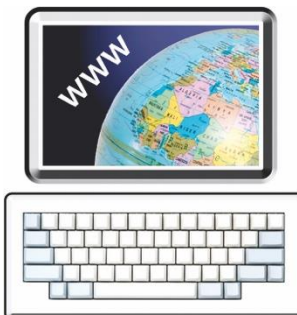
- **calling** free phone:

0800 044 334



- **texting:**

4334



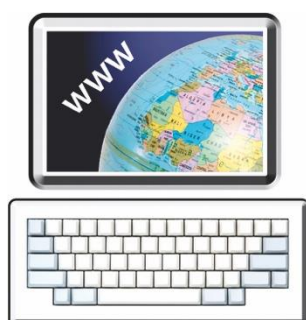
- visiting their **website** at:

<https://safetotalk.nz>



ACC

ACC funds free support for people who have experienced sexual abuse here in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Find out more information about how ACC might be able to support you by visiting their **website** at:

www.findsupport.co.nz



Sometimes it is hard to remember all the people you have supporting you.



Ask your support people to write their contact information in the box like:



- their name
- their contact number
- where they are from.

Contact us



If you would like to contact us you can:

- **call us:**

06 356 5868

- **email us:**

admin@arcsmanawatu.org.nz

- visit our **website:**

www.arcsmanawatu.org.nz

- visit our **Facebook** page:

ARCS Manawatū.



We have 3 offices you can **visit**.

10 Linton Street

Palmerston North



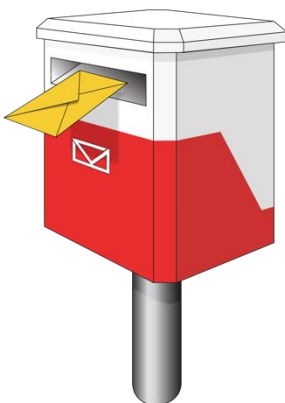
58 Bath Street

Levin



13 Ward Street

Dannevirke



You can send a **letter** to us at:

P O Box 673

Palmerston North 4440



This information has been written by Abuse and Rape Crisis Support Manawatu.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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