

## Welcome to the 'wellbeing' issue of The Village.

We all know about the health benefits of keeping in good physical shape as we age, but recently there has been more awareness around the importance of staying well, emotionally and mentally. So with that in mind, in this issue we're talking about emotional wellbeing.

One way to improve our emotional strength and resilience is learning how to cope with loss. So don't miss 'Good Grief', our upcoming information morning on Tuesday 13th June (see page 4). On that note, read on for six very

helpful tips from Janet Mikkelsen from Aroha Funerals on coping with loss.

And speaking of wellbeing, keep yourself feeling active and positive over the winter months by signing up for some of our many activities, walks and outings. There's nothing like exercise, friendship and fun to help you feel great!

**Juilette Tuckey**  
CEO  
HBH Group



## 6 tips for coping with grief and loss

*With Janet Mikkelsen of Aroha Funerals*



Janet Mikkelsen has seen more than her fair share of grief over the years. Before becoming a Funeral Director of Aroha Funerals, she worked as a nurse for 30 years in paediatric oncology and palliative care - experience that has helped her develop many of the skills she uses now. Read on for Janet's tips for coping with the loss of a loved one.

### 1. Grieving takes time

"There is no hurry to grieve," says Janet. "You'll get lots of well-meaning advice from people who often expect you to start 'moving on' after a while. But it can take

months or even years for you to move forward and that's okay." She says it's also okay to be selfish during this time. "You don't have to please everyone. It's important to look after yourself and, in fact, it's a healthy thing to do."



## 2. Everyone's grief is different

Try not to compare yourself to others and how they've managed the grieving process. "Many people ask me if it's okay to feel a certain way," explains Janet. "Everyone feels differently: some people might cry every day for two years, others can't cry at all. You have to do what feels right for you, because that's how you'll get through it in your own way."

## 3. Grief can be physical

Our bodies and our emotions are intertwined, so it's common for grief to manifest in physical symptoms, such as overwhelming tiredness, an upset stomach or nausea. "However, if there's anything you're worried about, it's best to see a healthcare professional," advises Janet. "Particularly if it's been a sudden death, you may have some signs of anxiety or depression, and that's normal too."

## 4. Get help if you need it

A support group can help you to process the grief, plus it's a wonderful opportunity for you to keep talking about your loved one. "If your grief becomes so overwhelming that you can't function during the day, or sleep at night, then get some help," says Janet. Aroha Funerals recommends The Grief Centre and Skylight (see links at end of story).

## 5. Join local groups or social networks

Women tend to build up good support groups, but men often end up much more lonely after losing a partner. Janet suggests joining a local men's group when you're ready. For both men and women, social networks like Virtual Village East are a great way to overcome loneliness and meet new people.

**"Life is full of grief, to exactly the degree we allow ourselves to love other people."**

Orson Scott Card

## 6. Remember it will get better

"Know that you will get through this," says Janet. "At first, it may feel like your heart has been ripped out. After some time, the acute pain starts to dull. Things will get better and you will laugh again."

### Helpful links:

[www.skylight.org.nz/resources/loss-and-grief](http://www.skylight.org.nz/resources/loss-and-grief)

[www.griefcentre.org.nz](http://www.griefcentre.org.nz)

## 'Good Grief' - a free information morning about coping with loss

Come along and hear our two guest speakers, Lila O'Farrell, a grief and loss counsellor, and Janet Mikkelsen from Aroha Funerals, as they share helpful and practical strategies and tips for navigating through times of loss. You're also welcome to bring a friend or family member to this FREE and informative event.

**When:** 10.30am to 12 noon, Tuesday 13th June

**Where:** Te Tuhi, 13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga

**RSVP:** by Friday 9 June to Ninwa - email [co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz](mailto:co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz)



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# Students help with digital wellbeing

Every Wednesday afternoon (except during the school holidays), students from St Kentigern College run a tech workshop for members who need a bit of help. Members can bring their phone, iPad or laptop and get one-on-one assistance if they're having problems or just want to learn how to do more with their device.

It's been wonderful for members to have the support of a 'digital guru' (aka a young person), and equally rewarding for the students.

Students are asked to assist with a wide range of issues, including how to add contacts and send emails, how to delete files, find pictures and search on Google. Other issues are banking, sending messages and using social media (such as Facebook or WhatsApp).



"One lady cried when we helped her learn how to increase the font size of her emails so she could read them," said one student. Another said, "I enjoy seeing them happy when they learn to do something new, especially when they learn how connect with friends and family on social media."

A huge 'thumbs up' to these amazing students for helping members keep up with the digital age!



## 4 ways to boost your emotional resilience

Emotional resilience or 'grit' is important at any age, but particularly in our senior years when we can face more health challenges and start losing people close to us. Instead of experiencing overwhelming anxiety or depression when we encounter stress, these **four pillars** work together to help strengthen our resilience and cope with tough times.

### 1. Be mindful

It's natural for our minds to be 'thinking' and busy. Mindfulness helps us to be 'in the present', rather than worrying about things that have happened or things that may happen.

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Practising mindfulness can help you feel calmer, manage stress and even sleep better. If you're keen to strengthen your emotional resilience, why not sign up for our 4-week 'Introduction to Mindfulness' programme starting Wednesday 7th June?

## 2. Look after yourself

Self-care is about being able to meet the challenges of daily life with energy and confidence. Things like walking in the fresh air, learning new skills and visiting new places are all forms of self-care – and offering those activities is one of the reasons Virtual Village East exists.

## 3. Maintain relationships

Positive relationships, whether they're connecting with family members or catching up with friends, are shown to lead

to a happier and more fulfilled life and to feeling more connected, supported and supportive. Another great reason to come along and meet new people at our various catch-ups!

## 4. Have purpose

Having a purpose is proven to help create a more rewarding life at any age, but especially in older age when we have more time on our hands. We can find purpose in faith, family, a political party, by volunteering for a local charity, looking after grandchildren or catching up with friends.

So try some or all of these four pillars to boost your emotional wellbeing – you may find you'll soon feel better, busier and more fulfilled.

## Events coming up...

### ▶ **Outing to the Auckland Museum**

*Tuesday 6 June*

- 10am
- Meet at HBH, transport will be provided

### ▶ **Mindfulness with Parvin**

*Every Wednesday - 7th June to 18th June*

- Topic: Learn simple skills for managing stress and living a more mindful life
- 10am to 12pm
- HBH Library

### ▶ **Expert tech support with St Kents students**

*Wednesday 7 June*

- 4.15pm to 5pm
- Meet at HBH main reception

### ▶ **Weekly walking group**

*Thursday 8 June*

- 10am
- Meet at the Café, 2R Bells Road, Lloyd Elsmore Park, Pakuranga Heights

### ▶ **Good Grief – coping with loss**

*Tuesday 13 June*

- Topic: Practical tips and strategies for navigating times of loss
- 10.30 to 12pm
- Te Tuhi, 13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga

### ▶ **Play Rummikub with VVE members**

*Monday 19th June*

- 1.30pm to 3pm
- HBH Howick Views, on arrival please go to main reception

### ▶ **Monthly Coffee & Catch-up**

*Tuesday 27 June*

- 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Te Tuhi, 13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga

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**To reserve your space please contact**

**Ninwa on 021 625 878 or email**

**[co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz](mailto:co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz)**

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