



Bridging the Gap: Coping with Mood, Behaviour or Supporting Unmet Needs

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Opening Karakia

Kia hora te marino

Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana

Hei huarahi mā tatou I te rangi nei

Aroha atu, aroha mai

Tātou i a tātou katoa

May peace be widespread.

May the sea be like greenstone; a pathway for all of us this day

Let us show respect for each other, for one another

Bind us all together



[Michael Melford Photography](#)



Tamayo, 2022

- ∞ Ko Ingarangi Olmecas/Zapotecas te whakapaparanga mai
- ∞ Engari Ko Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz the whenua tupu
- ∞ Ko San Martin te maunga
- ∞ Ko Coatzacoalcos te awa
- ∞ Ko **Gulf of México** (Atlantic) te moana
- ∞ Nō México ahau
- ∞ Ko Aotearoa te México te kāinga
- ∞ Kei Tāmaki Makaurau au e noho ana
- ∞ Ko Amado tōku papa
- ∞ Ko Esther tōku mama
- ∞ Ko Luis tōku tane
- ∞ Ko Orquidea tōku ingoa

**Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa
Xtyozēn yuad**

Content

1. Wellbeing
2. Root Cause of a Person's Actions
3. Intense emotional distress (triggers)
4. Interconnectedness as the inseparable nature of each dimension of health and wellbeing
5. Diverse strategies to wellbeing
6. Glimmers and Happy Hormones
7. Strategies to maintain well-being (resilience, antifragility and prosilience)

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. It can be described as how you feel about yourself and your life.

- Life of Engagement
- Life of Purpose
- Life of Meaning



Tamayo Mortera, 2024

Cognitive Changes

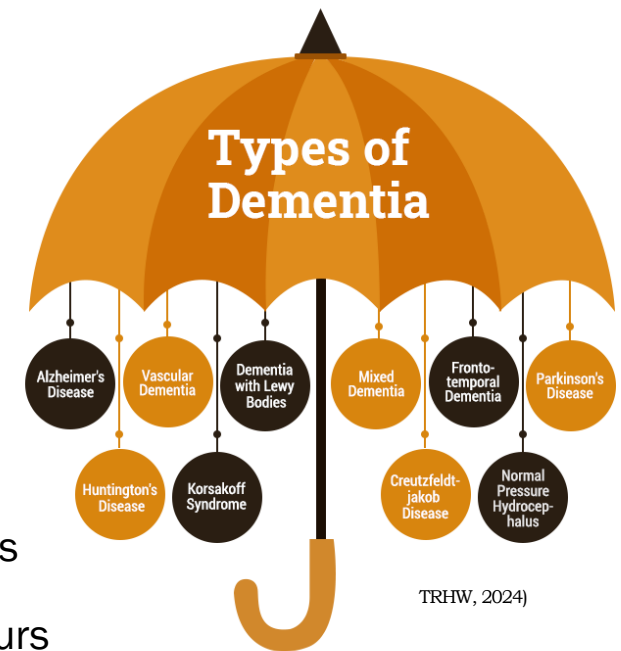
‘Dementia is a shift in the way people experience the world around them’

Dr. Al Power

Language is powerful, especially when talking about the D Word:

Dementia

- Memory Problems
- Cognitive Issues
- Cognitive Impairment
- Cognitive Decline
- Alzheimer’s Disease
- BPSD
- Challenging Behaviours
- Inappropriate Behaviours
- Unacceptable Behaviour



Root Cause of a Person's Actions

Brain Changes are real!
The Brain is incredible complex!
People are complex and unique too!

Grief, loss, anger, shock, fear,
frustration – normal emotions (cold,
hot)

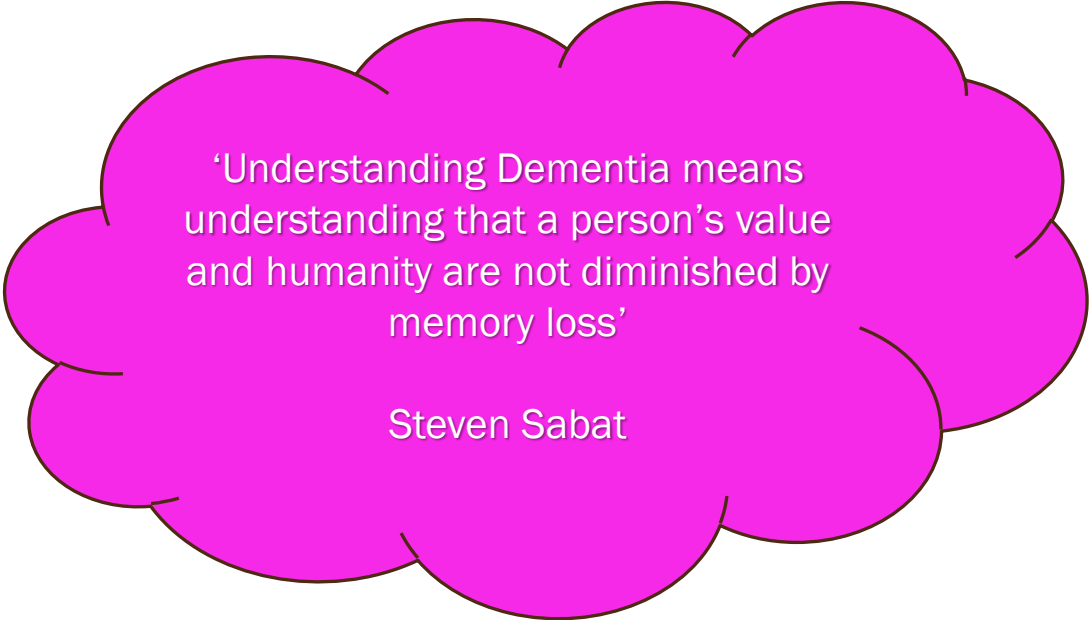
Personhood



Intense emotional distress (trigger)

Means having a strong, uncomfortable emotional reaction to a stimulus that wouldn't ordinarily cause that response:

- Sounds
- Smells
- Sights
- Events
- Certain Words
- Situations that remind someone of a traumatic event



'Understanding Dementia means understanding that a person's value and humanity are not diminished by memory loss'

Steven Sabat

Representation of Words and Actions

“Actions speak louder than words“

- ✓ Unmet need
- ✓ Challenges to sustain wellbeing
- ✓ Sensory changes (vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch)
- ✓ Expressions of Agency, Autonomy, Mana, Self-Determination
- ✓ New ways of interpreting
- ✓ Response to a physical or relational aspect of the environment



Pinterest, 2025



Pinterest, 2025

What if most of the *hard to understand* distress that we see is actually related to the *erosion* of one or more aspects of the person's wellbeing?

*Mā te whakarongo, ka mōhio
Mā te mōhio, ka mārama
Mā te mārama, ka matau
Mā te matau, ka ora*

*Through listening, comes knowledge
Through knowledge, comes understanding
Through understanding, comes wisdom
Through wisdom, comes wellbeing*

Whakataukī (Māori proverb)



Te Wheke: Interconnectedness as the inseparable nature of each dimension for health and wellbeing

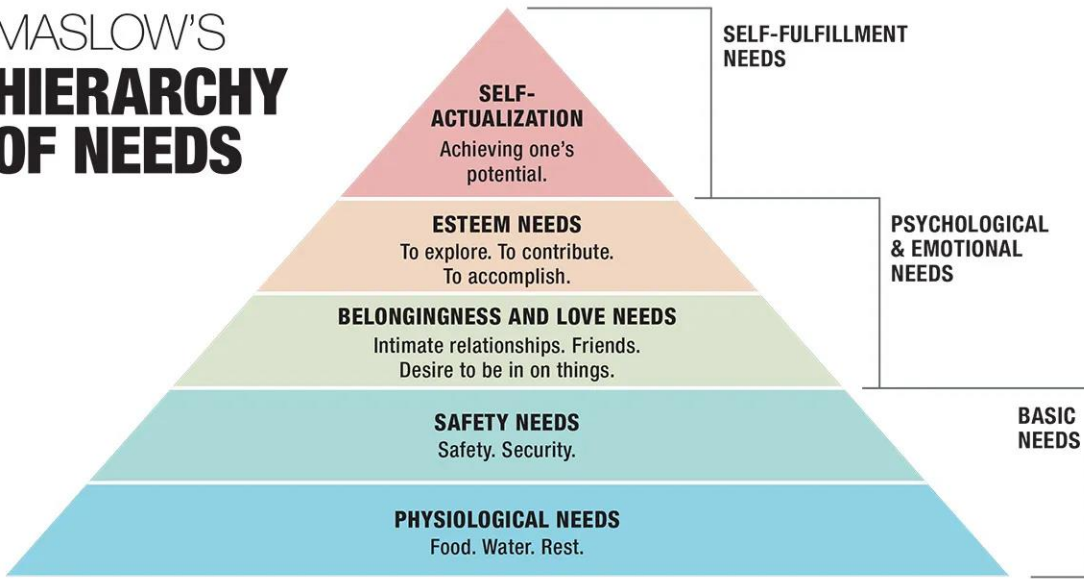
Rangimarie Rose Pere, uses the octopus as a symbol to represent the interconnectedness of health and wellbeing dimensions.

- The Head - Whānau
- The Eyes - Waiora
- The Tentacles: Dimensions of health and wellbeing
 - 1) Wairuatanga: Spirituality
 - 2) Hinengaro: The mind
 - 3) Taha Tinana: Physical well-being
 - 4) Whanaungatanga: Extended family connections
 - 5) Mauri: Life force in people and objects
 - 6) Mana Ake: Unique identity of individuals and family
 - 7) Hā a Koro Ma, a Kui Ma: Breath of life from forbearers
 - 8) Whatumanawa: The open and healthy expression of emotion



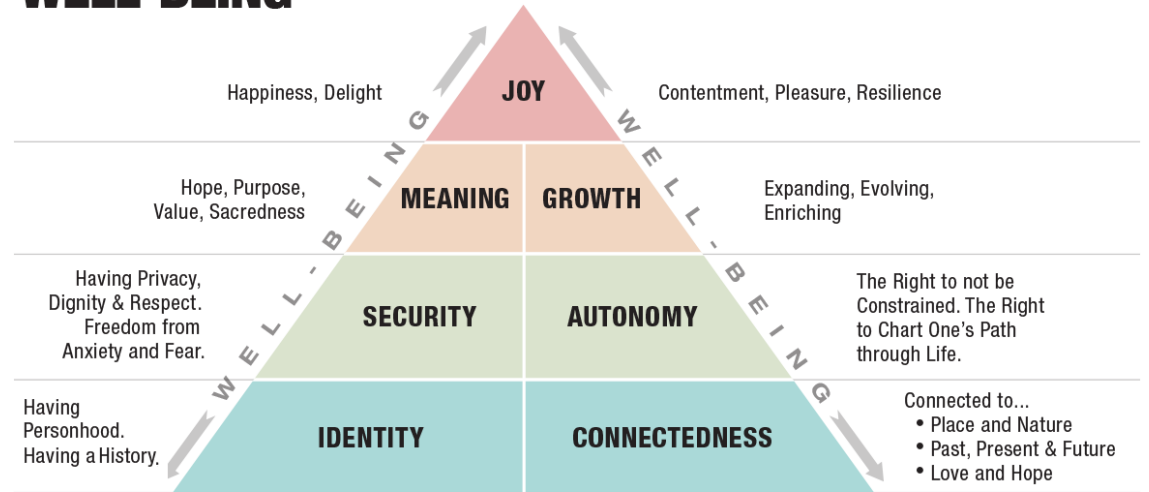
Credit: AI-generated image created by yganko

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Adapted from Maslow by ABeautifulVoice.org

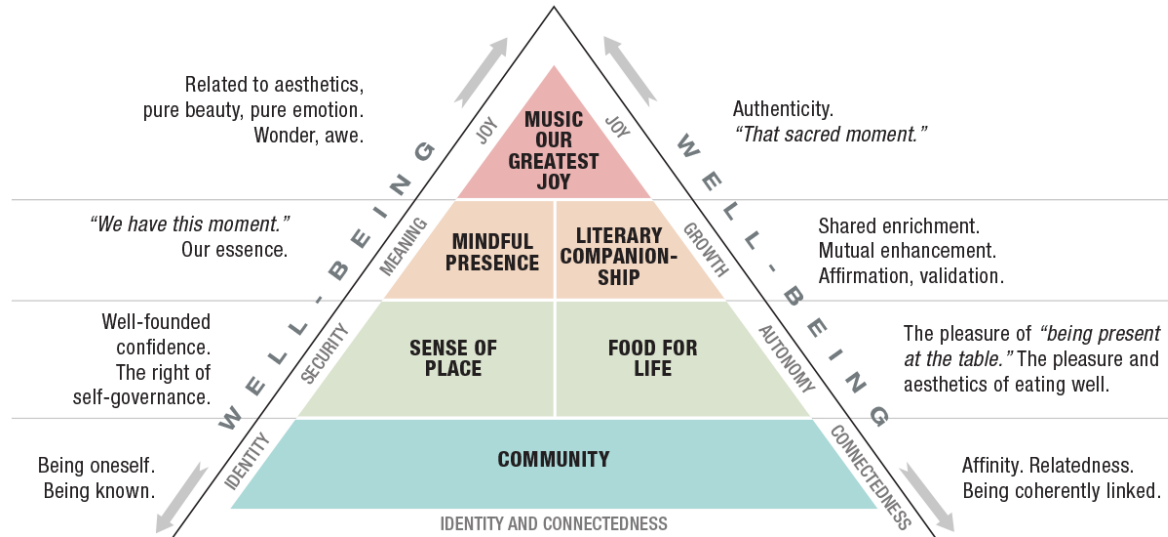
THE EDEN ALTERNATIVE DOMAINS OF WELL-BEINGSM



Dementia Beyond Disease, Enhancing Well-Being – Revised Edition. (Well-being pyramid, p. 99. Definitions of domains, pp. 37-248). By Author G. Allen Power, MD, FACP (2017). Baltimore, MD: Health Professions Press, Inc. Copyright 2017. Adapted by ABeautifulVoice.org with permission of author.

6 REAL LIFE PLEASURES

Dr. Al Power



Well-being pyramid illustrating hierarchy of "6 Real Life Pleasures." Adapted by ABeautifulVoice.org from Dementia Beyond Disease, Enhancing Well-Being, Health Professions Press, Inc. – Revised Edition, (p. 99), by G. Allen Power, MD, FACP (2017).

Te Whare Tapa Whā

Taha Tinana – Physical Wellbeing

What is happening? Not sleeping well

How we can support? Support the person to be active during the day, invite their whānau or friends on a walk

Taha Hinengaro – Mental Wellbeing

What is happening? Feelings sadness

How we support: Reach out to the person friends and whānau, and encourage them to check on the person e.g. video call to ask the person how are they feeling

Taha Wairua – Spiritual Wellbeing

What is happening? Losing faith in a higher power

How can we support? Support the person to find the nearest natural water source to put their feet in. For me, this allows my spirit to reset itself.

Taha Whānau – Family Wellbeing

What is happening? The immediate family doesn't seem to understand the person feelings of pain and loss

How can we support? Take into consideration that whānau is also about extended relationships, not just the immediate relatives. It's their friends, colleagues and the people they care about – support the person to reach out to everyone, someone will understand the person.

Case Scenario

John lives in a care centre for people living with Dementia. He is trying to leave the place, and he is experiencing intense emotional distress because the door is lock. John is known to love nature, the outdoors and to go on adventures before moving into the care centre.

Goal

John not to feel distress, and able to go outside safely when he desires to do so

Exercise

- Using any of your preferred wellbeing frameworks, identify what wellbeing domain(s) have been compromised
- Develop a plan that supports John to continue to enjoy the outdoors



Considerations

- Look at the person as a whole (not just clinical needs), including the need for accommodations
- Assess wellbeing domains, and focus on restoring across 24/7 through proactive care and support (plan approach)
- Focus on collective capacity (collaboration & partnerships)
- Create a supportive environment & individualise approach
- Check the built environment and operational dimensions (lighting, staff)
- Reframe risks:



That is too Risky!



What is the Risk of doing this?



What is the risk of Not doing this?



What is the best that can happen from doing this?



You can't just
hope for happy endings.
You have to believe in
them, then do the work
and take the risks.

Pinterest, 2025

Helping Restore John's Wellbeing

- You know what matters for the person
- Validate feelings and uphold mana
- Abilities, Strengths, Preferences
- Plan that includes the outdoors
- Team training
- Full team approach
- Strong partnership with Whānau
- Plan, Support, Review



Elderly Advisory Group, 2025

Diverse Strategies to wellbeing

IMPORTANT!!! Typical 'Non-Pharmacological Interventions' can easily become only *attempt* to provide PCC with a clinical mindset and Not Work.

Particularly if:

- NPI's are Reactive and not Proactive
- Exaggeration of discrete 'activities' often without underlying meaning for the person
- Involving the person in many group 'activities', often without underlying meaning for the person
- NPI's are Not person-directed
- NPI's are Not tied into the person domains of wellbeing (strengths, abilities, goal, need)
- Adding interventions in a Care Plan like doses of pills

However, if you are providing something that has meaning for the person... restoring wellbeing happens!

Different types of strategies

NPI's are not limited to:

- Art Therapy
- Animal Assisted Therapies
- Exercise Programmes
- Cognitive Stimulation Therapy
- Virtual Reality
- Signage
- Nutritional Programmes
- Horticultural Therapies

CI's are not limited to:

- Aromatherapy
- Movement Therapy (Alexander Technique)
- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic
- Hypnotherapy
- Reiki
- Yoga
- Tai Chi

Must be linked to the person domains of wellbeing, strengths, abilities...

Therapeutic Recreation / Meaningful Activities / Meaningful Engagement / Purposeful Activities / Creative Engagement

Assistive Technology , Body Percussion, Chair Tai Chi/Yoga/Zumba, Dance Therapy/Expression, Music Therapy/Expression, Doll Therapy, Drama Therapy, Poetry and Performance, Intergenerational Programmes/Activities, Laughter Therapy/Yoga, Mindfulness, RGM, Spin Poi, Water Activities, Reading, Playing Games, Card Games, Reminiscence, Validation, Presence, Sensory Stimulation, Cognitive Stimulation, Multi Sensory Environments, Massage, Touch, Animal Visits, Exercise and movement, Art Therapy/Expression, Watching Photos, Creating a Collage, Gardening, Movies, Volunteer work, Spending time outdoors, Community Engagement, Drawing, Painting, Calligraphy, Knitting, Candle making, Basketball, Football, Fishing, Kayaking, Cooking, Baking, Playing a musical instrument, Go to a concert, Watch TV, Radio, Archery, Astronomy, Writing, Beekeeping, Cleaning, Colouring**Know the person - meet the person where they are right now, BE PRESENT!**



Palatini, 2023



Alzheimers Research Association, 2021

A Wellbeing Approach

It is Not

Only reacting to distress in the moment or providing a temporary intervention to calm someone

It is

A series of support that are implements 24/7 to build an environment supportive of the person wellbeing domains



Tamayo Mortera, 2009

Strategies for US to sustain wellbeing

- ✓ Resilience
- ✓ Antifragility
- ✓ Prosilience



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Time flies when you
are having fun.

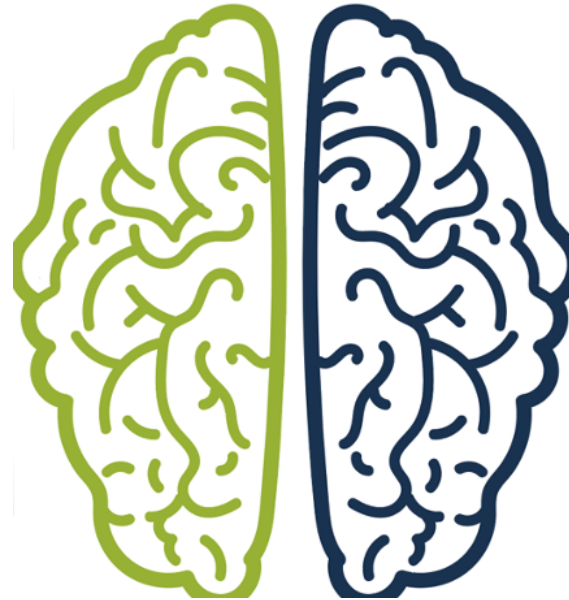
Albert Einstein

QuoteFancy, 2025

Nurturing the Brain through meaningful activity: Glimmers and Happy Hormones

ENDORPHINS
Natural
Pain Relief

OXYTOCIN
Calm and
Emotional Bonding



iStock, 2023

SEROTONIN
Mind, Mood,
Food and Sleep

DOPAMINE
Reward, Pleasure,
Achievement

Hacking neurotransmitters through purposeful engagement

Dopamine

- Complete a task
- Cook and eat my fav food
- To do List

Oxytocin

- Hold hands or hug my husband
- Give a compliment
- Play with the neighbour's dog

Serotonin

- Practice gratitude
- Riding my bike
- Be with Nature

Endorphins

- Watch Comedy
- Dance
- Massage

Conclusion

Focus on the person, details matter, validate needs, asses for skills, abilities, interests, routines, preferences. Effective communication matters - *Be a true voice for the person, not just an echo*, adapt the environment, optimise opportunity for success based on what is meaningful and purposeful for the person, and nurture belonging.



Cruz Mortera, 2025





Tamayo Mortera, 2023

nāga mihi nua

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Closing Karakia

Kia whakairia te tapu
Kia wātea ai te ara
Kia turuki whakataha ai
Kia turuki whakataha ai
Haumi e. Hui e. Tāiki e!

Restrictions are moved aside
So the pathways is clear
To return to everyday activities

