



The Pandemic Paradox

[New research from McMaster University suggests the pandemic has created a paradox where mental health has become both a motivator for and a barrier to physical activity.](#)

People want to be active to improve their mental health but **find it difficult to exercise due to stress and anxiety**, say the researchers who surveyed more than 1,600 subjects.

"Maintaining a regular exercise programme is difficult at the best of times and the conditions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic may be making it even more difficult," says Jennifer Heisz, lead author of the study and an associate professor in the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster.



"Even though exercise comes with the promise of reducing anxiety, many respondents felt too anxious to exercise. Likewise, although exercise reduces depression, respondents who were more depressed were less motivated to get active, and lack of motivation is a symptom of depression," she says.

[*This article was first published in Science Daily.](#)

Strategies for Activity Providers

In light of the research findings above, here are FIVE strategies to try that will help reduce the mental health barriers that are preventing people from being active and/or returning to classes and activities.

1. **Reach out:** If you have noticed some of your members still haven't returned, email or call them to see how they are getting on. Ask what support they need.

2. **Offer a range of low-impact, gentle exercise options:** High intensity exercise can exacerbate feelings of anxiety. Consider adding some relaxation or meditation into your current classes and/or offer a new class for those returning.
3. **Ask a class or group member to become a buddy:** Connect a regular member with someone who needs support e.g. pick them up and bring them to class.
4. **Provide information about where to go for mental health support:** Upskill in mental health first aid (see link below) so you can provide initial help and guide a person towards professional help.
5. **Make sure you have good COVID hygiene practices in place:** Ensure everyone signs in using the COVID Tracer app.
[Review your current practices to make sure they meet Exercise NZ guidelines.](#)

Jessee James is the owner of Embrace Tinana, and winner of the prestigious PT of the Year award from Exercise NZ in 2019. She spoke at our Winter Activity Providers Workshop in June.

She shared her approach to **hauora** and ideas on **how to build a great rapport** with clients and participants. Jessee uses the Te Whare Tapa Whā to guide her interactions (shown overleaf). She believes it is important to take a holistic approach.



In regards to building a strong rapport with people, Jessee uses the following techniques:

1. **Actively Listen.**
2. **Be Flexible.**
3. **Make Time.**
4. **Show Patience.**

Alongside these, Jessee encourages activity providers and trainers to "Be caring, show empathy, celebrate successes and be open minded". She wrapped up her talk by saying, "Be authentic... don't copy others. Let people in but have boundaries in place."

[Find out more about Jessee and Embrace Tinana](#) (Facebook).



What is Te Whare Tapa Whā?

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a holistic model of the 4 dimensions of wellbeing developed by Sir Mason Durie in 1984 to provide a Māori perspective on health. The four dimensions are:

- **taha tinana** (physical wellbeing);
- **taha hinengaro** (mental wellbeing);
- **taha wairua** (spiritual wellbeing); and
- **taha whānau** (family wellbeing).

The four walls of the wharenuī (meeting house) is a symbol of these four dimensions. The wharenuī's connection with the **whenua** (land) forms the foundation for the other 4 dimensions.

[Learn more about the Te Whare Tapa Whā model.](#)

Training Opportunities Galore!





It's been a busy few months in our education and training space! As you can see, a diverse range of practical sessions have been delivered. A big shout out to everyone who has joined us over the past few months. Koia kei a koe! Good on you!

[Education, Training and Development](#)

The Active Canterbury website is a great place to go to find out about upcoming education and training opportunities. Click on the link above to view resources and see what's coming up over the next few months.

[Share and Show Session: Brilliant Balls Practical](#)

Date: Saturday 31st July 2021.

Time: 10am to noon.

Venue: Neighbourhood Trust (64 McFaddens Road, St Albans).

Cost: FREE.

CPDs: 1 CPD if you attend the entire session

You'll leave with new connections, greater confidence and practical ideas to adapt or use in your own classes and activities. The emphasis is on shared knowledge and learning together.

BE QUICK! Registrations close on Friday 23rd July 2021.

[Ronnie Gardiner Method Introductory Course](#)

Dates: Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September 2021.

Time: 8am to 5pm both days.

Location: Age Concern.

Cost: \$255 for the employed (OT, Physio, DT etc) and \$185 for the self-employed, retired, students, volunteers etc.

The Ronnie Gardiner Method (RGM) is a powerful multi-sensory exercise method for the brain. It combines rhythm, movement and speech to help improve concentration, coordination, balance and memory.

[Tai Chi for Life Instructor Training Workshop](#)

Date: Sunday 26th September 2021.

Time: 9am to 5pm.

Location: St Martins Community Centre (122 Wilsons Road South, St Martins).

Cost: \$153 if REPs registered, and \$180 for others.

Early bird discounts available until Sunday 29th August 2021.

Tai Chi for Life is based on Sun and Yang style tai chi, and is easy to learn, effective and safe. Especially suitable for seniors and beginners.

GREATER CHRISTCHURCH *Sport and Recreation Guide*

[The Greater Christchurch Sport and Recreation Guide](#) is a great way to promote your activities – classes, groups and programmes – plus make it easy for new people to find out about what you have to offer. It's also FREE to list! Use the link below to add a new listing.

[Add your activity details to the Activities Directory.](#)



Key Nutrition Messages for Older Adults

We were fortunate to have nutritionist Wendy Scanlon present at our recent Winter Activity Providers Workshop.

Wendy shared **7 key messages** relating to nutrition and the health of older adults:



If exercise makes us feel so good, why is it so hard to do it?

Michael Otto PhD is a professor of psychology at Boston University.

[His article "The Exercise Effect"](#) says that, **starting out too hard** may be one of the reasons people disdain physical activity.

When people exercise above their respiratory



Mental disorders as a group are the third-leading cause of health loss for New Zealanders according to St John.

[So they are now offering a Mental Health First Aid course](#) to help equip managers, community workers and those interacting with the public.

The course teaches participants the skills and

- Eat a variety of healthy food each day.
- Love your veges.
- Wholegrains are a winner!.
- Eat protein at each meal.
- Look after your bones.
- Share meals.
- Cook!

[Watch the full presentation by visiting on the Active Canterbury website.](#)

threshold – that is, above the point when it gets hard to talk – they postpone exercise's immediate mood boost by about 30 minutes. **For novices, that delay could turn them off exercise for good.**

A key take home message for activity providers is: Start new people slowly and build up to a higher intensity.

knowledge to recognise and respond to someone experiencing mental health concerns. It will also help you build your own mental fitness and the confidence to provide initial help and guide a person towards professional help. An **online training option** is available.



Copyright © 2021 Active Canterbury, All rights reserved.

To get in touch with Active Canterbury please contact:

Nadine Milmine - Active Canterbury Network Coordinator
 Pegasus Health (Charitable) Ltd
 Phone: 0274 621 262
 Email: nadine.milmine@activecanterbury.org.nz

We welcome your feedback and comments.