

Whare Tapa Whā

From our NZ Curriculum Document:

<https://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Health-and-PE-in-the-NZC/Health-and-PE-in-the-NZC-1999/Underlying-concepts/Well-being-hauora>

Well-being, hauora

Well-being

The concept of well-being encompasses the physical, mental and emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of health. This concept is recognised by the World Health Organisation.

Hauora

Hauora is a Māori philosophy of health unique to New Zealand. It comprises taha tinana, taha hinengaro, taha whanau, and taha wairua.

Taha tinana - Physical well-being

the physical body, its growth, development, and ability to move, and ways of caring for it

Taha hinengaro - Mental and emotional well-being

coherent thinking processes, acknowledging and expressing thoughts and feelings and responding constructively

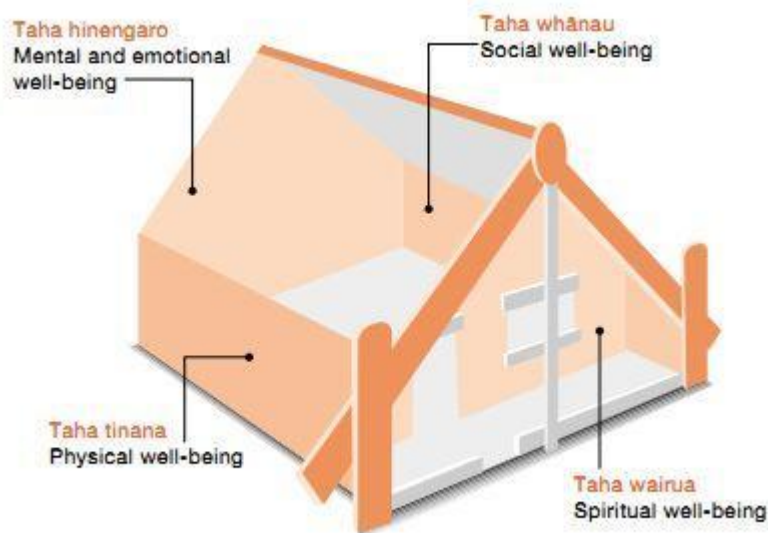
Taha whanau - Social well-being

family relationships, friendships, and other interpersonal relationships; feelings of belonging, compassion, and caring; and social support

Taha wairua - Spiritual well-being

the values and beliefs that determine the way people live, the search for meaning and purpose in life, and personal identity and self-awareness (For some individuals and communities, spiritual well-being is linked to a particular religion; for others, it is not.)

Each of these four dimensions of hauora influences and supports the others.



Dr Mason Durie's whare tapawha model compares hauora to the four walls of a whare, each wall representing a different dimension: taha wairua (the spiritual side); taha hinengaro (thoughts and feelings); taha tinana (the physical side); and taha whānau (family). All four dimensions are necessary for strength and symmetry. (Adapted from Mason Durie's Whaiora: Māori Health Development. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1994, page 70).

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/maori-health-models/maori-health-models-te-whare-tapa-waha>

Resources from Education Review Office

<https://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/wellbeing-for-success-a-resource-for-schools/useful-wellbeing-resources/>

Te Whare Tapa Whā Model including the whenua dimension:

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/t/te-whare-tapa-wh%C4%81-and-wellbeing/>

The Māori holistic model of health, te whare tapa whā, reminds you to take care of all the different aspects of your life to support your wellbeing.

What is te whare tapa whā?

Te whare tapa whā is a model of the 4 dimensions of wellbeing developed by Sir Mason Durie in 1984 to provide a Māori perspective on health. The 4 dimensions are:

- [taha tinana](#) (physical wellbeing)
- [taha hinengaro](#) (mental wellbeing)
- [taha wairua](#) (spiritual wellbeing)
- [taha whānau](#) (family wellbeing).

With 4 walls, the wharenuī (meeting house) is a symbol of these 4 dimensions. The wharenuī's connection with the [whenua](#) (land) forms the foundation for the other 4 dimensions.



Image credit: [Mental Health Foundation, NZ](#)

By nurturing and strengthening all 5 dimensions, you support your health and wellbeing, as well as the health and wellbeing of your whānau.

If something in your life is challenging the wellbeing of one wall or dimension, you can draw on the foundation and other walls until you can strengthen that wall again.

And to build resilience for the tough times, you can explore your way to wellbeing by choosing one small step at a time to strengthen one of your dimensions.

Here are some ideas to get you started.

Whenua (connection with the land or environment)

As the foundation for the other 4 dimensions, the health of the land and the natural environment is strongly connected to your health and wellbeing. You can think about whenua as your place of belonging. For Māori, the whenua is a key part of identity. Connection to the land and to nature has been shown to improve mental and physical wellbeing.

When was the last time you took a moment to enjoy nature? Not just the bush, mountains or beach but the small, everyday wonders all around us – the rustling of the wind through the trees, the spring flowers or the sound of birds settling for the night. Read our [top tips for letting nature in to strengthen your wellbeing](#). Maybe one of these will be your small step to greater wellbeing through whenua.

Taha tinana (physical wellbeing)

Taha tinana is your physical wellbeing. It is about how your body grows, feels and moves, and how you care for it.

Nourishing and strengthening your physical wellbeing helps you to cope with the ups and downs and life. Feeling physically well helps you feel mentally well.

Some key things to take care of taha tinana are physical activity, healthy eating, sleep and not smoking.

To strengthen your taha tinana, consider making a commitment with your whānau, friends or hoamahi (colleagues) to pick one thing you could each do to improve your physical wellbeing.

It could be supporting one another to quit smoking, go for a walk together at lunchtime or before or after work, adding one fruit or vegetable to each meal or going to bed at the same time each night. Start small and encourage each other to keep working at it!

For some ideas, find out more about the benefits of [physical activity](#) and how to incorporate it into each day.

Our section on [healthy eating](#) has loads of ideas about how you can make sure you are nourishing your taha tinana and that of your whānau members every day.

If you're having trouble with your sleep, our [sleep tips](#) can help you get the shut-eye you need. And if you're a smoker, [quitting smoking](#) is the best thing you can do to help your taha tinana.

Taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing)

Taha hinengaro is your mind, heart, conscience, thoughts and feelings. It's about how you feel, as well as how you communicate and think.

Taking care of taha hinengaro is important for everyone, regardless of whether or not you've experienced mental illness or distress.

When taha hinengaro is strong, you can better cope with life's challenges. You can express your feelings and reach out for support from friends, whānau and hoamahi (colleagues) if you need to.

Some surprising lifestyle choices can get in the way of having healthy taha hinengaro.

For example, what you eat affects your taha hinengaro. Eating some foods can improve your mood and mental wellbeing, while other foods can have a negative impact on how you feel. That means you can improve your taha hinengaro by making small changes to your diet. (And luckily, the same eating habits that keep you mentally well are those that support your taha tinana too.) Find out more about [food and mood](#).

How much you move also affects your taha hinengaro. Physical activity not only appears to reduce the symptoms and frequency of depression but, better still, reduces the risk of becoming depressed at all! Read more about how [physical activity affects mental health](#).

Drinking alcohol can lift your mood with the first glass, but too much alcohol too often can be a downer for taha hinengaro. Find out how [alcohol affects your brain and mood](#).

Learning how to manage stress also supports taha hinengaro. Stress is your body's natural reaction to a threat or an excess demand. Some stress is good for you and helps motivate you to get something done. But when you are under too much stress for too long, it affects your taha hinengaro. Learning how to manage stress is a key life skill. Find out more about [managing stress in your life generally](#) and [managing stress at work](#).

What small step would you like to take to improve your taha hinengaro?

Taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing)

Your spiritual essence is your life force – your mauri. This is who and what you are, where you have come from and where you are going.

The way people view wairua can be very different. For some, wairua is the capacity for faith or religious beliefs or having a belief in a higher power. For others, wairua is an internal connection to the universe or the sacred. There is no right or wrong way to think of or experience wairua, but it is an important part of your mental wellbeing.

Spiritual wellbeing can be expressed through beliefs, values, traditions and practices that support self-awareness and identity. Taha wairua provides a sense of meaning and purpose as well as experiencing a sense of connectedness to self, whānau, community, nature and the sacred.

How would you like to strengthen your taha wairua? Explore your way to taha wairua with these [ideas from the Mental Health Foundation](#).

Taha whānau (family wellbeing)

Taha whānau is about who makes you feel like you belong, who you care about and who you share your life with.

Whānau is about extended relationships – it's not just your immediate relatives, it's your friends, hoamahi (colleagues), community and the people you care about. Everyone has a place and a role to fulfil within their whānau, and whānau contributes to your individual wellbeing and identity.

Spending time with whānau, doing things for them and getting involved gives you a feeling of purpose, connection and wellbeing. It benefits you and strengthens your whānau. As a core source of strength, support, security and identity, whānau plays a central role in your wellbeing.

The Mental Health Foundation has some [ideas to explore how you might strengthen your taha whānau](#).

References

1. [Māori health models – te whare tapa whā](#) Ministry of Health, NZ
2. [Mental Health Awareness Week 2019](#) Mental Health Foundation, NZ
3. [Explore te whare tapa whā](#) Mental Health Foundation, NZ