



# Education and support for the psychosocial health and SAR practitioner well-being.

Peter Zimmer - New Zealand Land Search and Rescue

# Sharing our knowledge & insights

Disclaimer: no helicopter or rescue action shots – it is about people

My presentation will touch on:

- Education, awareness, support for member well-being
- Importance of looking after self and each other
- In NZ, we value cultural diversity and inclusivity
- **Removing the stigma** (that is a big one)
- ~~“No concrete pills required to get hard”~~
- Showing examples of our holistic approach to member well-being

# Karakia Rapa Taiwhenua



Composed by Miru McLean 2023  
Ngai Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tāwhaki

## Karakia Rapa Taiwhenua

Tākina mai te mauri ki Ranginui

Tākina mai te mauri ki Papatuanuku

Kia tau te mauri ki ngā tangata o Rapa Tai Whenua

Kia haumarū ngā hoa, kia haumarū ngā kaimahi

Hei āwhina, hei marutau i a ahau i tēnei mahi  
whakahirahira

Tūturu whakamaua ki a tina, TINA!

Hui e TĀIKI E!

## NZ Land Search and Rescue Incantation

I say this karakia in the presence of sky  
father above

I say this karakia in the presence of mother  
earth below

With protection & support for the people of  
Land Search and Rescue

To keep our friends safe, to keep our  
colleagues safe

And to help me stay safe in this important  
work

Let this be our commitment to all

To join! Gather together! In unity!

# Mihimihi

- **Mihimihi**

Tākina mai te whakaaro ki ngā  
mate huhua

Tākina mai te mauri ki te ao  
mārama

Tūturu whakamaua ki a tina,  
TINA!

Hui e TĀIKI E!

- **Acknowledgements**

- Let us remember the many that  
have fallen

- Let us acknowledge our place  
and space within the world

- Let this be our commitment to  
all

- To join! Gather together! In  
unity!

## Our History - Roger Bates book: 1934-2020 Land Search and Rescue in New Zealand

- Easter 1933 Sutch Search
- 1934 – 1994 Federated Mountain Clubs SAR Organisation (national committees, little funding, high spirits, can do attitudes, big events like Mt. Erebus disaster in Antarctica in 1979)
- 1994-2006 NZ Land Search and Rescue Inc. (new organisation formed, one paid national field officer, many different national committees and subcommittees)
- 2007 to 2019 known as LandSAR NZ (strategic review, a board of directors was formed, a business manager employed)
- 2020 to now (brought training in-house, more successful funding allowed for national organisation to grow and employ more staff to better support the efforts of our volunteer membership)

## Who and where are we today?

- 3100 volunteers across 64 groups and specialist technical rescue disciplines – alpine, cave, canyon, swiftwater, bush (wilderness)
- New volunteers in the last year – 349
- Volunteers leaving in last year – 276
- Average age of current volunteer is 48
- Average age of new volunteer is 41
- Gender of current volunteers 30% women, 69% men, <1% gender diverse
- Gender of new volunteers 43% women, 56 % men, < 1% gender diverse

## Who are we continued.

- Ethnicity of current volunteers 95% Pakeha, 6% Maori, 1% Pacific People, 1% Asian, 1% MELLA (Middle Eastern, Latin America, African)
- Ethnicity of new volunteers 96% Pakeha, 8% Maori, 2% Pacific People, 2% Asian, 1% MELAA
- Ethnicity of New Zealand: 68% Pakeha, 18% Maori, 9% Pacific People, 17% Asian, 2% MELAA
- Average length of service 7.7 years
- Average length of service: women 5.7 years, men 8.5 years

## Our Well-being Journey

- Doing the right thing by and for our people (rescuers) is a priority
- Learning about and seeing what others are doing
- ICAR Congress in Chamonix 2018, provided an inspiration to do more
- A change – not relying on others for well-being support
- FED (Fuel Excise Duty) successful funding bid 2020 → member assistance / well being programs established
- 2023 start our in-house peer support
- Concerted effort to become more diverse – gender, age, culturally



# Te Whare Tapa Wha

- Whare is a house / home a place of well being with different pillars / aspects to it.
- The goal of the next few slides is to understand the concept of the pillars and encourage seeing wellbeing as a holistic system - not just being happy in one part of your life or being happy all the time.
- Holistic – encompassing Physical, Medical and Mental Health
- We can call it Emotional Health if that makes it easier 😊

# Holistic Model of Wellbeing – Sir Mason Durie 1984



**Te Whare Tapa Whā**

# Holistic Model of Wellbeing



**Te Whare Tapa Whā**

## Taha whānau (family/social/community health) represented by one wall

Member Assistance Program (MAP), the service is also available to immediate family (at no cost)  
Whānau recognition – Groups can host a whānau event each year  
Guidance documents available on the members portal for Volunteer whānau  
Valued Employer Program

# Holistic Model of Wellbeing



**Te Whare Tapa Whā**

## Taha hinengaro (mental and emotional health) represented by one side of the roof

Member Assistance Program (MAP) – Confidential Support Service through INSTEP

Education Member Wellbeing Courses – Understanding Trauma and self-care and resiliency.

Peer Support Program

# Holistic Model of Wellbeing



**Te Whare Tapa Whā**

## Taha wairua (spiritual health) represented by the other side of the roof

Some groups have developed local iwi connections and ensure blessings/karakia's are carried out after an operation involving a deceased subject

Mark Pirikahu is LandSAR's Kaihautū (facilitates partnerships with Mana Whenua)

# Holistic Model of Wellbeing



Te Whare Tapa Whā

## Taha tinana (physical health) represented by another wall

Discounts are available for members with Specsavers, Mole Map, Flu vaccinations

Physically fit for the role –

- fitness testing and training
- ownership of looking after one's own health – fitness, food, sleep
- love for the outdoors

Fatigue Management

IMSAFE – health self-check

# Holistic Model of Wellbeing



**Te Whare Tapa Whā**

## Whenua (Land/ Roots) represented by the base / foundation

Online Education/Induction about LandSAR and its history – Online LMS  
Mark Pirikahu (LandSAR's Kaihautu is able to consult with iwi in case of searches on sites of significance

# Te Whare Tapa Whā - Land Search And Rescue

## Taha whānau (family/social/community health)

Member Assistance Programme service is available to immediate family.  
Whānau recognition – Group can host a whānau event each year  
Guidance documents available on the members portal for Volunteer whānau  
Employer recognition – Valued Employer Programme (more info on members portal)

## Taha hinengaro (mental and emotional health)

MAP – Confidential Support Service through INSTEP  
Education Member Wellbeing Courses – Understanding Trauma and self-care and resiliency.  
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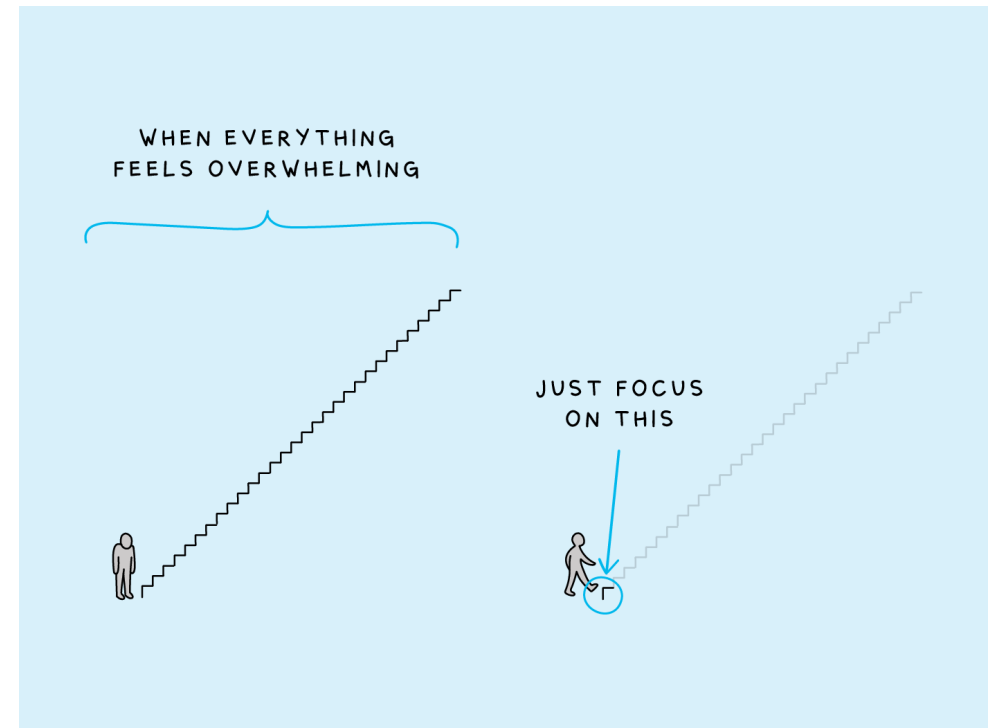


# Rahui

- Rahui for the maunga (mountain)
- Rahui for the people
- Tapu
- The Whanganui River has the legal status of a person

# Next, sharing a few known and tested ideas and concepts from NZ and around the globe

- Examining how individuals and teams track well-being wise.
- Maintaining a Positive Organisational Culture
- Harm to others in a organisational context
- Support and Referral Options





# Post Traumatic Growth

Manifests as change in 3 domains: sense of self, relationships and philosophy of life

- What experiences bring us closer together?
- How are we building resilience throughout our team?

# How are we tracking?

## LandSAR Self Wellbeing Check-in Tool

Thriving	Surviving	Distressed/Stressed	Unwell
<p>Physically well &amp; feeling full of energy</p> <p>Psyched to receive a call out</p> <p>Have a sense of purpose &amp; confidence</p> <p>Socially active with strong connections with others</p> <p>Good focus &amp; attention</p> <p>Able to manage frustrations &amp; stressors</p> <p>Able to achieve quality rest &amp; sleep; presents as well rested</p> <p><b>MAINTAIN &amp; OPTIMISE YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING</b></p>	<p>Low energy &amp; motivation</p> <p>Questioning if it is worth responding to the call out</p> <p>Minor physical ailments – but responding anyway</p> <p>Decreased interest in social activity &amp; engagement with the team</p> <p>Cranky with others; others aren't pulling their weight</p> <p>Difficulties achieving adequate rest or sleep</p> <p><b>STRENGTHEN WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE</b></p>	<p>Low energy, tired/fatigue</p> <p>Having the 'Oh No' moment when the callout comes</p> <p>Avoiding your normal outdoor recreational activities</p> <p>Social avoidance, withdrawal/detachment from others</p> <p>Regular thoughts/worries about issues/incidents</p> <p>Difficulties achieving adequate rest or sleep; restless or disturbed sleep</p> <p><b>MOBILISE SUPPORT AND DEVELOP A WELLBEING PLAN</b></p>	<p>Physically unwell or physical illness</p> <p>Hate or fear getting a call out – find excuses to avoid responding</p> <p>Isolation from others, and avoiding social activities</p> <p>Going through motions without emotion</p> <p>Sleep disturbed by dreaming, worry or excessive thinking</p> <p>Difficulties falling or staying asleep</p> <p><b>SEEK PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOP A SUPPORT ACTION PLAN</b></p>

For more information go to the LandSAR website members area or attend one of our Member Wellbeing workshops

# Maintaining a Positive Culture

- What puts our team in the “Green”?
- What does Positive Culture look like?
- What does being in the red look like as a team?

## STRESS CONTINUUM FOR THE TEAM

READY	REACTING	INJURED	CRITICAL
Transparency	Normalizing Depletion	Resources Scarce	Cliques And Hierarchy
Sense Of Mission	Staff Dreading Work	Rigid Perspectives	Lack Of Trust
Requests For Help Met With Support	Mistakes Are Personal	Members Undervalued	Gaslighting
Connection	Transactional Communication	Communication Silos	Culture Of Blame
Team Approach To Overwhelm	Requests For Help Are Criticized	Suffering In Silence	Vulnerability Punished
Curiosity Culture		Helplessness	Fear At Work
<b>Mission Satisfaction</b>	<b>Mission Drift</b>	<b>Mission Fatigue</b>	<b>Moral Injuries</b>

ADAPTED FROM COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS FIRST AID BY LAURA MCGLADREY | RESPONDERALLIANCE.COM

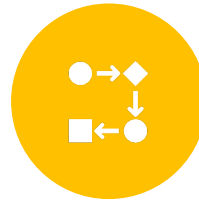
# M.A.N.E.R.S



**THE M.A.N.E.R.S MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID WAS FIRST DEVELOPED BY THE VICTORIAN AMBULANCE COUNSELLING UNIT TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICE PERSONNEL.**



**PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID IS A TOOL TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO STAY WELL AFTER A TOUGH SITUATION.**



**THERE ARE THE SIX STAGES RECOMMENDED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT. IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE USED PRESCRIPTIVELY.**



**ONE OR TWO STAGES MAY BE APPLIED INITIALLY AND ANOTHER STAGE OR STAGES WHEN NEEDED.**



**STAGES NEED ONLY TO BE APPLIED WHEN THEY ARE APPROPRIATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MEMBER.**

# M.A.N.E.R.S \*

- Minimise Exposure
- Acknowledge the Event/Incident
- Normalise Reactions
- Educate as required
- Review, Restore or Refer
- Self Care



# Minimise Exposure

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- Minimise exposure to distressing incidents
- Move the member to a place of calm and where they feel comfortable if they are distressed.
- If there is an option not to involve some members that should be a focus







# Acknowledge the Event

- Talk openly about the Event/Incident
- Acknowledge this one might be different to the norm for the SAR Members
- Ask the members how they are doing
- Allow members to talk openly and ask questions
- Often the most powerful stage of MANERS

# Normalise Reactions

- Reassure the member often that their reactions are normal
- Recognise that individual members are affected in different ways and that is normal
- That it is ok to be ok as well as not ok
- Acknowledge the members reactions without judgement



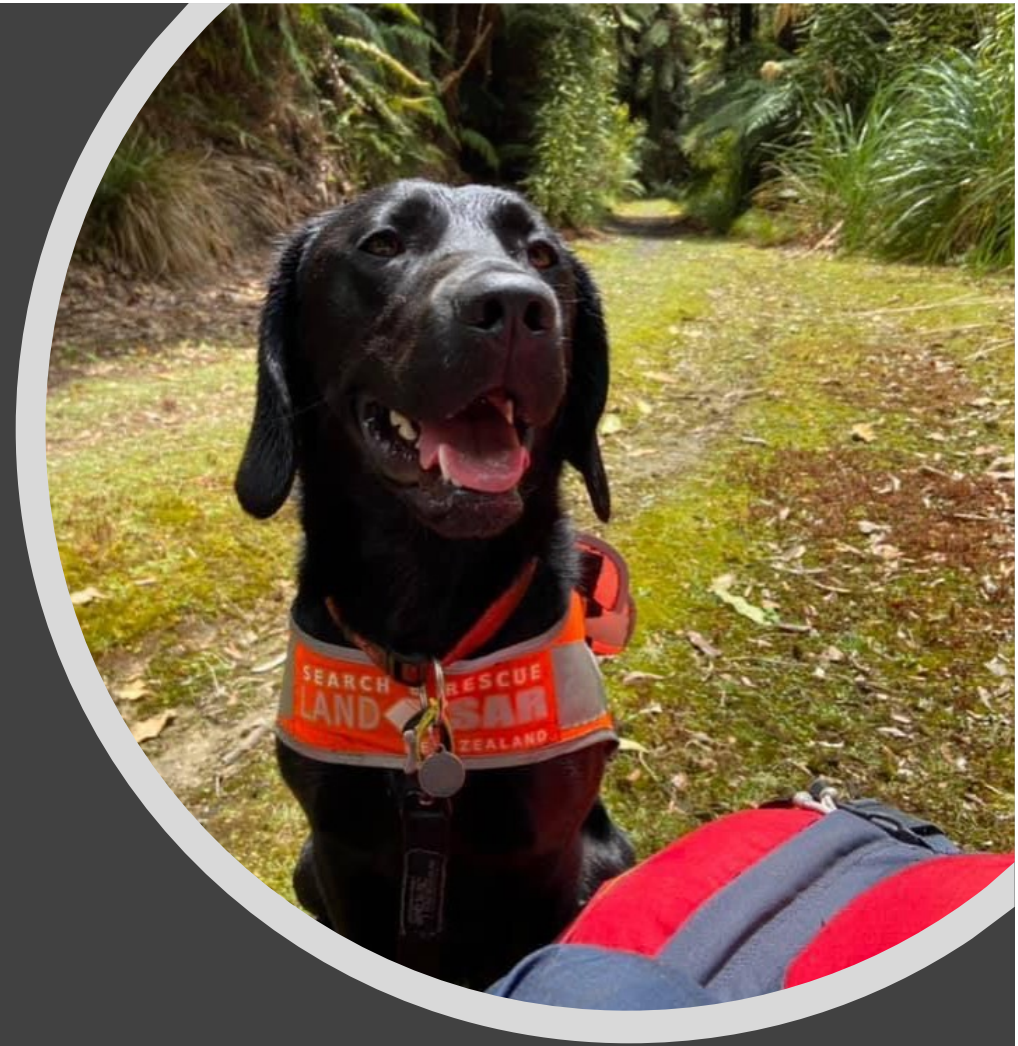
# Educate as required

- This is an opportunity to introduce the MANERS tool
- Talk about what sometimes helps different people work through a challenging event or incident
- Importance of talking to whom you feel comfortable with
- Talk about promoting good choices around processing what has happened i.e. gentle exercise, being with mates, avoid making important decisions
- Offer support options available



# Review, Restore or Refer

- Encourage the member to return to their normal tasks and duties if they feel up to it
- Indicate you are available to them but will also do a touch base call in the next 1-2 days
- Offer and assist in making a referral to Professional Assistance if required



# Self Care

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle yourself
- Have a couple of safe and reliable people you can talk to and share what's going on for you
- Seek support when you need it
- Be prepared to say not at the moment, or this time
- Access support from Peers or Professional Support if you require it



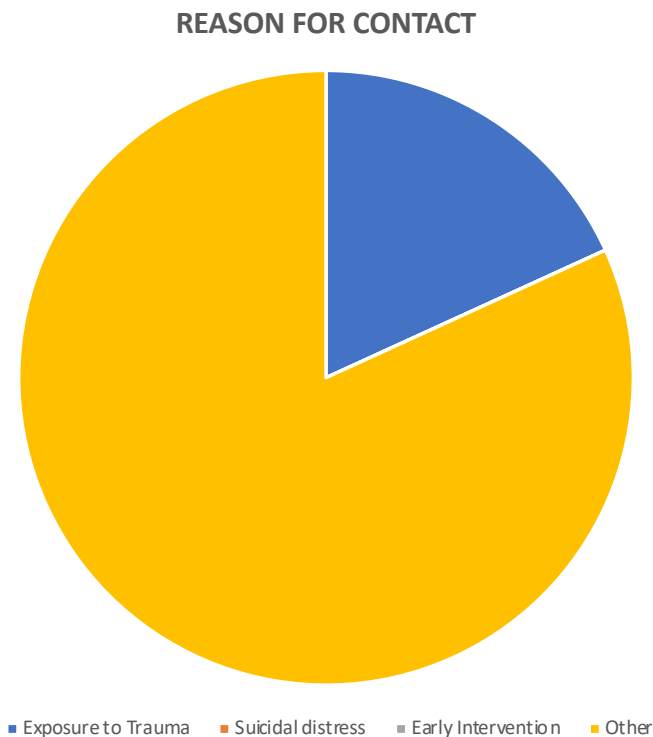
# Snapshot of our Support Initiatives & Mechanisms

- A few examples in the following slides
- Covering peer support
- Critical incidents
- Other support options

# Introduction to Peer Support

- Program Inception
  - Launched in September 2023 with initial training for 12 participants, as of August 2024 we have 40 trained peer supporters
- Volunteer Collaboration
  - 10 volunteers revised Mental Health First Aid content for Land Search and Rescue context
- Customized Scenarios
  - Scenarios tailored to reflect real challenges faced by volunteers
- Support Framework
  - Framework for Peer Supporters to conduct supportive conversations
- Role Clarification
  - Peer Supporters are not counsellors but provide peer support (“smoke detectors – not a fire hose”)
- Confidentiality Assurance
  - Code of Conduct ensures confidentiality for all parties

## Conversations with Peer Supporters: Formal Requests and Operational Use



- Accessibility of Peer Support
  - Available anytime, anywhere for assistance
- Criteria for Help
  - Critical Incidents (next slide)
  - Informal conversations
- Reported Statistics (Nov 2023 - Jun 2024)
  - Formal requests and operational considerations
- Utilization of Peer Supporters
  - Operational debriefs and post-profile release support



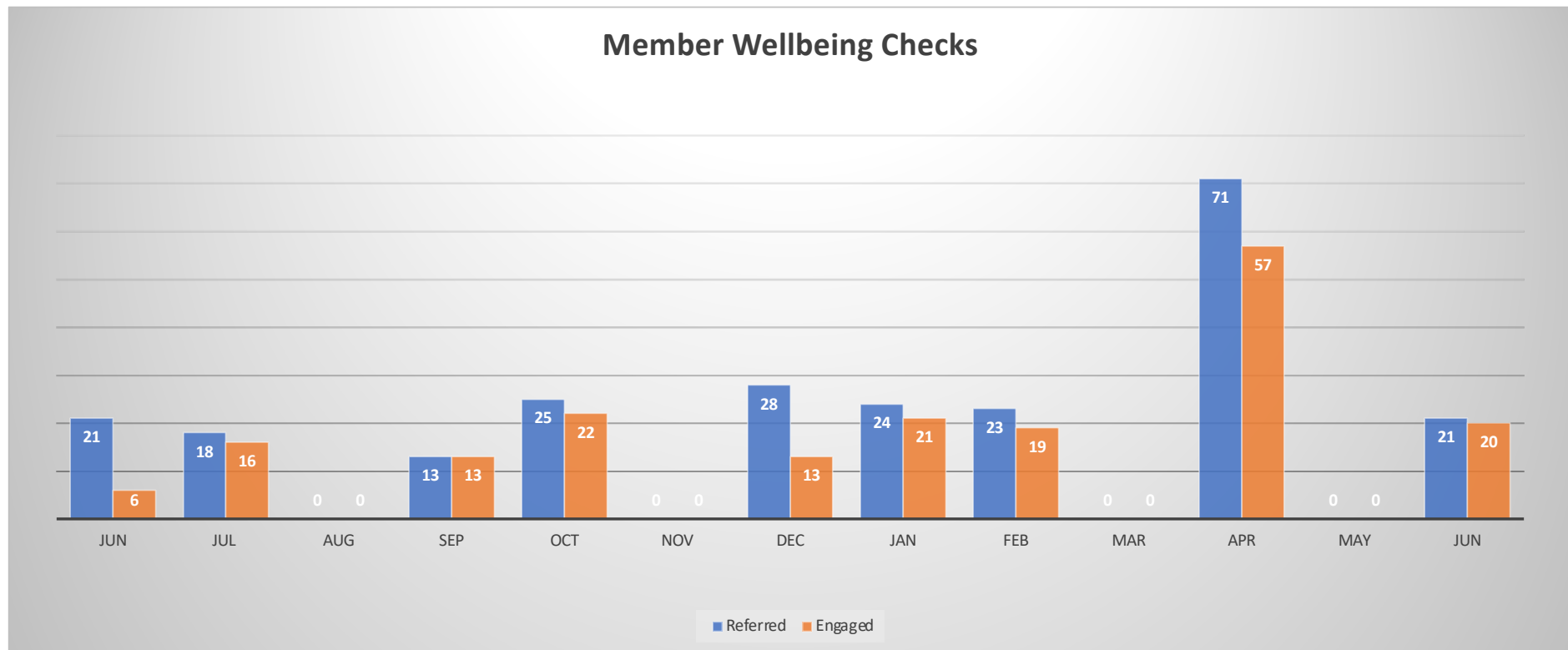
# Critical Incident Criteria

- Serious Injury or Life Threats to SAR Members
  - Activation of support when SAR members' lives are at risk
- Rescued Individuals with Critical Injuries
  - Wellbeing checks for extensively injured rescues
- Personal Connections Impacting SAR Members
  - Support for SAR members when rescues or despondents are known to them
- Operational Tragedies
  - Peer support for deaths during operations or delayed body discoveries
- Media Pressure
- Frequent Exposure to Critical Events
- Incidents Involving Children
- Unresolved Searches

# Instep: Member Assistance Program

- Instep's Role in Employee Assistance
  - Provides wellbeing checks for critical need situations
  - Similar approach to Peer Support services
- Wellbeing Check Methodology
  - Two phone calls with a set of self-rating questions
  - Establishes a baseline for post-event condition
- Perception and Outcomes
  - Checks can feel clinical and not always helpful
  - Deviations from baseline lead to additional support
- Referral System
  - Potential referrals to counsellors after checks

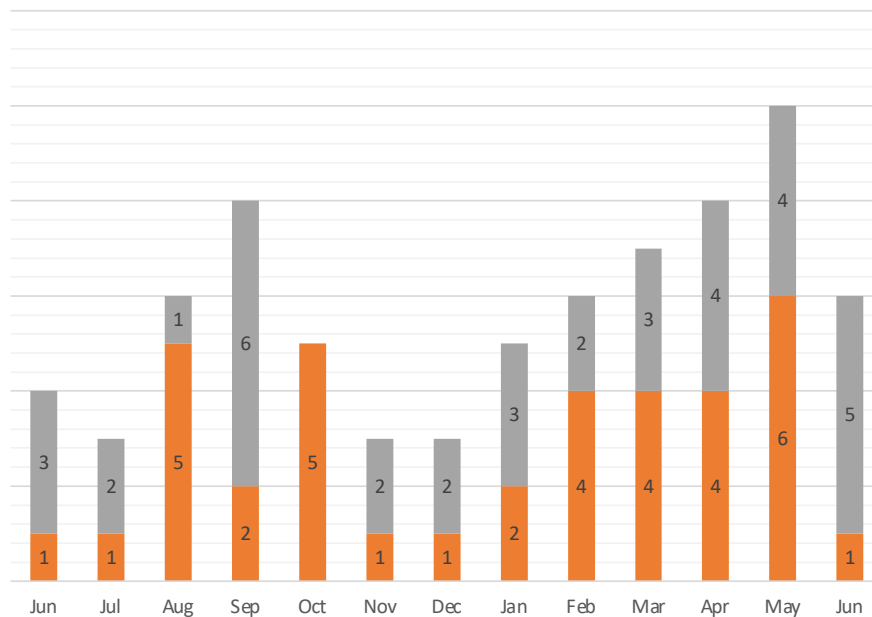
# Wellbeing Checks Engagement



# Counselling Services Utilization

## EAP SERVICES

■ Referrals ■ Ongoing



- Comprehensive Counselling Services
  - Available to staff, volunteers, and their immediate whanau
  - No need for National Office contact to utilize services
- Direct Access to Instep
  - Members can call Instep directly for support
- Flexible Counsellor Options
  - Freedom to request a different counsellor if desired
- Usage Statistics
  - Graph available showing member utilization of services

# Peer Support

- SAR members who are trained to chat through how we are coping or not coping
- Totally confidential
- Can be done face-to-face, over the phone or MS Teams
- Note that peer supporters are not counsellors and may refer you to Instep
- Is Growing!

## Meet Kelly Shaw

### Land Search and Rescue Peer Support

Hi, my name is Kelly and I joined Greymouth Land Search and Rescue late in 2020.

I have held a few roles within our group including GTO, Recruitment, Equipment Officer and Health & Safety, I'm currently the Chair of our group.

I have attended the 2 week Police SAR course at Dip Flat, I'm on the Inclusivity Advisory Group and am a Peer Supporter!

In my day job I'm a Social Worker in mental health at Te Whatu Ora.



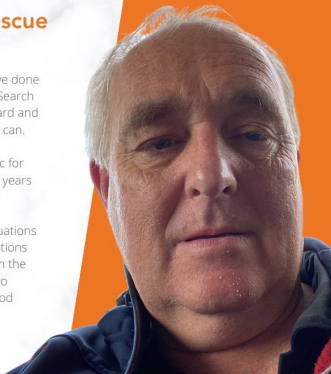
## Meet Wayne Stevens

### Land Search and Rescue Peer Support

I've been involved for 40 years and have done numerous different roles within Land Search and Rescue. These days I'm on the Board and still get out into the field or IMT when I can.

I have also been a volunteer paramedic for Wellington free ambulance for past 18 years or so.

Over time I've dealt with all sorts of situations and have also seen how different situations can impact on responders and those in the IMT. I'm keen to help offer to support to those who need it (and it's always a good opportunity to sit down drink a hot chocolate).



## Meet Jess Sullivan

### Land Search and Rescue Peer Support

Kia ora, my name is Jess.

I have been with Oxford Land Search and Rescue for three years, where I am a field team member and the team well-being lead.

My current day job is an Emergency Management Officer, for nearly a decade, I've dedicated my time to volunteering and working for various emergency response agencies.

I'm proud to be apart of the peer support whānau.



## Meet Claire Bentley

### Land Search and Rescue Peer Support

Hi my name is Claire Bentley and I joined Tauranga land search and rescue in 2021.

I have a few roles within our group including field team member, IMT, Health & Safety, Secretary, valued Committee member and Peer Supporter.

I come with post graduate qualifications in Positive Psychology & Wellbeing and apply this to my everyday life including my volunteer role as a search and rescue field team member. In my day job I'm in the Education sector and use coaching skills as a big part of my role. I recognise the benefits of Peer Support and look forward to adding to your support kete.



# Accessing Professional Assistance

For confidential advice call **0800 284 678** or use the web: [www.instep.nz](http://www.instep.nz) —  
member login: **landsar** password: **wellness**

You need to give your name, phone number, email, address, volunteer number and name of your group

Traumatic event exposure | Volunteer & Personal Relationships | Stress & Worry  
Management

Anxiety & Depression | Concerns about Alcohol or Drug Use | Grief & Loss |  
Volunteer / Life Balance

**In an emergency please phone 111 for Police or your local hospital for psychiatric  
assistance**



<https://www.alpine-rescue.org/articles/1225--icar-recommendations-for-stress-resilience-in-alpine-rescue>

International Commission for Alpine Rescue



**2023 Final ICAR Recommendations for Stress Resilience in  
Alpine Rescue**

# What is the most important thing in the world? He Tangata, he tangata he tangata

- He Tangata, he tangata he tangata which means its people, its people its people.
- Claudia and Davina Zimmer, Sue Webb, Hadyn Smith, Tom Wood, Marie Nordgren, Alison Sheets, Richard Delaney, Laura McGladrey.
- Andy Bray and all the loved ones of the seven in heaven who lost their lives in the Mangatepopo Gorge on 15 April 2008 – Portia McPhail, Tara Gregory, Natasha Bray, Tom Hsu, Floyd Fernandes, Anthony Mulder, Tony Mc Clean
- Kia Kaha – stay strong



Composed by Te Ranga Tupua

## Karakia Whakakapi

Whakairihia ngā mahi, ngā kōrero Rapa Taiwhenua  
Ki Ranginui, ki Papatuanuku  
Tūturu whakamaua ki a tina – TINA!  
Hui e – TĀIKI E!

### Closing karakia

Let us embed our work, our discussion & ideas of LandSAR  
In the embracement of sky father & mother earth  
Let this be our commitment to all  
To join! Gather together! In unity!

Thank you for the opportunity to share our member well-being journey with you. I am happy to answer questions if we have the time.

Peter Zimmer

Group and Volunteer Support

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