



Health about whole person says young Youth Health Nurse

Leah has always had a drive to work with young people, so being the youth health nurse at Youthspace is the ideal job for her.

"I am passionate about preserving young people's potential.

"I did lots of voluntary work with young people when I was studying for my Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Auckland in 2012-14 and when I worked as a practice nurse in Clendon in South Auckland after that. My job involves a lot of health promotion and education - increasing young people's knowledge around things like smoking, sexual health, and immunisations. My job is about young people's over-all state of health, physical, mental, social, and cultural and spiritual.

"The decisions a young person makes between the ages of 12-24 years shape the rest of their life. Young people need good support during these years and it is a privilege to walk alongside them during this time. If we can support young people to become the best they can be, there's no end to the difference they could make on society as a whole.

"Whangarei has an excellent range of support services for young people; services that are relevant, open and non-judgemental. I think we need to find ways to get information about them out to young Whangarei people.

"Young people are the future of Whangarei and we must invest in them by building on their strengths and providing opportunities that show our hope and belief in them.

When a young person is struggling

"I find I need to build a relationship with the young person first, so they know they can trust me, and I am honest with them young person about what happens to the information they might share with me. What they say stays between us unless I am worried about someone's safety (that they may be harming themselves, that someone else may be harming them, that they may be harming someone else or that harm may be going on around them.)

Start with an open question like, "Tell me about how you're doing about the moment." Then concentrate on listening to what they are saying. Make eye contact. Show that what they are saying is important and will be taken seriously so that they will continue to engage. A question that I have found useful is, "What matters to you?"

How to tell how a young person is

"Look for changes in behaviour or mood that may be a response to stress or may signal how they are feeling. They may be less engaged in school or other activities that they used to enjoy. They may be more irritable, more tearful, or more agitated. Their sleep may also be affected and they may eat more or less than they did previously. They may also be isolating themselves from friends/family and may be talking of hopelessness.

Resources I find helpful

"The Werry Workforce has excellent resources available online for parents, young people, and health professionals. The World Health Organisation's 'I had a black dog, his name was depression' video is also a realistic and eye-opening overview of depression. Other young people have found apps like 'Headspace' and 'SPARX' to be helpful. There is also the CALM website which provides online training.



Leah Bennett says that through her work she can combine her interest in science and medicine with her passion for people and meaningful relationships, something she finds hugely fulfilling

"A new free helpline, '1737', is also excellent for providing 24-hour telephone (texting and call-in) support for those needing support.

If you are worried about someone

"Let your young person know that you are worried; let them know that you see them struggling and that you want to support them to get help. If your young person is at immediate risk, contact the Police on 111. Otherwise you can contact the nurses at WYS for advice or see your family GP. If you are a friend/caregiver of a young person that you are worried about, make the call. Act now.

Show them you care

"The one single factor that has been found to improve a young person's life trajectory is being connected with an older figure who can act as a role model. If more of us were willing to connect with young people and be that mentor figure in their life, so many more young people could be influenced to become

the next leaders and voices of their generation.

"I'd want to show them that I was hearing what they were saying and that their feelings are being heard and taken seriously. I'd want them to know that they are not alone and that there is support available.

"I also think it is important that they find someone they really can talk to and to keep on trying if it doesn't work at first. Try one of the supports out there. Come and see us.

Youth space

"WYS is unique because it is a youth one stop shop. It offers youth development programmes with the youth work team, a comprehensive health service, including a specialist youth health voice. This is vital in a community like Whangarei where the mental health, sexual health and physical health statistics shows just how much young people struggle and are at risk."

Helplines for children and young people

Youthline – 0800 376 633, free text 234, talk@youthline.co.nz or www.youthline.co.nz/services/goforward/go-chat/thelowdown.co.nz email team@thelowdown.co.nz, free text 5626 or free text / phone 1737 anytime for support from a trained counsellor

Help for parents, family and friends

Commonground – www.commonground.org.nz
Parent Help – 0800 568 856
Family Services 211 Helpline – 0800 211 211
Skylight – 0800 299 100

Are you aged between 12 and 24 years old? Then this is your space, join in the fun

Whangarei Youth Space is a safe and fun place where you can meet friends, get involved in what's on, find a mentor, join in school holiday activities, access free, private, youth health services and get training and employment support.

How you can contact us at Whangarei Youth Space

Email: contact@youthspace.co.nz
Phone: 09 972 7248
Text: 021 765 838
Fax: 09 972 7249
Post: PO Box 1483
Whangarei 0140
www.youthspace.co.nz

Youth health enquiries contact a nurse on 021 756 724

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Supporting young people to live healthy lives