



# School Counsellor Newsletter

Edition 40

## Coping with events beyond our control

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For this newsletter I am sharing with you what I presented to the whole school last Monday 16 August during assembly. There are many events which can impact our sons, many of which are beyond our control. Indeed, since last Monday we have been moved into Level 4 lockdown - an event that has impacted us all and is certainly beyond our control. What we can control, however, is our willingness to be there to listen to our sons and support them. In the assembly presentation I shared with the Medbury students three strategies which are recognised as useful approaches to cope with events, whether they be personal, local, national or international, which may have an impact on them. I hope that they are useful for you as well in your role as a parent.

### Assembly Presentation

Kia ora koutou,

It is lovely to be talking to you all as a school today. I am going to spend some time reminding you of strategies you can use to cope with events that happen that are often outside of our control. These can be things that happen to you, or to your family, events that may happen to your friends and their families, or incidents that are reported in the news and the media - in Christchurch, in New Zealand and things that are happening in the world.

These events, even if they do not involve us directly, can have an impact on us and can make us feel unsure about things. This is okay and this is normal. We cannot control the impact such events have on us and the thoughts that may come into our brains but we can control how we react to these thoughts so that we can do our best to cope well.

I am going to share three main points today. My hope is that you aim to remember at least one of these, if not all three, and aim to use that strategy more when you find yourself feeling unsure about things or events that happen.

**1: Use your support team and talk to people you trust** if you are feeling unsure about something that has happened. It is really helpful to have someone listen to any questions, worries or concerns that you have so that they can support you. (I asked the students in assembly: Who can you talk to when you are feeling unsure about something? The students shared: parents, teachers, extended family members such as grandparents and friends.) Some extra points I added include:

- Close friends who you trust are a great source of support - can I suggest that you do talk to adults as well please. You all have amazing brains inside your heads yet they are still developing. As adults have more developed brains we can often look at things a different way to you as young people so it is really helpful to have adults in your support team.
- Can I also add here for any students who have access to online information - this is not always the best source of information so I would suggest talking about anything online with a trusted adult.

**2: Look at things a different way.** We cannot control the things that happen but we can control our own response. So if an event happens that makes you feel a bit worried or unsure try to look at it another way such as looking for the positives, what you can control and what you can learn from the event. For example, in my family we watched a programme recently about how the fire service train to deal with house fires which included an empty house being set alight. We decided as a family that we needed to review our fire escape plan since moving to our new house. So even though we were watching something about a negative event we looked at it from another angle and decided we could learn from it and change what we were doing at home.

**3: Problem solve** - is there anything you can do to solve this problem? Sometimes that can be writing a card to friends or family if they are coping with something hard, or to an organisation to express your support. Sometimes we can problem solve by looking after ourselves if the event is having an impact for us. For example, if you notice you are not feeling so good you could make more time to go outside and get fresh air. (I asked the students in assembly: what else can you do to look after yourself? The

students shared: doing exercise, spending time with friends, reading a book quietly, calming the brain by doing breathing exercises or mindfulness exercises and spending time with a pet.)

In summary - we cannot control many events that happen to us personally, locally or internationally but we can control how we respond to these by thinking about:

- **Using your support team and talking to people you trust**
- **Looking at things a different way**
- **Problem solving**

Aim to use all or one of these strategies I have suggested today to help you cope with an event that impacts you or makes you feel uncertain.



## **Jenelle Hooson**

**Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).**

If you wish to discuss the services the School Counsellor can provide, please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim:

[amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz](mailto:amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz).